

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE DECISION RECORD

26 July 2013

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Christopher Akers-Belcher (In the Chair)

Councillors: Keith Dawkins, Marjorie James, Alison Lilley, Robbie Payne,
Carl Richardson, Chris Simmons, Paul Thompson and Ray
Wells

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2 (ii), Councillor Rob Cook was
in attendance as substitute for Councillor Kevin Cranney.

Also in attendance:

Dr Peter Acheson, Public Health England
Dr Mark Reilly, Tees Valley Public Health Shared Service

Officers: Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive
Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive
Chris Little, Chief Finance Officer
Alyson Carmen, Legal Services Manager
Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration
John Mennear, Assistant Director, Community Service
David Hart, Strategic Procurement Manager
Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager
Fiona Stanforth, Community Regeneration Officer
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

47. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kevin Cranney and
Peter Jackson.

48. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations at the commencement of the meeting, see
minutes 59 and 61.

49. Minutes

- (i) Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee held on 28 June 2013 – Received.
- (ii) Minutes of the meeting of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership held on 21 June 2013 – Received.

50. Measles Outbreak *(Director of Public Health)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To provide the Committee with an update and assurance, regarding the ongoing management of the measles outbreak across the Tees Valley including Hartlepool.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Public Health introduced Dr Peter Acheson from Public Health England to Members who was in attendance to provide an update on the school based vaccination programme for measles.

Dr Acheson informed Members that since September 2012 there had been 411 confirmed cases of measles. A large school based campaign had been introduced which implemented 3153 vaccinations across the Tees area. It was noted that NHS England were continuing the campaign through GP surgeries which would be rolled out September/October 2013. Dr Acheson highlighted that the majority of reported cases were in the teenage group and it was suggested that this may be due to the poor uptake of the vaccination in the late 1990's and early 2000's. Members were informed that the number of cases reported per week had reduced dramatically and was now down to single figures. As a result of this, a number of health professionals including the Director of Public Health were working together to ensure the current momentum of the vaccination programme was not lost and maintained the high rates of vaccinations for years to come.

A Member questioned what the current take up from young mothers/new mothers was for their children to be vaccinated. Dr Acheson confirmed that the uptake was increasing with approximately 90% of children being vaccinated. However, it was acknowledged that there was still room for improvement as ideally the take up rate would be 95% to avoid the virus taking a hold on the population.

In response to clarification sought by a Member, Dr Acheson confirmed that the Doctor who had linked the measles vaccination to autism and bowel disease back in the 1990's, had been completely discredited and was unable to practice medicine in this country. It was noted that although there were a lot of parents worried about the vaccination at the time due to the MMR scare, they were not active refusers and have since taken their children for the vaccination. It was highlighted that some older teenagers had presented themselves requesting the vaccination.

A Member sought clarification on whether there was a way of tracking those children who were not vaccinated as a result of the MMR scare but were adults now and potential parents. Dr Acheson confirmed that GP surgeries were able to confirm who had been vaccinated from their patient records. A media campaign outlined the problem and suggested that people should be vaccinated as there was no upper age limit, however generally the older people were the more likely they were to be protected from natural exposure.

The Director of Public Health reminded Members that as from 1 April 2013, the Council had a duty for health protection to ensure management of all health protection risks and clinical diseases was in place including full scale incidents and outbreaks of diseases.

Dr Acheson was thanked for attending the meeting and providing Members with an update on the vaccination programme. In addition, Members passed on their thanks to the Outbreak Contract Committee and the work done with the media to promote the immunisation programme and preventing the spread of measles.

Decision

The report and update provided was noted.

51. Reviewing the Sustainable Community Strategy for Hartlepool *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To present the Committee with the first draft of the new Sustainable Community Strategy for agreement as a draft for consultation. The report will also set out for the Committee the draft 'Then and Now' document, the first version of the Equality Impact Assessment and outline the proposed 8 week consultation which will follow approval of the first draft.

Issue(s) for consideration

It was highlighted that the new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) would be greatly downsized and would not duplicate what was already captured in other key strategies and plans. The first draft of the proposed SCS was attached at Appendix 1. Details of the consultation timetable were provided in the report and would conclude with submission to Council for adoption in February 2014.

Decision

- (1) The draft Sustainable Community Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 was agreed as the first draft for consultation.
- (2) The 'Then and Now' document (Appendix 2), Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 3) and proposed 8 week consultation was noted.

52. Seaton Carew Development Sites *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) applies – Forward Plan Reference RN 16/13.

Purpose of report

To update Members on the latest position in relation to the Seaton Carew Development sites and to enable Members to consider and approve proposals in relation to first phase of the development to be referred to full Council on September 5th 2013 for consideration and approval.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background to the progress made in relation to the Seaton Carew Development sites. It was noted that Officers had been working jointly with the developer to produce draft development proposals and layouts for the sites and undertake a public consultation exercise. In relation to the Longscar building which was a key element to the overall proposals, approaches and negotiations were ongoing with the current owners to purchase the building by agreement before any other means of acquisition were considered. Details of the financial implications were included by way of confidential appendices which **contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation)**

Order 2006, namely, (paragraph 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The Assistant Director, Regeneration confirmed that recommendation (iii) should refer to the Council meeting on 5 September 2013.

A discussion ensued on the possible options for the acquisition of the Longscar Centre as Members were of the view that this building was having a detrimental affect on the Seaton area and they were concerned that this may delay the full implementation of the Seaton Carew Master Plan. The Assistant Director, Regeneration indicated it was a difficult and complex process and would only result in a compulsory purchase order if that was what was required once all other options had been explored.

It was highlighted that there had been a number of meetings of the Derelict Buildings Group and that a robust process was in place to ensure that the whole process did not fall on a technicality. It was suggested that the use of the balance of the actual capital receipt once recommendations (a) and (b) have been funded should be approved by Finance and Policy Committee and ultimately Council.

Decision

- (a) That the allocation of part of the capital receipt from the land sale of Elizabeth Way to purchase and demolish the Longscar building as detailed in confidential Appendix 1 which **contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) para 3.** These costs will not be incurred until the capital receipt was received by the Council.
- (b) The balance of the capital receipt to be set aside towards the overall Seaton Carew regeneration scheme including the development of community facilities within Seaton subject to future costed proposals being approved by this Committee and full Council.
- (c) If the value of capital receipts needed to fund items (a) and (b) was less than the actual capital receipt from the sale of land at Elizabeth Way the remaining amount be held as an earmarked Unused Capital Receipt, which can only be released if approved by this Committee and full Council.
- (d) The Committee refers the above recommendations to Council for approval on 5 September 2013.

53. Senior Officer Structure (*Chief Executive*)

Type of decision

Key Decision Test (i) applies – Forward Plan Reference CE60/13.

Purpose of report

To make recommendations to the Finance and Policy Committee in respect of the Senior Officer Structure of the Council for 2014/15 including functional responsibility.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report outlined the current and proposed structures within the Chief Executive's, Child and Adult Services and Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Departments. The functional proposals for 2014/15 were also detailed in the report. A letter of response from the Hartlepool Joint Trades Union Committee to the proposals was provided for Members' consideration and the Chief Executive provided the following responses to a number of points in the letter.

Para 5.2.1 – It was confirmed that the Borough Hall and Headland Sports Centre site would be managed as one site under Sports and Recreation within one Directorate.

Para 5.1.3 – Whilst the Chief Executive did not agree that there would be some grading issues, it would be continuously monitored as the Tees Valley City Deal progresses.

Para 5.2.3 – The issues of career grades would be examined further as part of the proposal and it was confirmed that the whole of the Public Protection administration team would be transferring from Regeneration and Neighbourhoods to the Director of Public Health.

Para 5.2.4 – The Chief Executive indicated that accelerated increments would not be proposed and that the issues surrounding neighbourhood management were currently being examined.

In response to clarification sought by a Member, the Chief Executive confirmed that the proposals would not result in salary increases for any Chief Officers.

A Member questioned the proposed transfer of reprographics and direct reporting to the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and whether further examination of possible income generation would be examined. The

Chief Executive recognised that whilst the proposed direct reporting arrangement was not ideal, this transfer was proposed based on an evaluation of all Assistant Director workloads. In addition, it was confirmed that the process to identify savings and income generation for 2014/15 and 2015/16 was underway.

The Chair commented that the conclusion of the work undertaken on the advice and guidance was eagerly anticipated by Members as this should make a significant difference to how the Council presented itself to the public. In addition, it was highlighted that Members and Officers needed to be mindful of the agreed Pay Policy Statement and subsequent recommendations regarding that which would be effective from 1 October 2013. The Chief Executive confirmed that the work undertaken on advice and guidance would provide a fully rounded local authority service in partnership with other partners such as health and police.

In response to a question from a Member, the Chief Executive confirmed that the work examining the Chief Executive's Department was underway.

Decision

- (1) That the removal of the Assistant Director (Resources) and Assistant Director (Community Services) posts from the establishment from 31 March 2014 was approved.
- (2) The function structures for 2014/15 were approved.
- (3) The additional savings at the top of the grade of £81k not already reflected in the updated MTFS forecasts were allocated to reduce the 2014/15 budget gap were approved.
- (4) It was noted that the structural proposals achieve total ongoing savings at the top of the grade of £331k as identified in paragraph 10.1 of the report.

54. Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS) (*Chief Finance Officer*)

Type of decision

Key Decision Test (i) applies – Forward Plan Reference CE57/13.

Purpose of report

To outline the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS) and to recommend that at this stage the Council does not pursue this initiative.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background to the LAMS scheme which was launched in March 2011. The practical considerations of the implementation of the scheme were detailed in the report. A number of national developments had been implemented since the LAMS was launched including Help to Buy – Equity Loan; and Help to Buy – Mortgage Guarantee. The report noted that investigation of LAMS indicated that this scheme was not suitable for new build housing and as it was not yet clear what impact the Government's Help to Buy scheme will have on the housing market as a number of experts, including the outgoing Governor of the Bank of England had expressed concerns at the implementation of LAMS. Against this changing background it was recommended that the LAMS scheme was not pursued at this time.

Decision

- (1) The report was noted.
- (2) The proposal not to pursue the LAMS scheme at the current time was approved.

55. Sale of Crown House Site on Surtees Street for Student Accommodation *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To seek approval to complete the sale of the former Crown House site on Surtees Street for the development of student accommodation.

The details of the sale will be subject to formal negotiations with the Homes and Communities Agency regarding grant conditions that were attached to funding for the original purchase and clearance of the site.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background to the purchase and clearance of the site which took place in 2010 as part of an acquisitions strategy linked to the Central Area Investment Framework. A proposal had been received from the Cleveland College of Art and Design and Vela to develop the site

for student accommodation due to its proximity to the College and town centre amenities. The report detailed the conditions in place from the original grant to demolish and clear the site from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). In view of this, negotiations were ongoing with the HCA to recoup the Council's share of the capital receipt.

A discussion ensued on the option of leasing the land with the opportunity to purchase at a later date. The Assistant Director, Regeneration indicated that a lease option was not under consideration at this point and may not fit into Vela's business model for the site but could be explored further if Members requested this. In conclusion Members requested that the option of receiving 100% of the capital receipt should be pursued in the first instance in view of the Council's proposal to reinvest in projects in the area such as the redevelopment of the Market Hotel. It was suggested that should 100% of the capital receipt not be achieved, the proposal should be resubmitted to the Finance and Policy Committee for further examination.

Decision

- (1) That the sale of the Crown House site as detailed in options 1 and 2 be approved to proceed, subject to the Council's receipt of 100% of the capital receipt from the HCA, to enable the development of student accommodation by Vela for Cleveland College of Art and Design.
- (2) That Vela's offer or any value above this which was agreed with the HCA be accepted.
- (3) That should the Council not achieve 100% of the capital receipt, a further report be submitted to the Finance and Policy Committee for further consideration.

56. Delegated Property Transactions *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To inform the Committee of the recent Minor Property Issues dealt with under Delegated Powers.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background to the delegated powers to the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods for a variety of transactions. A

number of transactions had been progressed in accordance with this delegated consent and they were summarised in Appendix 1 which **contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) para 3.**

Decision

The report and property issues that had been dealt with under Delegated Powers were noted.

57. Sale of Land at Belle Vue Way *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To seek approval for the sale of land at Belle Vue Way.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background and outlined the history of the site which was shown hatched on a plan attached at Appendix 1. Prestige Cars Direct Properties Limited had submitted a proposal for the site for a public house/restaurant operator, the terms of which were included in confidential appendix 5 which **contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) para 3.**

Decision

The proposed terms as outlined within the confidential appendix were approved.

58. Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund – “999 What’s your Emergency” *(Assistant Director, Community Services)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To approve the recruitment of a temporary position, fully supported by grant income to deliver this project.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report outlined the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund which was a national grant stream which funded research into public Museum collections. Members were informed that a collaborative application by the Museum of Hartlepool (lead Hartlepool BC), the Dorman Museum (lead Middlesbrough BC) and Head of Stem (lead Darlington BC) had been one of 7 projects successfully chosen from 76 applications received by the Fund for the “999: What’s Your Emergency” collection. This was a research and public access project to create knowledge of and widen public involvement in museum social history collections directly relating to the Emergency Services and individual heroes who have helped local communities over the last 250 years. The proposal included a directly employed Officer (band 7) to deliver the project. Further details of how the project would be delivered were included in the report.

Members were reassured that the new post was a temporary post with all financial implications being included within the grant allocation. It was noted that the advertisement of the post would follow the Council’s recruitment process including secondments, redeployment, internal and external advertisement if required.

Decision

- (1) That the acceptance of the grant offer was noted.
- (2) That the recruitment of a Collections Access Officer to deliver the project be undertaken through the Council’s usual recruitment process.

At this point in the meeting, Councillors Rob Cook and Chris Simmons declared a personal interest in minute 59.

59. Community Pool Category 5 Grant Update 2013/14
(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To provide an update to Finance and Policy Committee on the Category 5 Community Pool grants approved via delegated powers to the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods for ratification.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report detailed the different categories available as part of the Community Pool Grant programme and how they had been allocated during 2013/14. It was highlighted that the budget available for the grants through Category 5 for 2013/14 was £42,647 and the maximum grant that a VCS organisation can apply for through this scheme was £5,000.

An application has been received by Generic Advocacy Training and Consultancy Service for £2,709 and this was approved via delegated powers this financial year. It was noted that there had been no further applications submitted for consideration at this stage.

A Member questioned the eligibility criteria that referred to a Community Interest Company and the distribution of profit and whether this should indicate 'not for profit organisation'. The Community Regeneration Officer indicated that this would be clarified as part of the forthcoming review of the community pool.

Decision

The decision of the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods in approving the allocation of Community Pool Grant of £2,709 to the Generic Advocacy Training and Consultancy Service was noted.

60. Corporate Procurement Quarterly Report on Contracts (Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To satisfy the requirements of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules with regard to the Finance & Policy Committee:

- To receive and examine quarterly reports on the outcome of contract letting procedures including those where the lowest/highest price was not payable/receivable.
- To receive and examine reports on any exemptions granted to these Contract Procedure Rules.

Issue(s) for consideration

Attached at Appendix 3 which **contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) para 3**, was a table which detailed the tenders received since the cessation of the Audit Sub-Committee and the commencement of the Council's new constitution. The Assistant Chief Executive highlighted that the standstill period for one of the contracts had concluded, therefore the preferred bidder had been approved by this Committee.

A Member referred to the Council decision from 25 July 2013 and the Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that future reports would incorporate the amendments agreed at Council and would form basis of the quarterly report to Council.

Decision

The report was noted.

61. Longer Lives *(Director of Public Health)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To introduce to the Committee a presentation based on the Longer Lives data, released on a national basis through Public Health England, on health inequalities.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Public Health introduced Dr Mark Reilly from Tees Valley Shared Public Health Service who was in attendance to present to Members the Longer Lives data. Dr Reilly provided a detailed and comprehensive presentation which outlined the causes of premature mortality across the Tees Valley area. The presentation displayed the stark realities of the differences in life expectancy across Hartlepool and the 10 steps that should be embedded to tackle these inequalities as identified by Dr Chris Bentley from the Department of Health. It was highlighted that death rates from heart disease had reduced at a faster rate in Tees Valley in England.

Councillor Paul Thompson declared a personal interest at this point in the meeting.

A Member requested a copy of the presentation slides be forwarded to all Members of the Committee.

A lengthy discussion and debate took place on the dramatic differences in mortality rates across Hartlepool on a ward by ward basis which highlighted the affect deprivation could have. The importance of linking this information to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment was discussed. Dr Reilly confirmed that mortality rates were summarised geographically based on the persons usual place of residence. The performance of GP practices was publicly available on the internet through practice profiles. Members discussed the need to engage and target the local community to look at ways of reducing inequalities across the town. The Director of Public Health indicated that this was a challenge that needed to be dealt with through partnership working across all appropriate agencies across the whole town but with a targeted approach to where resources were most needed.

The Director of Public Health confirmed that since 1 April the Council had

responsibility around public health and providing assurance that appropriate immunisation programmes were in place. In response to a query from a Member, the Director of Public Health confirmed that NHS England would be leading on the programme of flu vaccinations and an update on the implementation of this programme would be reported to the Committee later in the year. It was suggested that this could be publicised in the Council's Hartbeat magazine. Dr Reilly commented that Hartlepool had really good health protection services including the smoking cessation service which had been highlighted as the best in England.

The importance of building into Council services measures to address health and equality was discussed and it was highlighted that the improvements to housing through the clearance of street houses and redevelopment of new houses with gardens was a contributory factor to addressing health inequalities.

A Member reiterated the comments made as part of the presentation on the additional support provided by the Fire Brigade through safety checks, winter warmth issues and engaging with young people which highlighted the need for a partnership approach to tackling health inequalities in a time of ever decreasing resources. Dr Reilly confirmed that Public Health England statistics around health inequalities were identical to maps of where Government cuts backs had been implemented.

The importance of ensuring the people had aspirations to live longer was discussed and the need to build this into the Health and Well Being Strategy was highlighted.

The Director of Public Health confirmed that a mandatory function of the local authority was crime prevention and further information on this would be submitted to the Committee at a later date.

Dr Reilly was thanks for a very informative presentation and for answering Members' questions.

Decision

The presentation and actions being taken to reduce health inequalities across the town were noted.

62. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

The meeting concluded at 11..25 am

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 1 August 2013