

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE AGENDA



Thursday 19 September 2013

at 9.30 am

in Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

MEMBERS: FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Councillors C Akers-Belcher, Cook, Dawkins, Jackson, James, A Lilley, Payne, Richardson, Simmons, Thompson and Wells

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee held on 23 August 2013.
- 3.2 To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership held on 5 July 2013.

4. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ITEMS

- 4.1 Medium Term Financial Strategy – Review of Reserves as at 31 March 2013 – *Corporate Management Team*
- 4.2 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2014-15 – Savings Proposals – Initial Budget Consultations – *Corporate Management Team*



5. KEY DECISIONS

- 5.1 Procurement of Specialist Drug and Alcohol Prescribing Service – *Director of Public health*
- 5.2 Disposal of Surplus Assets – Lease of Bryan Hanson House – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and Assistant Director (Regeneration)*
- 5.3 Discretionary Housing Payment Policy Review – *Chief Finance Officer*

6. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

- 6.1 Advice and Guidance Project – *Assistant Director (Resources)*
- 6.2 Registration Service Update – *Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*
- 6.3 Additional Apprenticeship Opportunities – *Assistant Chief Executive*
- 6.4 Function Catering Service – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhood*
- 6.5 Skills Support for the Workforce – Procurement – *Assistant Director (Community Services) and Assistant Director (Resources)*
- 6.6 Localised Council Tax Support 2014/15 – *Chief Finance Officer*

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- 7.1 Hartlepool Household Survey – Headline Results – *Assistant Chief Executive*
- 7.2 Health and Safety Annual Report – *Assistant Chief Executive*
- 7.3 Update on Strategic Review of Procurement in the North East Local Government Sector – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*
- 7.4 Distribution of Pink Papers – *Chief Solicitor*
- 7.5 Healthy Weight Healthy Lives including Report on National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) – *Director of Public Health*

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006

EXEMPT ITEMS

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs referred to below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006



10. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

- 10.1 Future of the Indoor Bowling Club – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods (Para 3)*

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Date of next meeting – Friday 18 October 2013 at 9.30am in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hartlepool



FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

23 August 2013

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

Present:

Councillor: Christopher Akers-Belcher (In the Chair)

Councillors: Keith Dawkins, Alison Lilley, Robbie Payne and Chris Simmons

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2 (ii), Councillor Barday was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Cranney, Councillor Griffin was in attendance as substitute for Councillor James, Councillor Cook was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Richardson and Councillor Sirs was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Jackson.

Also Present:

Edwin Jeffries, Joint Trade Unions

Officers:

Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive
Chris Little, Chief Finance Officer
John Morton, Assistant Chief Finance Officer
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration
Graham Frankland, Assistant Director, Resources
John Mennear, Assistant Director, Community Services
Kerry Trenchard, Acting Performance and Partnerships Manager
Karen Oliver, Facilities Management Manager
Laura Stones, Scrutiny Support Officer
Steve Hylton, Public Relations Officer
Rachael Clark, HR Business Partner
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

73. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cranney, Jackson, James, Richardson, Thompson and Wells

74. Declarations of Interest

None at this point in the meeting. However, declarations were declared later in the meeting (Minute 84 of the open minutes and Minute 92 of the closed minutes refer)

75. Minutes

- (i) Minutes of the meetings of the Finance and Policy Committee held on 26 July 2013, 2 August 2013 and 8 August 2013 – Received.

In relation to the minutes of 8 August – Minute 71 – Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation, a Member questioned the accuracy of the minutes in respect of the preferred site for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. The Chair confirmed that the minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting. Councillor A Lilley requested that her disagreement in relation to the accuracy of the minutes be recorded.

- (ii) Minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board held on 24 June 2013 – Received.

76. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2014/15 Savings Proposal *(Chief Executive)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To enable Members to consider the initial 2014/15 savings proposals relating to the Committee remit. Comments made were to be incorporated with those received from each of the Policy Committee in relation to their remits and will be considered by the Finance and Policy Committee at the meeting on 19 September 2013.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Chief Finance Officer referred to previous reports to the Committee which provided background and an overview of the Council's financial position including details of the significant financial challenges and risks facing the Council over the four years commencing 2013/14 arising from continued reductions in Government funding for Councils.

In relation to the 2014/15 budget, it was reported that that the Council faced a gross budget deficit of £8.524m. The gross budget deficit could be reduced to £4.594m without impacting on services through a combination of permanent budget savings and one-off factors as summarised in the report. The report also detailed departmental savings proposals with a total value of £4.376m. Assuming the proposed departmental savings were

implemented there was a net unfunded deficit for 2014/15 of £0.218m. It was anticipated at this stage, that this amount could be bridged from the 2014/15 New Homes Bonus. However, this income was not yet guaranteed.

Members were advised that if the proposals, as set out in the report, were approved for addressing the 2014/15 budget deficit the Council would still face significant budget deficits in 2014/16 and 2016/17. Over the period of the current MTFS it was forecast that the Council would have to make permanent budget cuts of around £16.2m, details of which were included in the report.

Members were referred to the proposed departmental budget savings and budget pressures for consideration by the Committee, attached as appendices to the report, that would be incorporated with those received from each of the Policy Committees in relation to their remits for consideration by the Finance and Policy Committee on 19 September 2013.

It was noted that an additional report would be presented to a future meeting of this Committee to consider the criteria for the Community Pool.

Clarification was sought in relation to the proposed saving regarding Security Services and whether the review of provision included the Civic Centre. It was confirmed that it was security in other buildings, not the Civic Centre.

Decision

The Committee supported the proposed savings and budget pressures for further consideration by the Committee on 19 September 2013.

77. Living Wage *(Chief Executive)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) applies – Forward Plan Reference CE58/13.

Purpose of report

To obtain Finance and Policy Committee approval to implement a Living Wage for low paid employees in the Council.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Chief Executive presented the report which provided background information relating to the Living Wage Initiative including the benefits of the scheme, sub regional decisions as well as details of the background to the decisions of Council to establish a Living Wage. The report included details of the impact of a 1% pay offer on bands 1-4, justification for introducing a Living Wage for Council employees, accreditation information, should the Council wish to become a Living Wage Foundation Accredited employer, financial implications of a Living Wage as well as details of the flexibility to change the rate of a Living Wage.

Details of the contractual arrangements, the impact on pay and grading structures together with feedback from Head Teachers and Joint Trade Unions were provided as set out in the report.

It was proposed that the Living Wage be contractual for Green Book and TUPE employees and Bands 1-3 be merged into a single pay band (Band 1-3) comprising spinal column point 10 only.

The main group of employees who would benefit from the introduction of a Living Wage would be cleaners. Members were referred to the summary of proposals together with Alternatives for Green Book employees as detailed in the report.

In response to a request for clarification that Elected Members would not benefit from the proposals given recent comments on this issue, the Chair provided assurances that Elected Members would not benefit from the Living Wage Initiative highlighting that the only link between Elected Members and the Living Wage was the decision to ring fence savings from the new governance arrangements to support this initiative.

The Chair suggested that part of the ring fenced reserves from savings in Members' budgets for the current year be utilised to fund the Living Wage the following year.

Decision

- (i) That a Hartlepool Living Wage equivalent to Spinal Column Point 10 (currently £7.26 per hour) and uprated as and when the value of Spinal Column Point 10 increases be introduced for Council employees with effect from 1 September 2013.
- (ii) That Bands 1 – 3 be merged into a single pay band (Band 1-3) comprising Spinal Column Point 10 only with effect from 1 September 2013.

- (iii) That the national minimum wage methodology (i.e. including hours on sleeping in duty) be applied when determining compliance with the Council's Hartlepool Living Wage for employees
- (iv) That employees be referred to appropriate agencies outside of working hours if they wish to receive advice on the possible impact on benefit entitlement.
- (v) That members note the intention of the Director of Child and Adults and the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods to submit a further report on a Hartlepool Living Wage in respect of the potential impact on commissioning arrangements to Finance and Policy Committee.
- (vi) Members expressed their support to encourage other Hartlepool employers to pay our Hartlepool Living Wage to their employees and noted the intention to submit a further report to Finance and Policy Committee in due course.
- (vii) That Council be requested to release £90,000 from the Living Wage reserve to fund a Hartlepool Living Wage of £7.26 per hour in 2013/14
- (viii) That the cost of implementing the Living Wage of £155,000 be funded from 2015/16 onwards from the ongoing savings in Members Allowances (£131,000) with the residual shortfall of £24,000 being funded from the review of Workforce Arrangements, or if savings in this area are not achieved the residual cost will be a budget pressure for 2015/16.
- (ix) That part of the ring fenced reserves from savings in Members' budgets for the current year be utilised to fund the Hartlepool Living Wage the following year (2014/15).
- (x) That client budgets and trading accounts be funded for the Hartlepool Living Wage.
- (xi) That a strategy for using the unused element of the Living Wage reserve be developed as part of the 2013/14 Outturn Strategy.
- (xii) The Committee noted the Council's aspiration of moving to the National Minimum Wage.

78. Warm Up North – Delivery of Green Deal Measures for Residents *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (ii) applies – Forward Plan Reference RN17/13.

Purpose of report

To provide information on the 'Warm Up North' project and to seek approval and funding to formally engage with the scheme.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director presented the report which provided background information on the Warm Up North Project together with details of the purpose and benefits of the scheme. Although Hartlepool had previously decided not to join Warm Up North there were a number of areas where, through good progress in delivery of the scheme, risks had been reduced, mitigated or managed, details of which were provided. The report included details of progress to date in relation to the project.

With regard to the financial considerations, Members were advised that the Council would have to make a financial contribution of £50,000 towards the scheme and this was a capped sum, which could be paid over two financial years. The Director of Public Health was considering the option of funding this contribution from the Public Health budget. Another option was to consider a contribution from any under spend on the Authority's social fund budget.

Decision

- (i) That Hartlepool BC join and participate in the Warm Up North Project.
- (ii) That an allocation of £50k be committed in order to facilitate inclusion and this be funded from the non-recurring Public Health Grant Fund.

79. Future Use of Brierton Site *(Director of Regeneration of Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) and (ii) apply – Forward Plan Reference RN89/11.

Purpose of report

To update the Committee on progress for the future use of the site.

To consider the outcome of the marketing of EDC/Golden Flatts sites.

To consider options for potential parking areas on part of the land adjacent to Sitwell Walk.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Resources reported on the background to the use of the Brierton site and Cabinet's and Council's subsequent approval of the proposals for the future of the site, details of which were set out in the report.

The report included progress to date in terms of the future use of the site including Catcote Future's works, demolition of the upper school building and the moves from the existing Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and EDC site. The different elements of the Brierton site usages were identified on a plan attached as an appendix to the report.

As part of the approved Master Plan, the western edge of the site was designated for residential development. A six week statutory public consultation had been carried out, details of which were provided, the results of which would be submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration.

Details of future sports provision and playing field developments were outlined in the report as well as the outcome of the tender process for the sale of EDC and Golden Flatts sites, included in a confidential appendix to the report. ***This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely (para 3) – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).***

With regard to Macaulay/Sitwell Walk, two options to provide parking bays had been investigated, the outcome and benefits of each were provided. Members were referred to the risks, financial and asset management considerations.

In the discussion that followed Officers responded to issues raised by Members which included clarification on capital receipts targets, the financial, planning and demolition considerations as well as the advantages and disadvantages of attaching various planning conditions to the sale of sites of this type.

In relation to option 1 – to provide parking bays at end of Groves off Macaulay Road, and the suggestion that this could be phased over more than one year, a Member queried whether this could be undertaken in one year as opposed to a phased approach. The Assistant Director agreed to incorporate this option in a future report relating to capital receipts for consideration by the Committee.

With regard to the future use of this site, Members were keen to ensure that the recommendations of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum in relation to Mental Health and Wellbeing of Children were considered in terms of improved facilities and emphasised the need for a greater mix of bungalows on that site.

In addition, the Committee requested that the report to be submitted in relation to capital receipts should explore the impact of attaching planning conditions to the sale of the site.

Decision

The Committee:-

1. Noted the current position on the development of the Brierton site.
2. Approved the highest bidder as preferred bidder in relation to the EDC and Golden Flatts sites.
3. Provisionally approved the use of any surplus capital receipts from the relevant disposals to fund parking at locations adjacent to the end of Groves off Macauley Road (Option 1 in Section 9) and the option of works being undertaken in one year as opposed to a phased basis be explored and the various options be presented to the Committee for consideration.
4. Noted that if Members approved recommendation 3 above, a report would need to be submitted to full Council to enable this proposed scheme to be funded when funding was available. It was currently envisaged this proposal will be included in the 2014/15 Medium Term Financial Strategy report which will be submitted to Council in February.
5. That a future report in relation to capital receipts be awaited and include the impact of attaching planning conditions to the sale of the site as well as future sites.
6. That consideration be given to the provision of a greater mix of bungalows on the site.

80. Welfare Reform Impacts *(Chief Finance Officer)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) and (ii) apply – General Exception Notice.

Purpose of report

To set out for information the range of welfare reforms, their associated implementation timescales/impacts and update Members on the Council's arrangements for dealing with these challenges.

To enable Members to approve revised proposals for using the Local Welfare Support funding in 2013/14.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Chief Finance Officer reported on the background to the Government's Welfare Reforms, the national impact with Hartlepool ranked as one of the worst hit Councils. The report provided detailed information of the local impact of Welfare Reforms, progress on collection of Council Tax under the Local Council Tax Support Scheme, bedroom tax/social rented sector under occupancy charge, properties affected by the new bedroom criteria rules by Ward and the average loss of housing benefit which equated to £1.2m across the borough.

Data on local welfare support awards in Hartlepool during Quarter 1 indicated a significant underspend as summarised in the report. If current trends continued the Council may potentially underspend in the current year by up to £400,000. Members views were sought as to how they wished to apply the underspend.

In the debate that followed Members discussed the impact of the bedroom tax changes, the various options available and initiatives explored by other local authorities. With regard to the potential underspend and the option to support households affected by the bedroom tax changes at a cost of £346,000 to the Local Welfare support budget and £4,000 to support food bank initiatives, Members were keen to support this proposal.

Decision

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the retention of a contingency amount of £50,000 from the

forecast LWS underspend be approved to manage any increase in demand for support in the current year.

- (iii) That the proposals for applying the forecast uncommitted LWS underspend as set out below be approved and this proposal be referred to full Council as a departure from the approved Budget and Policy Framework

Bedroom Tax			Food Bank Initiatives	Contingency	Total
No of weeks Support	Help per household	Cost to LWS budget			
£	£	£	£	£	£
16	218	346,000	4,000	50,000	400,000

- (iv) It was noted that a further report on the development of the 2014/15 Local Welfare Support arrangements would be submitted when the 2014/15 funding allocation was confirmed.
- (v) Council be requested to approve that delegated authority be given to Finance & Policy Committee, to determine the application of any underspend of the contingency sum of £50,000 following a Local Welfare Support scheme review in January 2014

81. Data Quality Policy Review *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

Type of decision

Non key

Purpose of report

To inform Finance and Policy Committee of the review of the Data Quality Policy and provide them with the updated version of the policy for approval.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Acting Performance and Partnerships Manager reported that the Data Quality Policy had been reviewed in 2011 and it was therefore considered

timely to review and update the policy to reflect, amongst other things, the Council's new governance arrangements. The Policy, attached at Appendix 1, had been considered by the Audit and Governance Committee at the meeting on 25 July 2013 with no amendments received.

Decision

That the updated Data Quality Policy be agreed.

82. Review of Risk Framework (*Assistant Chief Executive*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the review of the Risk Management Framework and provide them with the updated version of the Framework for information and comment.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Acting Performance and Partnerships Manager reported that the Risk Framework had been in place since the Spring of 2011 and had been reviewed and updated particularly to reflect the role of the Finance and Policy Committee in the new governance arrangements in relation to risk management. The Framework, attached at Appendix 1, had been considered by the Audit and Governance Committee at the meeting on 25 July 2013 with no amendments received.

Decision

That the updated Risk Framework be agreed.

83. Quarter 1 Strategic Financial Management Report
(*Corporate Management Team*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To inform Members of:

- (i) 2013/14 Forecast General Fund Outturn;
- (ii) Corporate Income Collection;
- (iii) Progress in achieving the capital receipts target; and
- (iv) Capital Programme Monitoring.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Chief Finance Officer provided details of progress against the Council's 2013/14 Forecast General Fund outturn, Corporate Income Collection, progress in achieving the capital receipts targets and Quarter 3 Capital Programme Monitoring.

The report included background information and reporting arrangements for 2013/14. As previously reported an initial assessment of the forecast 2013/14 outturn for a range of corporate budgets was completed and an initial underspend of £1.1m forecast. In relation to the management of departmental budgets, the Corporate Management Team was again seeking to achieve underspends to help address the significant financial challenges through a combination of robust management actions, as detailed in the report. After reflecting these actions, it was currently anticipated that there would be a year end underspend of £2.090m to £2.764m which included the initial forecast outturn of £1.1m. A range of additional one off commitments had also been identified since the initial 2013/14 outturn forecast. When account was taken of these commitments and the earmarking of the initial forecast outturn of £1.1m it was anticipated there would be a net uncommitted underspend of between £19,000 and £693,00. Details of the forecast outturn were provided in Appendix A and summarised in a table included in the report. The range reflected the impact of seasonal and demand led budgets which were difficult to predict after only three months actual activity. At this stage it was not recommended that this amount be committed until the position was more certain.

In relation to collection of Business Rates and Council Tax in 2014/15, taking into account the significant changes implemented in April 2013, the figures compared favourably with the same period last year.

Decision

- (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That the potential use of the forecast uncommitted outturn of £19,000 to £693,000 be deferred until the position on demand lead/seasonal budget was more certain and the actual 2014/15 Local Government Finance Settlement was known.

84. Review of Civic Lottery Fund and Minor Awards (Assistant Director, Community Services)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To advise Members of a number of options for the future administration and the responsibility for the Civic Lottery and the restrictions placed upon disbursement of Civic Lottery funds by the Secretary of State. In addition, the report gave options for clarity on additional existing small grants funds related to the Community pool.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided background information to the establishment of the Civic Lottery Fund together with details of the current eligibility criteria. In terms of the options for future administration and the responsibility for the Civic Lottery the following options had been identified as detailed in the report :-

Option 1 – Transfer the responsibility of the Civic Lottery to another Committee other than Finance and Policy

Option 2 – Allocation of Civic Lottery awards alongside Member Ward Budgets

Option 3 – No change to the current arrangements

Members were referred to the Civic Lottery Guidelines and Secretary of State approvals, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

Members were advised that there were currently two other small grant pots, the Sports Council Award and Directed Lettings which were formerly linked to the community pool and related to historical allocations and Members

views' were sought in this regard. It was recommended that the annual grant to the Hartlepool Sports Council continued and the current budget amount continue to be awarded direct. In terms of directed lettings, it was proposed that this category of funding support be no longer supported and the small number of groups affected apply for support via the Member Ward Budgets in the area in which they operate.

At this point in the meeting Councillors Griffin and Payne declared a personal interest in this item of business

In the discussion that followed the Assistant Director, Community Services responded to issues raised by Members. Clarification was provided in relation to the proposal in option 2 that no successful bidding group would be eligible to apply again within three years and that new applicants would be given preference over repeat applications. A Member questioned the impact of the three year restriction on small groups ability to operate to which it was highlighted that there was an option to utilise Ward Member Budgets for support.

Decision

1. That the option for the future administration of the Civic Lottery be agreed as follows:-
 - (i) That the Civic Lottery grants be administered on a Ward basis via Neighbourhood Management and be reported annually to Neighbourhood Services Committee.
 - (ii) That the Civic Lottery local guidelines be amended as outlined in **Appendix 2**.
2. In relation to the Former Community Pool 'top sliced' funds, the additional 'grant pots' be amended as follows:-
 - (i) That the Hartlepool Sports Council continue to be allocated £2,500 from the existing budget for the benefit of sporting talent in the town.
 - (ii) That the 'Directed Lettings' budget be terminated and existing qualifying groups bid for support via the Members' Ward Budgets.
 - (iii). The Elwick Parish Council be given direct premises hire support of £250 per annum from existing budgets to meet the Borough Council's legal obligations.

85. **School Meals Service Strategy** (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To report to the Finance and Policy Committee the actions and outcomes from the School Meals Service task group.

To seek Committee's consideration and approval of various elements of the future strategy.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided background information to the establishment of a School Meals Service task group together with the costs associated with the running of the School Meals Service in 2012/13 along with a breakdown of the income generated and funded as set out in a confidential appendix to the report. A breakdown of the overhead costs was also provided in a confidential appendix. ***This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely (para 3) – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).***

Take up of school meals was 58% overall in 2012/13 which represented an increase of 3% on 2011/12 figures. Take up by school was set out in an appendix to the report. A detailed schedule showing the financial performance by school was also attached as a confidential appendix ***This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely (para 3) – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).***

In relation to the future strategy, the task group identified a number of areas to be explored as set out in the report. In terms of the pricing strategy, options included a price reduction, price freeze or pricing incentives for those with more than one child in education, the implications of which were included in report. A number of other considerations were set out in detail in the report including school kitchen and equipment improvements, tackling childhood obesity and poverty via the school meal service, school

involvement, school funding reform and free school meals. Details of free school meal eligibility and take up over the years was also provided.

A lengthy discussion ensued in relation to the various strategies in place to improve take up of school meals and commented on the educational benefits of breakfast clubs and promoting healthy eating initiatives in schools. Members welcomed the report and the principles around addressing family poverty and financial incentives for larger families. The Committee was pleased to note the proposals to further explore with head teachers the implications of pupils leaving the school premises at lunch times. The Assistant Director and Facilities Management Manager responded to issues raised by Members in relation to the strategy and take up figures, as detailed in Appendix 1, and highlighted the potential reasons for low levels of take up.

Decision

- (i) That the strategy to freeze prices for 2013/14 be approved.
- (ii) The Committee endorsed that strong support was needed from schools and parents to work towards a continued price freeze and a longer term reduction of school meal prices.
- (iii) That the feasibility study into offering financial incentives for families with more than one child in education be approved and receive a report on the options available.
- (iv) That further investigations into an ICT system to support menu selection and payment collection be approved.
- (v) The continuation of an in-house School Meal Service based on the strategy within the report be supported and reported back to the Committee in twelve months.
- (vi) The Committee approved the proposal to take a report to the School's Forum recommending a new monthly charging process for Primary Schools based on actual meals served, and raise the need for strong support to increase the take up of school meals in all schools.
- (vii) That further exploration into the Blackpool pilot to fund free breakfasts in all primary schools using a combination of Public Health, Pupil Premium and other funding opportunities as outlined in the 'School Food Plan' document be approved.

86. Tees Valley and South Durham Local Improvement Finance Trust – Future Arrangements *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To consider the development of the Tees Valley and South Durham LIFT Company (LIFT Co) and requests the Committee to consider whether there were any benefits to the Council of pursuing Level 2 Signatory status linking to operational work the Council was delivering in partnership with “Community Ventures” the Private Sector Partner managing the business of the LIFT Co.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background to the development of the LIFT company as well as the aim and objectives of the company. There had been significant structural change within the NHS since the original establishment date. However the strength of this model had stood the test of time and continued to deliver with successor bodies their strategic Service Development Plans.

To date the Council had not taken up the option to sign up to the Strategic Partnering Agreement due to concerns around the cost of the procurement route and any commitment to long term maintenance arrangements which could be out of the Council’s control. However, subsequent feedback from the PCTs and other Councils had been positive. Details of the supporting arrangements and benefits to the Council in joining the SPB at level 2 were provided.

Decision

- (i) The Committee noted the development of the LIFT Company since implementation.
- (ii) That the Council should sign up to the Level 2 non-exclusivity status on the LIFT Company Strategic Partnership Board.

87. **Assessment Process Regarding Clawback of Grants From Historical Grants Programmes** (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To seek approval from Members on a suggested process for dealing with grant clawback enquiries.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Regeneration reported on the background to the changes to the removal of DCLG's capital clawback rights from certain historic grant programmes. Responsibility for dealing with enquires from grant recipients now sat with the Council and a system was required.

It had been recognised by Government that although there was a requirement to protect public funds that were administered through various grant schemes, the fact that they were tied into clawback clauses forever was restrictive and often counteractive in terms of supporting businesses and economic growth over the medium to long term.

It was proposed that following receipt of an enquiry from a grant applicant a report would be prepared for Finance and Policy that would provide a recommendation as to whether clawback funding should be pursued and would cover a range of considerations to establish if the repayment of funding was required. It was suggested that grants administered 10 years ago or more that were below a grant offer of £25,000 should not be pursued unless there were extenuating circumstances. Grants paid out within the last 10 years would be looked at on an individual basis.

Members views were sought in relation to a current enquiry, details of which were included in a confidential appendix. ***This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely (para 3) – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).***

A lengthy discussion ensued during which Members raised a number of queries/issues in relation to various cases and clawback options to which the Assistant Director provided clarification on the clawback arrangements.

Given the current financial situation, Members emphasised that clawback funding should be consistently pursued. The Committee was assured that the suggested approach would address any concerns as all enquiries would be considered on a case by case basis.

Decision

- (i) That the approach suggested that would allow historic grant enquiries to be dealt with in a fair and equitable way, be endorsed.
- (ii) In relation to the enquiry received from Bamardo's, clawback funding be pursued.
- (iii) To ensure full Member participation in clawback decisions, all enquiries would be considered by the Finance and Policy Committee on a case by case basis.

88. Quarter 1 Council Overview of Performance and Risk 2013/14 *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To inform the Finance and Policy Committee of the progress made against the 2013/14 Council Plan, for the period ending 30 June 2013.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Acting Performance and Partnership Manager presented a report which described progress made against the actions and performance indicators included in the Council Plan for 2013/14. It was noted that at this stage 88% of actions were on target.

Decision

That the current position with regard to performance be noted.

89. Employee Sickness Absence 1st Quarter 2013/14 (Assistant Chief Executive)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To update the Committee on the Council's performance in relation to employee sickness absence for the first quarter of 2013/14.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided details of employee sickness absence for the first quarter of 2013/14 and actions taken across the Council to achieve this. Members were advised that the target figure for 2013/14 was 7.50 days absence per wte (whole time equivalent). The actual sickness rate at the end of the first quarter showed the Council's performance was on target at 7.52 days per whole time equivalent per employee per annum. There had been continuous improvement year on year, as detailed in the Council's annual sickness absence statistics included in the report. The Council continued to focus on sickness absence management to ensure the Council achieved its target at the end of the reporting year.

The report included sickness absence statistics by department as well as a breakdown of long, medium and short term sickness absence.

Decision

That employee sickness absence rates for the first quarter of 2013/14 be noted.

90. Six Monthly Monitoring of Agreed Scrutiny Recommendations (*Scrutiny Manager*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To provide Members with six monthly progress made on the delivery of Scrutiny recommendations that fall within the remit of this Committee.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided details of progress made against the investigations undertaken by the previous Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee. The report included a chart which provided the overall progress made against each scrutiny recommendation since the last six monthly monitoring report was presented to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee in March 2013.

It was noted that 72% of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's recommendations had been completed with 13% in progress, 11% cancelled and 4% overdue.

Decision

That progress against the agreed recommendations be noted.

91. Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation Order) 2006

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs referred to below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

Minute 92 – Workforce Arrangements – This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely (para 4) – namely information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection

with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holder under, the authority.

- 92. Workforce Arrangements** *(Chief Executive) This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely (para 4) – namely information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holder under, the authority*

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) applies – Forward Plan Reference CE59/13.

Purpose of report

To advise Members of progress in negotiations with Hartlepool Joint Trade Union Committee in relation to possible savings in workforce costs which would not affect the number of employees working for the Council.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided background information relating to progress in negotiations with the Joint Trade Unions in relation to the possible savings in workforce costs which would not affect the number of employees working for the Council, further details of which were included within the exempt section of the minutes

Decision

The decision was set out in the exempt section of the minutes

The meeting concluded at 12.05 pm.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 2 SEPTEMBER 2013

SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP DECISION RECORD

5 July 2013

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Christopher Akers-Belcher (In the Chair)

Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Clare Clark, Neighbourhood Manager
Barry Coppinger, Police and Crime Commissioner
Lucia Saiger-Burns, Durham Tees Valley Probation Trust
Ian McHugh, Cleveland Fire and Rescue Authority
John Bentley, Safe in Tees Valley

In accordance with Council procedure rule 5.2 (ii) Libby Griffiths, Housing Hartlepool was in attendance as a substitute for Andy Powell, Housing Hartlepool and Superintendant Ian Coates was in attendance as a substitute for Chief Inspector Lynn Beeston and Karen Clark was in attendance for Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health.

Also present:

Karen Hawkins, Hartlepool and Stockton Clinical Commissioning Group
Mark Smith, Head of Youth Services

Officers: Lisa Oldroyd, Community Safety Research and Development Co-ordinator
Richard Starrs, Strategy and Performance Officer
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

6. Appointment of Vice Chair

It was noted that historically this position had been taken by the District Commander of Cleveland Police. This was noted and the views of the Chief Superintendant responsible for neighbourhood command would be sought and fed back to the Partnership.

7. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive; Chief Inspector Lynn Beeston, Cleveland Police; Andy Powell, Housing

Hartlepool and Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health.

8. Declarations of Interest

None.

9. Minutes of the meetings held on 24 April 2013 and 21 June 2013

Confirmed.

10. Matters Arising

24 April 2013:

Members of the Partnership were reminded of the need to nominate a substitute member to attend meetings when they were unable to, and to forward this information to Democratic Services at their earliest convenience.

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods confirmed that a review of the Community Safety Partnership's would not form part of the Crime and Police Panel's scrutiny programme for 2013/14 as it was outside of the Panel's remit.

The Neighbourhood Manager circulated a paper outlining the aim and delivery of the Safe Relationship Programme. The Chair requested that any comments and/or feedback should be forwarded direct to the Neighbourhood Manager.

21 June 2013:

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods confirmed that the report and actions generated as a result of the Domestic Homicide Review had been forwarded to the Home Office for review.

11. Community Safety Strategy 2014-17 *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Purpose of report

To agree a process for developing the Community Safety Strategy 2014-17.

Issue(s) for consideration

It was noted that the development of the Community Safety Strategy would commence in September 2013 assisted by the consultation undertaken as

part of the Household Survey. It was noted that the Face the Public Event in September 2013 would provide the opportunity for the Partnership to provide feedback to the public on performance and activities undertaken to address local priorities and a consultation timetable was circulated. It was anticipated that the finalised strategy would be presented to the Partnership in March 2014 for submission to Council and publication in April 2014. It was highlighted that there may be scope for an additional Council meeting late April/early May in view of the combined European and Local Elections being held on 22 May and it was noted that this may assist what was a challenging timescale.

It was noted that the Strategy would be produced in an easy to read format along with the inclusion of an Executive Summary.

Decision

The proposed process and schedule for developing and consulting on the Community Safety Strategy 2014-17 was agreed.

12. Safer Hartlepool Partnership Development Day Feedback *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Purpose of report

To provide feedback from the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Development Day event held on 24 May 2013 and to identify from the discussions held on that day a small number of key priorities to be further developed by the Partnership.

Issue(s) for consideration

As a result of the Development Day held on 24 May 2013, a number of strengths and weaknesses were identified. As such the following key areas for improvement were included in the report:

- Reducing re-offending
- Public confidence and reassurance
- Partnership support and collaboration

A table outlining the priorities and actions of the Partnership's Development Plan was included in the report and members were asked to agree the responsible officers to take the actions forward. It was highlighted that the key theme across all actions was to ensure robust practices were in place.

The following was agreed:

- 1) Reducing Re-offending – DTV Probation Trust

- 2) Public confidence and cohesion – Cleveland Fire and Rescue Authority and Neighbourhood Manager.
- 3) Partnership Support and Collaboration – Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and Neighbourhood Manager.

A discussion took place in relation to the number of re-offenders that were not known to the probation service and it was noted that further work was being undertaken to analyse this information and ascertain what contributed to their re-offending. This would then assist the mapping of need for services for the people in Hartlepool. It was highlighted that this information would need to be fed into the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Police and Crime Panel and the Clinical Commissioning Group to inform any decisions on future commissioning arrangements, the timing of which would need to link into the budget process. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that a timescale would be developed to link into the budget process. In addition, it was noted that the Re-offending Strategy would be drafted and submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee as part of its work programme.

The representative from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) confirmed that collaborative work was underway to align the work being undertaken by the CCG with public health and commissioning. It was suggested that all the work being undertaken could be collated and included in one report to be submitted to the Health and Wellbeing Board. To assist the Partnership, the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods would collate the different areas of work being undertaken in relation to offending and report back.

The Partnership was informed that a review of the services provided to offenders was being undertaken and the representative from the DTV Probation Trust confirmed that updates on this review would be brought to the Partnership as and when available. The Police and Crime Commissioner confirmed that Stockton Borough Council intended to provide support to an in-house bid from the Probation Service. The Chair indicated that a letter would be forwarded to endorse the service currently provided as the way forward for Hartlepool.

In relation to the Development Plan, the Chair circulated information provided by Stockton Borough Council on the initiative 'Community Safety Connect' which promoted a zero tolerance to anti-social behaviour. It was suggested that a representative from Stockton Borough Council be invited to a future meeting of the Partnership to provide further details as this initiative was receiving support from the Local Government Association as an innovative way of addressing anti-social behaviour.

A discussion ensued on the operation of 'ringmaster' as this was considered a fundamental way of communicating with the community. It was noted that the provision of this service was currently being renegotiated. The Police and Crime Commissioner indicated he would look into the progress of this issue and report back to the Partnership.

It was noted that a quarterly performance monitoring regime would be set up to monitor and analyse re-offenders and the contributory factors into their behaviour. It was suggested that the Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health be included within the action to improve working relationships between prisons and Local Authorities.

Decision

- (i) That the priorities for action within the Reducing Reoffending Action Plan were agreed incorporating the comments noted above.
- (ii) That a representative from Stockton Borough Council be invited to a future meeting of the Partnership to provide further details as this initiative was receiving support from the Local Government Association as an innovative way of engaging with the public around anti-social behaviour and community safety.

13. Safer Hartlepool Partnership Performance (*Neighbourhood Manager (Community Safety)*)

Purpose of report

To provide an overview of Safer Hartlepool Partnership performance for 2012/13.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Community Safety Research and Development Officer provided the Partnership with a detailed and comprehensive presentation which examined the performance of the Partnership against agreed performance indicators. Performance in comparison to Local Peers across Cleveland for 2013-13 was also provided.

It was noted that there was a lot of good news within the performance information and it was suggested that this should be publicised to reinforce the collaborative work being undertaken by the Partnership and other agencies.

Decision

- (i) The presentation was noted.
- (ii) That the performance of the Partnership be publicised

14. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chairman ruled that the following items of business should be considered by the Committee as a matter of urgency in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that the matter could be dealt with without delay.

15. Safer Hartlepool Partnership – Agenda and Report Templates

It was suggested that as the Partnership had now been encompassed within the Council's Democratic Support that all future agendas and reports should include the Council logo as well as the Safer Hartlepool Partnership logo.

Decision

That all future agendas and reports include both the Council logo and the Safer Hartlepool Partnership logo.

The meeting concluded at 3.16 pm

CHAIR

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

19th September 2013



Report of: Corporate Management Team

Subject: MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY - REVIEW
OF RESERVES AS AT 31st March 2013

1. TYPE OF DECISION / APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Budget and Policy Framework decision.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To enable Members to review the existing financial reserves that are held to manage financial risks and to determine if any of these risks have reduced and thereby enable reserves to be released for other purposes.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 As Members will be aware from the updated MTFS report submitted to the Committee on 2nd August 2013 the Council faces the most challenging financial position it has ever faced over the next three financial years. This position reflects the following key factors:

- The requirement to make significant additional budget cuts, on top of those implemented over the last three years, of **£16.2m**, before the start of 2016/17.

As verbally reported by the Chief Finance Officer on 2nd August 2013 there is an increased risk that the actual savings may be higher owing to the impact of changes announced by the Government in the “2014/15 and 2015/16 Local Government Finance Settlement Technical Consultation” document. The Local Government Association (LGA) have identified that for 2015/16 the cash cut in core funding for Local Authorities has increased from 8.2% (£2.1 billion) announced in the June 2013 Spending Review to 13.1% (£3.1 billion) in the Technical Consultation document, an additional cut in Local Authority core funding of **£1 billion**. Clearly, if increased cuts of this magnitude are implemented by the Government for 2015/16 this will significantly increase the budget deficit for this year.

At this stage the only potential mitigation may be the Council's allocation of the £3.8 billion national NHS Social Care funding, known as the Health

and Social Care Integration Transformation Fund (ITF). On the 7th August 2013 NHS England and the Local Government Association issued a briefing note to 'set out our joint thinking on how the ITF could work'. The briefing note stated that the 2015/16 fund will be created from the following:

- £1.9 billion of existing funding continued from 2014/15 – this money will already have been allocated across the NHS and social care to support integration. This allocation includes £130 million Carers' Breaks funding, £300 million CCG Reablement funding, £350 million capital grant funding (including £220m of Disabled Facilities Grant) and £1.1 billion existing transfer from health to social care;
- £1.9 billion additional funding from NHS allocations. This includes funding to cover demographic pressures in adult social care and some of the costs associated with the Care Bill. This allocation also includes £1 billion that will be performance related, with half paid on 1 April 2015 (which it is anticipated will be based on performance in the previous year) and half paid in the second half of 2015/16 (which could be based on in-year performance).

The briefing note indicated that NHS England and the LGA (Local Government Association) and ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services) will work with the DH (Department of Health), DCLG and CCGs (Clinical Commissioning Groups) and local authorities over the next few months on the following issues:

- Allocation of Funds;
- Conditions, including definitions, metrics and application;
- Risk-sharing arrangements;
- Assurance arrangements for plans;
- Analytical support e.g. shared financial planning tools and benchmarking data packs.

Further updates will be provided when more information becomes available.

- Business Rates Risks arising from the level of the 'safety net' and the potential impact of reduced Business Rates paid by the Power Station, which accounts for **17%** of the Council's Business Rates income;
- The abolition of the national Council Tax Benefit system and the introduction of Local Council Tax Support schemes. Following the initial cut in funding for Local Council Tax Support schemes the key issue for 2014/15 and future years is the Government's decision to mainstream this grant within the core revenue grant paid to Councils. As previously reported there is a risk that this change further reduces funding for LCTS as more deprived communities have suffered disproportionate cuts in core grants in previous years.

- 3.2 Since the Government commenced cutting Local Authority core grants in 2011/12 the Council has adopted a strategic multi-year approach to managing the Council's overall financial position. This approach has included the strategy for holding reserves to manage specific financial risks, which is designed, as far as practical within a climate of sustained and increasing year on year grant cuts, to avoid the need for additional in-year budget cuts. The overall strategy recognises that under existing Government funding arrangements the Council needs to manage financial risks from its own resources as it will not be eligible for national 'emergency funding' from either:
- Capitalisation approvals for redundancy costs, which are only granted to fund the statutory cost of redundancy payments and not pension strain costs, which are paid when employees over 55 years are made redundant. In addition, capitalisation approvals have to be funded from capital receipts. The Council has previously committed forecast capital receipts of £4.5m to fund unavoidable Housing Market Renewals commitments, following the Government withdrawal of capital funding to complete these schemes;
 - Business Rate Safety Net threshold. Previous reports on the MTFS have highlighted this ongoing risk and the impact of the Power Station Business Rates. In financial terms from 2014/15 this is an annual risk of £1.9m (although the Government may increase this threshold) which the Council needs to manage from its own resources. Safety Net grant is only paid for shortfalls above this threshold.
- 3.3 As part of the Council's multi-year financial strategy a review of reserves and the financial risks these reserves had been earmarked for was completed as part of the 2013/14 budget process. This review identified reserves of £2.280m which could be released. This amount was earmarked, alongside the 2012/13 managed revenue budget underspend, to fund additional financial risks as part of the 2013/14 approved budget.
- 3.4 Members will recall from the annual budget report submitted to Council that the Local Government Act 2003 introduced a statutory requirement on an Authority's Chief Finance Officer (CFO) to advise Members on the robustness of the budget forecasts and the adequacy of the proposed level of reserves. If Members ignore this advice the Act requires the Council to record this position. This later provision is designed to recognise the statutory responsibilities of the CFO and in practice is not a situation the Corporate Management Team (CMT) would expect to arise for the Council. The requirements of the Act and professional advice from the CMT and CFO has successfully underpinned the Council's strategic multi-year approach to managing the financial challenges it faces and the strategy for holding reserves to manage financial risks.
- 3.5 Following completion of the above review the Audit Commission published a report to present the findings of a national study they had undertaken during

2012 on the level of reserves that Councils hold and the decisions Councils make relating to them. The report made the following statements:

- Reserves are an essential part of good financial management. They help Councils cope with unpredictable financial pressures and plan for their future spending commitments. The level, purpose and planned use of reserves are important factors for elected Members and council officers to consider in developing medium-term financial plans and setting annual budgets;
- Having the right level of reserves is important. Where Councils hold very low reserves, there may be little resilience to financial shocks and sustained financial challenges. Where reserves are high, Councils may hold more than they need;
- There is no set formula for deciding what level of reserves is appropriate, too low or too high – Councils are free to determine the reserves they hold. Chief Finance Officers have a duty to provide elected members with the advice they need to make good decisions;
- Further changes in Council funding took effect from April 2013, with the introduction of local Business Rates retention and new arrangements for providing Council Tax support. The impact of these changes, and the level of further funding reductions in 2015/16 and 2016/17, are not yet known, but many Councils expect their funding will reduce.

3.6 The Audit Commission identified a range of questions to help Members in their decision making on reserves, which includes a 'good-quality, annual review to ensure the purpose and level of reserves align with medium-term financial planning'. The report identified five key areas for Members to consider:

- i) How much is held in reserves;
- ii) What are reserves held for, including information provided to Members;
- iii) Do the authority hold any contingency fund other than reserves to protect against unplanned costs;
- iv) The relationship between reserves and Council Tax;
- v) Unplanned movements on reserves.

3.7 In relation to items (i) and (ii) the next section of the report provides a detailed explanation of these issues. In relation to items (iii) to (v) these are covered below:

- Contingency funds other than reserves to protect against unplanned costs

The Council does not provide contingency funds within the overall revenue budget to protect against unplanned costs. The Council's approach is to base the revenue budget on the most accurate assessment available for demand lead budget and then to monitor progress against the budget throughout the year at a corporate level. This approach is

designed to enable corrective action to be taken at a corporate level if this is necessary to fund unplanned costs.

This approach is underpinned by the strategic approach adopted by the Council for managing risk through the establishment of risk based reserves and the annual review of these risks and reserves.

- Relation between reserves and Council Tax

Council Tax has been frozen for the last three years (i.e. 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14) and it is anticipated there will be a further freeze for 2014/15. This strategy has enabled the Council to benefit from Council Tax freeze grants provided by the Government to limit the financial burden on individual households. At the time Members determined to freeze Council Tax it was recognised that the freeze grant were only temporary and the removal of these grants is reflected in the budget forecasts for future years.

Decisions to freeze Council Tax have not been directly linked to the level of the Council's reserves. The budgets for the three years up to 2013/14 have included the use of reserves specifically earmarked to support the budget and partly mitigate the impact of Government grant cuts.

As detailed in the MTFS update report on 2nd August 2013 reserves established from the 2012/13 and 2013/14 General Fund Outturns, plus one-off benefits in 2013/14 and 2014/15 from changes to the core Revenue Grant/Education Services Grant will be earmarked to support the overall revenue budget over the 3 years commencing 2014/15 at the rate of £1m per year.

- Unplanned movements on reserves

Detailed in-year financial management reports are submitted to Members to monitor progress in the planned use of departmental reserves and to identify where these reserves may be carried forward to fund rephased expenditure commitments or financial risks.

These reports also provide details of forecast outturns for corporate and departmental budgets to enable Members to determine a strategy for using forecast managed budget underspends. Details of the initial forecast outturn were reported on 31st May 2013. Updates of these forecasts were reported on 2nd August 2013 and 23rd August 2013 to enable Members to approve a strategy for using these one-off resources.

There is one area where forecast outturns are more difficult to predict and that relates to funding allocations received towards the year end from outside bodies, particularly NHS bodies, to fund expenditure commitments in the following year. These resources are allocated to fund specific commitments, but at the year end show as contributions to reserves in the Council's annual accounts.

4. DETAILED REVIEW OF RESERVES HELD AT 31st MARCH 2013

- 4.1 As reported in previous years the starting point for the reserves review is the Statement of Accounts which details the total reserves held by the Council at the end of the financial year. For this review the relevant Statement of Accounts shows the position at 31st March 2013 and at that date the Council held total reserves of £52.142m.
- 4.2 As detailed in previous reviews the total reserves held by the Council include reserves held in trust by the Council (mainly consisting of school balances) and other specific one-off commitments which are certain to be incurred. This latter category includes earmarked funding for the capital programme, ringfenced capital grants and the budget support fund allocated to support the 2013/14 and 2014/15 budgets. When account is taken of these commitments the net value of the Council's reserves which Members need to review is £33.928m, as detailed below:

Table 1 - Value of Council's Revenue Reserves

Balance at 31 March 2012 £'000		Balance at 31 March 2013 £'000
49,988	Total Reserves (as per 2012/13 Statement of Accounts)	52,142
(1,273)	Less Audit Adjustments - Transfers of Reserves to Provisions	
48,715		52,142
8,936	Less - Reserves Held in Trust and Capital Reserves	
6,775	School Balances	8,201
1,971	Earmarked Capital Reserves	4,190
710	Strategic Ringfenced Grants	3,273
495	Budget Support Fund – 2013/14 and 2014/15	2,051
	Civic Lottery Reserve & Museum Acquisitions	499
18,887		18,214
29,828	Value of Council's Revenue Reserves	33,928

- 4.3 Details of the reserves of £33.928m are provided in Appendices A to D and in summary relate to the following areas:

	Value of Reserves at 31.03.13 £'000
Corporate Reserves	28,076
Child and Adult Services	4,527
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	884
Chief Executive's Department	241
Education Services	200
Total	33,928

4.4 Appendices A to D provides a detailed analysis of:

- Memo - Created as part of 2012/13 Outturn – this column shows the reserves created last year;
- Reserves held at 31st March 2013 – includes reserves created as part of 2012/13 outturn;
- The planned use of reserves over the period 2013/14 to 2015/16. For some Corporate Reserves no planned usage is shown as these items relate to reserves held to manage demand lead risks where the timing is uncertain, for example the Business Rate risk reserves held to manage reductions in the Power Station Business Rates. Similarly, no usage is shown for the Insurance Fund as the timing of payments is not known;
- Value of Reserve to be released – this column identifies those areas where the risk the reserve was originally earmarked to manage has reduced and the reserve can be released;
- Value of Reserve to be retained;
- Reason for retention.

4.5 The following paragraphs provide details of the key issues impacting on the level of reserves and the linkages to the MTFS and other strategies, such as the funding strategy for managing the Local Council Tax Support scheme and the strategy for managing Early Intervention Grant cuts.

4.6 Corporate Reserves

4.7 The total value of these reserves is £28.076m as detailed in Appendix A and includes 7 key reserves which account for £23.865m (85%) of this total as detailed in the following paragraphs.

- Redundancies and Early Retirement Costs Reserve - £8.465m

In previous years the MTFS report has advised Members that the Council will face significant one-off redundancy and early retirement costs (for those employees aged 55 years and older) as a result of the need to make significant budget cuts and that these costs are likely to increase year on year as other non staffing cuts become more difficult to achieve. To avoid having to make even higher budget cuts to fund these one-off costs the Council has previously earmarked one-off resources to fund these costs and thereby protect front line services as far as possible in the current financial climate.

In terms of estimating these costs two factors have been taken into account.

Firstly, the proportion of the overall budget spent on pay budgets, which is around 56%. On this basis it is a reasonable planning assumption that 56% of the total savings required over the next three year of £16.2m will come from pay budgets, which equates to approximately £9.1m. In practise the actual amount is likely to be higher as significant elements of

the overall non pay budget cannot be cut, such as the costs of Looked after Children, care costs for older people and the ICT contract.

Secondly, an estimate is made of redundancy and early retirement cost arising from reducing staffing budgets and the number of employees. This assessment is more difficult as the costs are dependant on an individual employees pay, age and length of service with the Council. To assess these variables it is appropriate to use experience of redundancy and early retirement costs over the last 4 years and how these compare to the ongoing savings in pay budget which have been achieved. As detailed in the following table the average cost of redundancy and early retirement costs as a percentage of the ongoing savings in pay budgets is 78%. This equates to an average pay back period of approximately 9.4 months, which is well within the Council's maximum pay back for individual post decisions of 3.05 years.

	Pay Savings £'000	Redundancy and Early Retirement costs £'000	Redundancy and Early Retirement costs as percentage of pay savings
2010/11 to 2013/14	9,474	7,372	78%

On the basis of the above factors estimated redundancy and early retirement cost relating to the General Fund Budget for the next three years are £7.1m.

There is a risk the actual redundancy and early retirement costs over the next three years will be higher than this estimate owing to a combination of factors:

- a higher proportion than 56% of the overall savings over the next 3 years coming from pay budgets;
- the average cost of redundancy and early retirement costs as a percentage of the ongoing savings in pay budgets increasing above 78%(i.e. pay back period of 9.4 months) This risk reflects the ageing profile of the Council work force and early retirement costs which arise from making employees above 55 year old redundant;
- the total level of General Fund savings increasing above £16.2m as a result of higher actual grant cuts being implemented in 2014/15 and 2015/16 than currently anticipated. Based on the Local Government Finance Settlement 2014/15 and 2015/16 Technical Consultation recently issued by the Government this is a significant risk;
- the cost of redundancy and early retirements cost arising from cuts in specific grants regimes, which have not been factored into the above cost estimate. The major risk area for 2014/15 relates to the Early Intervention Grant cuts.

In practise the Council is likely to be affected to some extent by each of the above risks over the next three years; therefore it is difficult to assess the additional one-off costs which will arise from these risks. However, it would only take a relatively small change in a combination of these factors to increase forecast redundancy and early retirement costs above the initial estimate detailed in the previous paragraph. For example:

- if the one-off redundancy and early retirement costs increased to 100% of the pay savings (which would still provide a pay back period of 12 months) the one off costs would increase from £7.1m to £9.1m;
- if the total General Fund savings over the next three years increased by £2m this would increase one-off redundancy and early retirement costs from £7.1m to £7.9m;

In view of the above significant financial risks it is recommended that the existing redundancies and early retirement cost reserve of £8.465m should be retained. This one-off funding will enable the Council to continue to fund unavoidable redundancy and early retirement costs and continue to avoid the need for even higher cuts if the Council had not adopted a robust and forward looking strategy for funding these costs. It is also recommended that this position is reviewed as part of the 2015/16 budget process when the position on the above risks may be clearer and Members note the significant risk factors in this area.

It should also be noted that to enable the full savings in pay costs arising from compulsory redundancies to be taken into account when the annual budget is set this reserve will also need to fund temporary employment costs where the notice period extends beyond 31st March. This position reflects the timing of the Council decision in February 2014 on the approval of 2014/15 budget savings and the implications this has on notice periods for certain staff. Further work needs to be completed to assess the financial impact for 2014/15 and to determine if earlier decisions need to be made by Council in future years to reduce these costs.

- General Fund Reserve - £5.946m

This balance includes funding allocated to fund specific risks approved as part of the development of the 2014/15 MTFS and these amounts will be transferred to individual reserves during the current year, as part of the formal budget setting process. These issues cover funding allocated to manage the Business Rate risks (£0.9m), support for the 2014/15 budget (£0.680m) and to manage capital risks (£0.191m).

When account is taken of these commitments the net uncommitted General Fund Reserve is £4.175m. This amount equates to approximately 4% of net General Fund budget, which is within the previously recommended range of 3% to 5%. In view of the increased

financial risks facing the Council it is recommended that the level of the uncommitted General Fund reserve is appropriate and should be retained.

- Insurance Fund - £3.932m

This reserve is held to fund the cost of all insurance payments outside of policy excess claims. The value of outstanding claims is reviewed on an annual basis and the current reserve provides funding to meet the increased cost of settling claims as a result of a Court of Appeal hearing in 2012/13.

- Equal Pay Risk Reserve - £2.177m

Owing to the significant uncertainty of continuing Equal Pay risks the Council has previously earmarked two elements of funding for these risks. One element consisted of this reserve which it is recommended is maintained to fund these forecast liabilities. The other element related to the separate 'Equal Pay Provision' of £0.86m. As part of the 31st May 2013 MTFS report it was recommended this amount could be released.

As reported in previous years Equal Pay issues continue to evolve and new risks emerge as Court cases are settled in other Councils. Therefore, whilst the existing reserve should protect the Council against these one-off costs this cannot be guaranteed.

- Local Council Tax Support Reserve - £1.197m

This is earmarked to partly mitigate the impact of the Government cut in funding for Local Council Tax Support schemes. As part of the 2013/14 LCTS scheme approved by Council in January 2013 £660k of this reserve is committed to support the Local Council Tax Support Scheme from 2013/14 onwards. The remaining £537k is held as a contingency to manage demand lead risks and potential further cuts in Government funding for LCTS schemes.

As reported in the May 2013 MTFS update report additional funding will be added to this reserve in the current year to help to mitigate the Government grant cut and to support vulnerable Hartlepool households. However, as previously reported the availability of this funding does not provide a permanent funding solution to the grant cuts. Therefore, at some stage the Council will need to increase cuts in Local Council Tax support from 8.5% to 20%, which is the level of cuts implemented by the other Tees Valley Council in 2013/14. The actual cut may be higher depending on future Government funding decisions.

- Budget Support Fund 2014/15 to 2016/17 - £1.148m

As detailed in the August MTFS update report this amount arises from the refund of core Revenue Support grant previously top sliced to fund the national academies programme following a Court ruling. There will be

further one-off benefits in the current year and 2014/15 as the Council will not lose as much core funding to fund the continued national academies programme as initially anticipated in February 2013. It is anticipated these resources will total between £2.7m and £3.6m by 2014/15. As the higher figure is uncertain Members have committed £2.7m of these resources; £2.3m to support revenue budget over the next three year and £0.4m to support regeneration initiatives.

- Business Rates Risk Reserve - £1m

This reserve is earmarked to manage in-year shortfalls in Business Rates and this is the amount set aside at the 31st March 2013. As detailed in the recent MTFS update an additional contribution to this reserve of £0.9m will be made in the current year and this will provide a total reserve of £1.9m to manage this risk. This is the level of the 'safety net' level for Hartlepool in 2014/15 and the Council is required to manage shortfall up to this level from its own resources. The availability of this reserve will hopefully avoid the need to make in-year budget cuts if there is a reduction in the Business Rates paid by the Power Station.

4.8 Child and Adult Services Reserves

- 4.9 The total value of these reserves is £4.527m as detailed in Appendix B. Four reserves account for £3.247m (72%) of this total as follows:

- Early Intervention Grant (EIG) reserve £1.5m – which is committed to provide a longer lead time to manage the 20% EIG funding cut;
- Drug Action Team (DAT) Reserve £0.588m – allocated to fund ongoing commitments relating to Drug and Alcohol services;
- Look After Children Reserve £0.738m – allocated to meet increase pressure of Looked after Children;
- Older People Reserve £0.421m – allocated to meet increased cost pressures.

4.10 Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

- 4.11 The total value of these reserves is £0.884m as detailed in Appendix C. Five reserves account for £0.637m (72%) of this total as follows:

- Selective Licensing £0.177m – committed to deliver this scheme over 5 year and will be fully used in 2013/14 and 2014/15;
- Social Housing New Build £0.161m – ring fenced to fund future repair costs in accordance with the approved business case for this project;
- Engineering consultancy reserve £0.1m – earmarked to manage trading account income volatility;
- Fleet Reserve £0.1m – ring fence to fund future repairs and maintenance cost;
- Major Regeneration Projects Reserve £99,000 – as agreed by Members on 2nd August 2013 this amount will be transferred in to the 'Capital Risk

Reserve' which is earmarked to manage capital receipts risks, including the Jacksons Landing project.

4.12 Chief Executives Department

4.13 The total value of these reserves is £0.241m as detailed in Appendix D. Two reserves account for £0.117m (49%) of this total as follows:

- Finance IT Investments reserve £62,000 – earmarked to funded 'I World' changes associated with Welfare Refoms;
- Corporate Strategy ICT Systems Development Reserve £55,000 – earmarked to fund ICT enhancements attributable to the rationalisation of systems to achieve ongoing savings.

4.14 Outcome of Reserves Review

4.15 As outlined in section 2 a comprehensive review of reserves and the commitments/risks these reserves were earmarked to fund was completed last year. The funding released from this review and the one-off resources achieved from the 2012/13 managed budget underspend were earmarked to address new risks and commitments facing the Council as a result of continuing grant cuts and the significant changes to the Local Government funding system implemented in April 2013.

4.16 The latest review has identified those reserves where the initial risk has reduced and the reserve (or part of the reserve) is longer needed and can therefore be released. In total the amount which can be released is £0.631m as summarised below:

	Value of Reserves at 31.03.13 £'000	Value of reserves which can be released £'000
Corporate Reserves	28,076	313
Child and Adult Services	4,527	265
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	884	20
Chief Executive's Department	241	28
Education Services	200	5
Total	33,928	631

4.17 The MTFS update report on 2nd August suggested that the review of reserves would need to consider funding the impact of the national legal challenge against 374 authorities in England and Wales in respect of search fees paid to local authorities for property searches and the continuation of Ward Member budgets. At this stage no further progress has been made in relation to the national legal challenge, therefore it is not recommended that funding is set aside for this potential risk. This issue will need to be kept under review as funding may need to be provided at some stage.

4.18 In relation to Ward Member budgets Members need to determine if they wish to provide a further allocation of £5,000 per Member in 2014/15 at a total cost of £0.165m. Members are reminded that the Council meeting on 14th February 2013 it was resolved to:

- Approve Ward Member budgets of £5,000 per Member for 2013/14;
- Approve the proposal that any 2013/14 Ward Members underspend can be carried forward by individual Members to 2014/15;
- Approve an amendment to the original ward budget scheme, which had been established on the basis that any unspent monies would not be 'rolled over', to enable unspent allocations in 2012/13 and future years to be 'rolled over' for use by Member in the following year(s).

4.19 If Members determine they wish to continue to provide Ward Member budgets in 2014/15 it is recommended that this can be funded from the resources released from the reserves review. On this basis a total allocation of £0.165m would leave an uncommitted balance on the resources released from the reserves review of £0.466m.

4.20 As detailed in the quarterly financial management report submitted to the Committee on 23rd August 2013 it is also forecast that there will be a one-off financial benefit from the careful management of the current year budget of between £0.019m and £0.693m.

4.21 Therefore, when account is taken of the net resources released from the reserves review the Council potentially has a one-off uncommitted benefit of £0.485m to £1.159m. The higher figure is dependant on the achievement of forecast departmental budget underspends. In terms of developing a strategy for using this forecast one-off funding it is recommended that this is completed as part of the next phase of the development of the MTFS later in the year. This will enable the strategy to reflect the actual announcement of the 2014/15 grant settlement and confirmation of the indicative grant allocations for 2015/16. As detailed in section 2 of this report the actual grant cuts for 2014/15 and 2015/16 may be higher than the current MTFS forecast. The Local Government Association have highlighted that the consultation document published by the Government in July 2013 will result in additional funding cuts of £1 billion in 2015/16. The availability of this uncommitted one-off funding may be needed to temporarily mitigate the impact of higher grant cuts to provide a longer lead time to manage this position.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 It is recommended that Members:

- i) Note the report;
- ii) Determine if they wish to continue to provide Ward Member budgets of £5,000 per Member in 2014/15 at a total costs of £0.165m;

- iii) If recommendation (ii) is approved it is recommended that this cost is funded from the one-off resources identified from the reserves review of £0.631m, which will leave an uncommitted one-off benefit of £0.466m;
- iv) It is recommended that a strategy for using the net uncommitted reserves of £0.466m is developed as part of the overall MTFS and note that this amount may need to be allocated to offset higher grant cuts in 2014/15 or 2015/16 to provide a longer lead time to develop a permanent strategy.

6. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 To enable a strategy for using the one-off benefits from the reserves review to be developed as part of the MTFS.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/15 to 2016/17 report to Finance and Policy Committee 31st May 2013 and 2nd August 2013.

8. CONTACT OFFICER

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Corporate Reserves

Memo Created as part of 12/13 Outturn (included in Balance as at 1/4/13 £'000	Reserve	Balance as at 1st April 2013	Planned Use of Reserve - £000					Reason for/purpose of the Reserve	2012/13 Total Value of Reserve to be Released £'000	2012/13 Value of Reserve to be Retained £'000	Reason for Retention
			2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Total Planned Use of Reserves	Estimated Balance at 31/03/16				
	Strategic One Off Costs 1112 Redundancies	8,461	(2,400)	(3,300)	(2,761)	(8,461)	0	This reserve has been created to fund the estimated costs of redundancy /early retirement over the period of the MTFS and reflects experience of these costs over the last 4 financial years.		8,461	Committed to fund redundancy/early retirement costs over the period of the MTFS, in relation to both the General Fund and specific grant regimes where the specific grant cannot be used for this purpose.
	Strategic One Off Costs 1112 Council Capital Fund	650	(650)			(650)	0	This reserve is earmarked to fund Corporate Capital Fund commitments in 2013-14.		650	Committed to funding Corporate Capital Fund expenditure in 2013/14 as per the MTFS.
	Strategic One Off Costs 1112 Housing Market Renewal	291	(291)		0	(291)	0	This reserves covers the commitments in relation to Housing Market Renewal.		291	Committed to fund Housing Market Renewal costs as per the MTFS.
	Total	9,402	(3,341)	(3,300)	(2,761)	(9,402)	0			9,402	
(1,608)	General Fund	5,946	(191)	(1,540)	0	(1,731)	4,215	This balance includes funding allocated to fund specific risks approved as part of the development of the 2014/15 MTFS and these amounts will be transferred to individual reserves during the current year, as part of the formal budget setting process. These issues cover funding allocated to manage the Business Rate risks (£0.9m), support for the 2014/15 budget (£0.680m) and to manage capital risks (£0.191m). When account is taken of these commitments the net uncommitted General Fund reserve is £4.175m.		5,946	The net uncommitted General Fund reserve is £4.175m. This amount equates to approximately 4% of net General Fund budget, which is within the previously recommended range of 3% to 5%. In view of the increased financial risks facing the Council it is recommended that the level of the uncommitted General Fund reserve is appropriate and should be retained.
0	Insurance Fund	3,932	0	0	0	0	3,932	The Insurance Fund has been established to provide for all payments that fall within the policy excess claims. Most policies provided by the Council are subject to an excess.		3,932	A comprehensive review of this reserve was carried out in 2012/13 which reflected the court of appeal ruling which increased the cost of settling insurance claims. It is therefore prudent to retain the reserve at it's current level.
0	Strategic Risk Reserve	2,177	0	0	0	0	2,177	The risk reserve was set up to cover one-off equal pay costs.		2,177	Committed to fund Equal Pay risks identified in MTFS.
0	Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Scheme Reserve	1,197	(20)	(290)	(350)	(660)	537	This reserve will be used to support the cuts in Council Tax Benefits.		1,197	As part of the 2013/14 LCTS scheme approved by Council in January 2013 £660k of this reserve is committed to support the Local Council Tax Support Scheme from 2013/14 onwards. The remaining £537k is held as a contingency to manage demand lead risks and potential further cuts in Government funding for LCTS.
(1,148)	Budget Support Fund - 2014/15 - 2016/17	1,148	0	0	0	0	1,148	This reserve was set up from funding changes from the Councils core Revenue Support Grant and the linkages to the Education Support Grant. This was reported as part of the MTFS on 2/08/13.		1,148	Committed to support the budget from 2014/15 to 2016/17
(1,000)	Business Rates Risk Reserve	1,000	0	0	0	0	1,000	This reserve is earmarked to manage in-year shortfalls in Business Rates and this is the amount set aside at the 31 st March 2013. As detailed in the recent MTFS an additional contribution to this reserve of £0.9m will be made in the current year and this will provide a total reserve of £1.9m to manage this risk. This is the level of the 'safety net' level for Hartlepool in 2014/15 and the Council is required to manage shortfall up to this level from its own resources.		1,000	The availability of this reserve will avoid the need to make in-year budget cuts if there is a reduction in the Business Rates paid by the Power Station.
0	Support 12/13 Loss of Council Tax Freeze Grant	727	(348)	(379)		(727)	0	This reserve was created to mitigate the loss of the 2012/13 Council Tax Freeze Grant.		727	This reserve is committee in 2013/14 and 2014/15.
	Supporting Family Poverty	309	(160)	(149)		(309)	0	This Reserve was created to support Family Poverty Initiatives in the town. Members agreed this funding could be used to support the Local Council Tax Support Scheme.		309	Committed to be used to support the Local council Tax Support Scheme.
0	Future Project Investigation Costs	250	0	0	0	0	250	This reserve was originally held to investigate future benefits of projects which would have on-going revenue savings.	250	0	
(110)	Pension actuarial reserve	232	0	0	0	0	232	This reserve was created to manage pension costs over 3 year period of the current actuarial valuation, which cover the period up to 2014/15.		232	This reserve was created to manage the pension costs over a 3 year period of actuarial valuation.
(40)	Emergency Planning	212	0	0	0	0	212	Reserve held on behalf of 4 authorities for Emergency Planning and only a proportion belongs to Hartlepool.		212	Committed to fund Emergency Planning Projects.
(200)	School Attainment	200	(200)	0	0	(200)	0	Created to assist Secondary Schools in improving examination performance		200	To fund support to schools.
(200)	ICT Reserve	200	(200)			(200)	0	Created to fund potential one off costs relating the finalisation of the existing ICT contract.		200	Shown as committed in 2013/14. An update on the actual use of this reserve will be provided as soon as practical, although this is a complex contract and these issues will take time to finalise.
(105)	Members Ward Budgets	194	(194)			(194)	0	Used to fund ward issues approved by individual Members from their allocated annual budget.		194	Used to fund ward issues for Members and shown as all spent in 2013/14 for the propose of this review. However, the position will be reviewed at the year end in accordance with the Council decision on 14th February 2013 when it was resolved to: • Approve ward Member budgets of £5,000 per Member for 2013/14; • Approve the proposal that any 2013/14 Ward Members underspend can be carried forward by individual Members to 2014/15; • Approve an amendment to the original ward budget scheme, which had been established on the basis that any unspent monies would not be 'rolled over', to enable unspent allocations in 2012/13 and future years to be 'rolled over' for use by Member in the following year(s).
0	Carbon Reduction	165	0	0	0	0	165	The Carbon Reduction Commitment is a mandatory scheme aimed at improving energy efficiency and cutting emissions in large public and private sector organisations. This reserve is set aside to fund the payment of Carbon Allowances in 2013/14 and 2014/15		165	Currently anticipated to be committed over period of the MFTS, although the timing is uncertain. Potential changes in the CRC regime may mean these commitments may not arise and Members will be updated when more information is available.
0	Business Transformation Set Up Costs	165	(69)	(96)	0	(165)	0	Funds set aside for implementation costs associated with the 3 borough collaboration project which aimed to deliver ongoing savings over the period of the MTFS.		165	Balance of £96k to be utilised against project costs should they arise for projects to support the development and achievement of longer term savings for which there are no departmental budgets.
0	Building / Development Control Income Shortfall	140	(140)	0	0	(140)	0	This reserve was created to cover income shortfalls owing to the weakness in the economy.		140	Committed in 2013/14.
(107)	Property Reserve	107	(107)			(107)	0	This reserve was approved as part of the 2013/14 MTFS.		107	Committed in 2013/14.
(75)	ICT Contract	75	(75)	0	0	(75)	0	This Reserve is to cover the costs specialist IT and Legal advisors for the ICT procurement.		75	Committed in 2013/14, the use of specialist IT and Legal advisor has been a key component in the sucessful undertaking of the IT procurement and the acheivement of ongoing budget savings over the lifetime of the contract.
0	Works in Default Empty Homes	50	0	0	0	0	50	This reserve was created to fund works in Default Empty Homes.		50	Committed in 2013/14.
0	Training for Staff on Redeployment Register	49	0	(49)	0	(49)	0	This reserve was orginally allocoated to train staff on the redeployment regستير. The Finance and Policy Committee has now recommended that amount is earmarked to provide funding for Modern Apprentices.		49	Committed in 2014/15.
0	Concessionary Fare	38	(38)	0	0	(38)	0	This reserve covers the tri-annual cost of replacing concessionary fares passes.		38	Committed in 2013/14.
(37)	Vodafone	37	(37)			(37)	0	This reserve was created to support a one off strategic review/ development of the Councils stores/ purchasing System for use with Services Direct.		37	Committed in 2013/14.
0	Seaton Carew Community Centre	30	(5)	0	0	(5)	25	This reserve was created to provide time to keep the Community Centre open for a temporary period until alternative provision as part of the overall Masterplan for Seaton Carew. The full amount was not needed as costs have been funded from the overall departmental outturn.	25	5	The centre is due to close at the end of August 2013.
(20)	Public Enquiry	20	(20)			(20)	0			20	
0	Mayoral Referendum Reserve	18	0	0	0	0	18	To fund one off costs of holding a referendum.	18	0	
(21)	Salary Sacrifice	28	0	0	0	0	28	This reserve was created to capture NI and Pension Savings generated by the Salary Sacrifice for Cars scheme to fund future pensions liabilities		28	Needed to fund future pension liabilities.
0	LPSA Reward Grant	18	0	0	0	0	18	This fund was created to fund future years expenditure.	18	0	
0	NDC Fund	8	(8)	0	0	(8)	0	Reserve established from NDC under spend and will be transferred to the NDC Trust.		8	This funding can now be released to the NDC Trust.
0	Core Strategy Inquiry	2	0	0	0	0	2	To support the future costs of undertaking the Local Plan review which occurs every 3 to 5 years.	2	0	
	Total Departmental Reserves	28,076	(5,153)	(5,803)	(3,111)	(14,067)	14,009		313	27,763	

4.1 APPENDIX A

Memo Created as part of 12/13 Outturn (included in Balance as at 1/4/13 £'000	Reserve	Balance as at 1st April 2013	Planned Use of Reserve - £000					Reason for/purpose of the Reserve	2012/13 Total Value of Reserve to be Released £'000	2012/13 Value of Reserve to be Retained £'000	Reason for Retention
			2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Total Planned Use of Reserves	Estimated Balance at 31/03/16				
	0	Supporting People Reserve				0	68	Reserve created from Grant underspend and earmarked for potential clawback. To be used to fund transition arrangements following SDO reductions taking place during 2011/12.	68	0	
		Older People - SRR			421	421	0	Reserve created from Grant underspend and earmarked for potential clawback. To be used to fund transition arrangements following SDO reductions taking place during 2011/12.		421	Reserve to be deployed in 14/15 to support the management of continuing pressures in older people's services.
	0	Carers Funding from one-off PCT funds		40	40	80	40	Reserve created from One-Off funding received from PCT close to financial year end to deliver priorities for Carers support		120	Reserve to be used over three year period to fund additional carers personal budgets / short breaks.
	588	DAT				0	588	Reserve created from slippage around placements for individuals and specific scheme commitments.			588 Required to meet ongoing commitments relating to Drug & Alcohol services.
	0	Mill House	101			101	0	The reserve arose from a rates rebate following a review of the leisure centre rateable values in 2006/07.			101 Reserves is targeted for utilisation at MHLC in 13/14.
		Archaeology Projects	22		22		22	0 Reserve to be used for specific archaeology projects following SDO reductions.			22 This relates to service income carryover to allow project income to sustain the service.
		Archaeology - Monograph Series	1		1		1	0 Creation of reserve to ensure completion of project and ensure no loss of external funding for the overall project.			1 Retained for current publication.
		Tall Ships Reserve	87			87	0	This reserve has been set aside to support the residual costs of the Tall Ships event.			87 Closure of this account and payment of outstanding elements will be complete 13/14.
		Seaton CC 'Management'	108			0	108	Balance carried forward from previous years. Some of this fund pertains to Children's Services. However, the amount is still being determined by the overseeing board.			108 Reserve fund for Seaton Carew facilities in relation development plan
		C&F Local Safeguarding Board (Partnership Funding)	29			0	29	Ring-Fenced Reserve - This is Partnership Funding with other bodies so not all HBC funding; relates to underspends carried forward.			29 Partnership budget with contributions from other agencies. Budget pressure arisen due to requirement to have independent chair
		Think Family	123		91		91	32 2010/11 balance of grant funding to be carried forward into 2011/12 to assist with continuation of service following reductions in 2011/12 grant allocations as part of the Early Intervention Grant.			123 Reserve supporting pilot and delivery delivery of edge of care service and support foster care scheme to reduce numbers of children looked after.
		Raising Educational Achievement	44			0	44	Residual funding to ensure vulnerable young people are tracked and supported to remain in education.	44	0	
	65	C & F Care Matters	155			0	155	Contribution to the Safeguarding and Specialist Services for the development of Looked After Children in this volatile area.			155 Required to support service development of newly developed services for looked after children including supported accommodation.
		Child Poverty Local Duties	8		8		8	0 Allocation fund targeted family work.			8 Required to provide child home safety equipment for families
	0	C&F Looked After Children	738		500		500	238 Contribution to the Safeguarding and Specialist Services for the development of Looked After Children in this volatile area.			738 Reserve be retained to meet pressures of looked after children increasing with increasingly complex placement requirements, utilisation in 13/14 relates to implementation of new Children's home.
	0	C&F Donations	7			0	7	This Reserve has been created from the various grants and donations received to the LA to pay for various items and equipment for vulnerable children and children looked after.			7 The Reserve is used by Social Workers during the year to purchase equipment etc as required.
	0	EIG Commissioning	110		27		27	83 Specific reserves created to cover temporary commissioning officers to support implementation of early intervention strategy and prevent breaks in contracts.	83	27	
		EIG Interim Funding	70			0	70	Created to support overall Early Intervention Service.	70	0	
	1,240	EIG General	1,500		20		20	1,480 Reserve created to support longer term funding changes for Early Intervention Services			1,500 Reserve to be retained to support transition period owing to 20% cut in overall grant provision for Early Intervention Services.
	61	Youth Offending	227			0	227	Ring-Fenced as YOS is a Partnership Budget. Created from planned underspends in previous years to fund YOS initiatives.			227 Partnership budget with contributions from other agencies. High level of uncertainty of future funding arrangements for service due to partners indicating they intend to reduce contribution and revised grant funding formula for 2013/14
1,954 TOTAL CHILD & ADULT (EXC EDUCATION)			4,527	188	709	461	1,358	3,169	265 4,262		

Education Services

4.1 APPENDIX B (PART 2)

Memo			Planned Use of Reserve - £000					Reason for/purpose of the Reserve	2012/13 Total Value of Reserve to be Released £'000	2012/13 Value of Reserve to be Retained £'000	Reason for Retention
Created as part of 12/13 Outturn (included in Balance as at 1/4/13 £'000)	Reserve	Balance as at 1st April 2013	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Total Planned Use of Reserves	Estimated Balance at 31/03/16				
0	Educational Psychologists	150	(106)	(44)	0	(150)	0	Reserve created to ensure sustainability of service in future years as schools convert to Academy	0	150	Reserve created to ensure sustainability of service in future years as schools convert to Academy
0	Workforce Development	25	(25)	0	0	(25)	0	This is income received from schools and other LA's towards the Newly Qualified Teacher Development Programme	0	25	NQT provision now provided through Teaching Schools; may be required to be paid to Teaching Schools as contribution towards provision
0	School Improvement	20	(20)	0	0	(20)	0	Reserve created to enhance and develop school improvement in 2013/14	0	20	Reserve created to enhance and develop school improvement in 2013/14
0	Performance Data - YOS	5	0	0	0	0	5	2011/12 approved to fund temporary post	5	0	Reserve to be offered for savings as not required
0	TOTAL CHILD EDUCATION SERVICES	200	(151)	(44)	0	(195)	5		5	195	

Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

4.1 APPENDIX C

Memo Created as part of 12/13 Outturn (included in Balance as at 1/4/13 £'000	Reserve	Balance as at 1st April 2013	Planned Use of Reserve - £000					Reason for/purpose of the Reserve	2012/13 Total Value of Reserve to be Released £'000	2012/13 Value of Reserve to be Retained £'000	Reason for Retention
			2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Total Planned Use of Reserves	Estimated Balance at 31/03/16				
0	Selective Licensing	177	93	84		177	0	Income generated from fees required to fund the scheme over a 5 year period.		177	Committed to deliver the scheme over the 5 years. Reserve funds Salary costs in 13/14 & 14/15.
125	Social Housing New Build	161	0	0	0	0	161	Ring-fenced reserve created from rental income which represents a contribution to the Major Repairs Fund. This funding is set aside to fund repairs over the lifetime of the housing stock.		161	Ring fenced to fund future repair costs in accordance with the approved business case for this project.
0	Engineering Consultancy Reserve	100	0	0	100	100	0	Reserve created to manage Trading Activities over more than one year. This is earmarked to fund potential income shortfalls in future years or potential bad debts in this area.		100	Risk on Trading Activities will not be covered and will impact on the Revenue position without allowing time to manage the available resources and activity levels.
0	Fleet Reserve	100	30	30	40	100	0	Ring Reserve created from a surplus on the Fleet account in 11/12. This is needed to cover future repairs and maintenance costs over the whole life of the fleet so that annual charges to clients can remain static over the lifetime of the vehicle		100	Surplus generated is merely a timing issue and will be needed to cover future costs associated with an older fleet.
0	Major Regen Projects	99	0	0	0	0	99	Major Regeneration schemes - Originally earmarked for Church Square but now earmarked to manage Strategic Capital Risks as per the report to F & P Committee 2.8.13.		99	Earmarked to fund strategic capital risks.
0	Winter Maintenance	50	50	0	0	50	0	Funding to cover additional costs incurred during a bad Winter. Ongoing revenue budget is sufficient to cover normal weather conditions and this reserve provides a contingency for additional works which may be required.		50	No other funding available to cover this cost and appropriate to provide a contingency for unpredictable factors.
0	Passenger Transport Reserve	45	0	45	0	45	0	Reserve created to manage the risk of income shortfalls in future years in a developing trading area of private hire.		45	This is a new service area which is still in development stage and the reserve is needed to manage the service over more than one year.
0	Plant Replacement Reserve	40	0	40	0	40	0	Reserve created to fund the costs associated with Plant Equipment over more than one year e.g. repairs and maintenance or replacement costs.		40	Without this reserve there will not be sufficient funding to replace the plant on a rolling programme over years.
25	Bikeability - Childhood Injuries	25	25	0	0	25	0	Contribution received to contribute towards projects underway		25	Committed.
0	Planning Appeals (Village Greens Hearings etc.)	20	0	0	0	0	20	Reserve earmarked to fund various risks incl the cost of village green hearings in 13/14.	20	0	No other funding available to cover these one-off costs and if they occur they will now be reported as part of the Departments Outturn.
0	Health & Safety Training	20	20	0	0	20	0	Legislative requirements for operational staff to be trained to HSE set standard:		20	Committed - no other funding available.
0	Community Grants Pool	17	17	0	0	17	0	Reserve created year on year from the underspend on the Community Grants Pool budget as this expenditure is 'ring-fenced' by Members for contributing towards the community.		17	It is current practice to carry over unspent Community pool funds into the next financial year. Grant allocations require grants Committee approval.
0	Speed Cameras	16	16		0	16	0	Relates to the funding ring fenced for the Tees Valley Camera Partnership		16	Ring fenced Funding.
9	Right to Challenge	9	9	0	0	9	0	Funding allocated late in 12/13 to fund the costs associated with the additional legislative requirements. Work ongoing in 13/14.		9	Small contribution to existing work and no other funding is available.
5	Right to Bid	5	5	0	0	5	0	Funding allocated late in 12/13 to fund the costs associated with the additional legislative requirements. Work ongoing in 13/14.		5	Small contribution to existing work and no other funding is available.
164	TOTAL REGENERATION & NEIGHBOURHOODS	884	265	199	140	604	280		20	864	

Memo	Reserve	Balance as at 1st April 2013	Planned Use of Reserve - £000					Reason for/purpose of the Reserve	2013/14 Total Value of Reserve to be Released £'000	2013/14 Value of Reserve to be Retained £'000	Reason for Retention
			2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Total Planned Use of Reserves	Estimated Balance at 31/03/16				
Created as part of 12/13 Outturn (included in Balance as at 1/4/13 £'000)											
0	Finance - IT Investment	62	62	0	0	62	0	Created to fund a number of IT projects.	0	62	To fund changes to the I World system associated with the Welfare Reforms. Also to fund upgrades to the corporate payment and income management systems, including linkages to school meals payments.
0	Corporate Strategy - ICT System Development	55	55	0	0	55	0	Created to fund temporary development resources for enhancements of current ICT systems such as e-bookings and EDRMS and costs attributable to the rationalisation of systems to achieve savings from the provision of ICT.	0	55	To fund temporary development resources for enhancements of current ICT systems such as e-bookings and EDRMS and costs attributable to the rationalisation of systems to achieve savings from the provision of ICT.
0	Finance - Accountancy Section	20	0	0	0	0	20	Created to fund temporary appointments to cover maternity leaves during 2013-14, which have subsequently been managed through savings arising from vacancies over the same period.	20	0	
0	People Framework Development	18	18	0	0	18	0	Created to enable department to manage budget over more than one year.	0	18	Provision for the implementation of the workforce strategy for which there is no other budget
0	Contact Centre	15	15	0	0	15	0	Created to enable department to manage budget over more than one year.	0	15	Identified for staff qualification training to ensure that they meet the revised essential criteria for posts.
0	Registrars	15	15	0	0	15	0	Created for redecoration of new marriage/ceremonies room at the Borough Hall and some software integrations/upgrades.	0	15	To be used for redecoration of marriage room and replacement software for certificate production/online certificate requests and contribution to corporate booking system
0	Corporate Strategy - Working from Home Surplus	13	13	0	0	13	0	Created to manage the costs of home working key fobs between financial years	0	13	To manage the costs of home working key fobs between financial years.
0	Corporate Strategy - Performance Management	13	0	6	7	13	0	Created to enable department to manage budget over more than one year.	0	13	To support related costs for performance management e.g. covalent charges.
10	Hartlepool Partnership	10	10	0	0	10	0	To support the Household Survey costs due in 2013/14.	0	10	To support the Household Survey costs due in 2013/14.
0	Corporate Strategy - Enhancing Council Profile	9	4	0	0	4	5	Created to fund temporary costs in development and establishing arrangements for enhancing and maintaining the Councils profile including social networking, public relations and other associated elements.	5	4	To fund temporary costs in development and establishing arrangements for enhancing and maintaining the Councils profile including social networking, public relations and other associated elements.
0	Corporate Strategy - Corporate Consultation	8	8	0	0	8	0	Created to enable department to manage budget over more than one year.	0	8	To support the viewpoint panel, online survey system costs .
0	Resource Investment - HR	3	0	0	0	0	3	Created to enable department to manage budget over more than one year	3	0	
10	TOTAL Chief Exec.	241	200	6	7	213	28		28	213	

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

19 September 2013



Report of: Corporate Management Team

Subject: MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS)
2014/15 SAVINGS PROPOSAL - INITIAL BUDGET
CONSULTATIONS

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Budget and Policy Framework decision.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To consider the views / comments received from each of the individual Policy Committees in relation to the initial 2014/15 savings proposals.

2.2 To ask that the views / comments expressed by the Policy Committees be fed back to the Corporate Management Team to assist in the preparation of further detailed reports in relation to the initial 2014/15 savings proposals, for consideration by the Policy Committees in November 2013.

3. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF COUNCILS FINANCIAL POSITION

3.1 Detailed budget reports were submitted to the Finance and Policy Committee on 31st May 2013 and 2nd August 2013 to enable Members to begin to develop detailed budget proposals for 2014/15. These proposals will be referred to full Council in February 2014 to enable the 2014/15 Budget and Council Tax to be set.

3.2 The report to the Finance and Policy Committee on 2nd August 2013 provided an update on the latest position and covered the following areas:

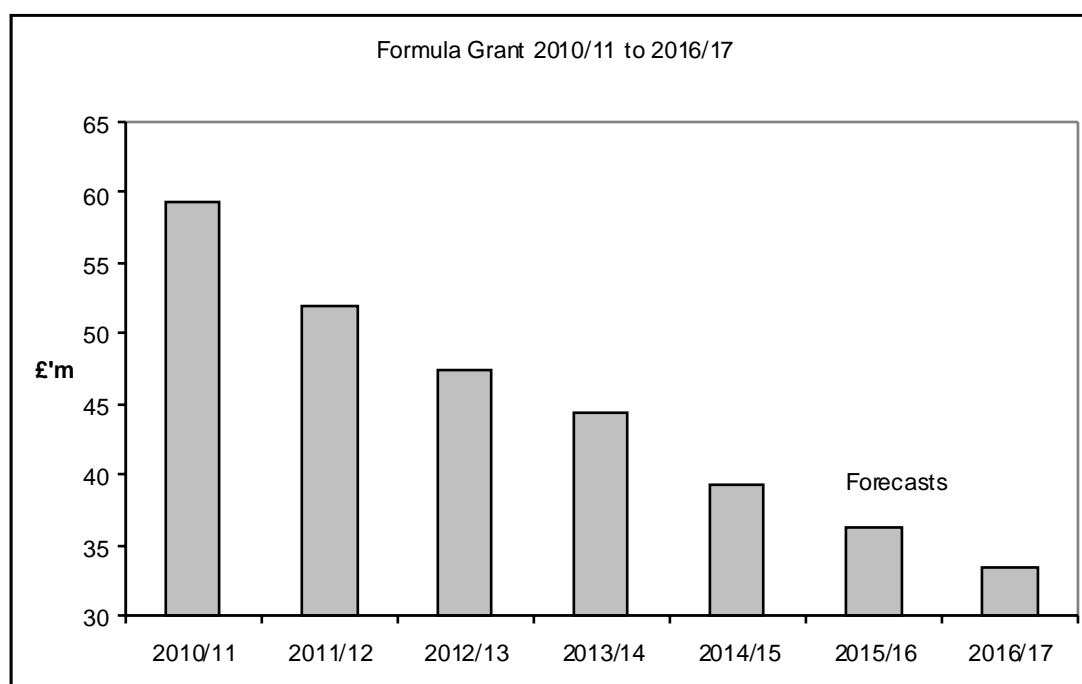
- Background and Government Spending Plans 2014/15 Onwards;
- One-off resources available to manage risks and / or support Council priorities;
- General Fund Revenue Budget 2014/15 to 2016/17;
- Strategy for bridging 2014/15 budget deficit;
- Council Tax 2014/15 to 2016/17;
- Impact of 2014/15 budget proposals on 2015/16 and 2016/17 forecast deficits;
- Review of Reserves;
- Reductions in other grant funding;

- Strategy for managing capital risks; and
- Conclusion and recommendations.

3.3 In summary the August MTFS provided a comprehensive assessment of the financial challenges and risks facing the Council over the 4 years commencing 2013/14. In summary the report advised Members that the Council is facing the most challenging financial position since becoming a Unitary Authority in 1996, which reflects:

- The scale of Government cuts in core General Fund grants confirmed for 2013/14 and 2014/15. It is anticipated these cuts will continue in the following two years. The June 2013 Spending Review announcement confirmed the overall level of cuts for 2015/16. The previously forecast grant cuts are summarised below. It should be noted the 2015/16 and 2016/17 forecast will be updated when more information on the impact of the June Spending Review announcement, the July Local Government Finance Settlement 2014/15 and 2015/16, and introduction of the Integration Transformation Fund on individual Councils is known.

Actual Formula Grant allocation 2010/11 to 2013/14 and forecasts 2014/15 to 2016/17



- The abolition of the national Council Tax Benefit system and the transfer of financial responsibility for Council Tax Support to individual Councils, with a 10% national funding cut. The actual cut for Hartlepool was around 13% when account is taken of actual support previously provided under the former national Council Tax Benefit scheme. There is a risk further grant cuts are made in this area in future years if the Government determines to implement further cuts in the Welfare Budget. In addition, the Government's decision to mainstream this grant and include it within the core revenue grant from 2014/15 increases financial risk for areas serving

more deprived communities, including Hartlepool, as reductions in core revenue grant have historically had a disproportionate impact on these areas;

- The implementation of the Business Rates Retention system, which will transfer significant financial risks to individual Councils. Under the new system a 'safety net' system will operate which will require individual Councils to fund the first 7.5% of in-year reductions in business rates from their own resources. Additional Government support will only be paid for shortfalls above this threshold. For Hartlepool this equates to an annual risk of around **£1.9 million** in 2014/15 and future years. This is a significant risk for Hartlepool owing to the potential impact of in-year reductions in the business rates paid by the Power Station, which contributes **17%** of the total Business Rates collected by the Council;
- Individual Councils face potential costs relating to 50% of back-dated Business Rates appeals. The Government has set aside some funding for this issue nationally, although it is not yet clear if this will be sufficient at an individual authority level. This is also a significant risk for the Council as the Power Station has a number of outstanding appeals and further information is provided later in the report;

- 3.4 In relation to the 2014/15 budget the report advised Members that the Council faces a gross budget deficit of **£8.524m**. The gross budget deficit can be reduced to **£4.594m** without impacting on services through a combination of permanent budget savings and one-off factors as summarised below:

Revised budget deficit 2014/15

	£'000	£'000
Budget Deficit reported February 2013		8,524
Public Health Funding		(500)
Full Year ICT saving (includes potential rental income)		(500)
Initial Changes in Planning assumptions (includes budget reductions from continuing 1% public sector pay gap, saving from senior management restructure, lower energy increases and lower Employers Pension contributions)		(1,797)
Net Budget Gap 2014/15		5,727
One-off funding (funded from uncommitted one-off resources and will be sustainable at this level for 3 years. Thereafter, this will need to be replaced by identifying additional savings of £1m in 2017/18).	(1,000)	
Use of residual balance of 'Savings implementation reserve'	(133)	
Total use of one-off funding		(1,133)
Permanent budget cuts to be implemented 2014/15		4,594

- 3.5 The August MTFS report also detailed departmental savings proposals with a total value of **£4.376m**. These detailed proposals have now been considered by the detailed Policy Committee and feedback is provided in section 4.
- 3.6 Assuming the proposed departmental savings are implemented there is a net unfunded deficit for 2014/15 of **£0.218m**. At this stage it is anticipated that this amount can be bridged from the 2014/15 New Homes Bonus which will be payable for 7 years commencing 2014/15. This income is not yet guaranteed and will depend on the share of the national New Homes Bonus funding the Council receives, although at this stage this is a reasonable planning assumption. It should be noted that this proposal will mean that in 2014/15 total support for the core revenue budget from the New Homes Bonus will be £1.4m.
- 3.7 As reported previously the New Homes Bonus is funded by top slicing the national funding for Local Authorities. Whilst it is forecast the Council will receive a total New Homes Bonus payment of £1.4m in 2014/15, this needs to be seen in the context of the permanent cut in the Council's core grant which in 2014/15 is forecast to be £20m (34%) less than it was in 2010/11.
- 3.8 Assuming Members approve the proposals detailed in the previous paragraphs for addressing the 2014/15 budget deficit the Council will still face significant budget deficits in 2015/16 and 2016/17. Over the period of the current MTFS it is forecast that the Council will have to make permanent budget cuts of around **£16.2m**, as follows:
- 2014/15 net deficit £4.6m;
 - 2015/16 revised deficit £6.3m;
 - 2016/17 revised deficit £5.3m.
 - Total forecast deficit £16.2m
- 3.9 The revised deficit is less than the initial forecast prepared in February 2013 of £19.4m and the reduction reflects the benefits of the revised planning assumptions and available one-off resources to support the budget over the next three years. The use of the one-off resources over the next three years is not a permanent solution and defers an additional budget deficit of £1m until 2017/18.

4. POLICY COMMITTEES INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) PROPOSALS FOR 2014/2015 SPECIFIC ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED BY THIS COMMITTEE

- 4.1 The Finance and Policy Committee, at its meeting on the 2 August 2013, considered details of proposed departmental budget savings and budget pressures for 2014/15. At this meeting it was determined to refer these proposals to the relevant Policy Committees for consideration, with responses to be fed back to the Finance and Policy Committee on the 19 September 2013.

- 4.2 In accordance with the agreed process, details of proposed savings and pressures for 2014/15 were presented to the Policy Committees in August / September 2013. In considering the proposals relevant to each respective service area, the views / comments made by the Policy Committees are outlined below:-

Finance and Policy Committee (23 August 2013)

- 4.3 The Finance and Policy Committee considered the 2014/15 proposed savings and budget pressures. Members commented on the following proposed savings:-

Community Pool

Members were supportive of an additional report coming back to the Finance and Policy Committee to look at the criteria for the Community Pool.

Security Services

Clarification was sought in relation to the proposed saving regarding Security Services and whether the review of provision included the Civic Centre. It was confirmed that it was security in other buildings, not the Civic Centre.

Regeneration Services Committee (29 August 2013)

- 4.4 In relation to the 2014/15 savings proposals, the Regeneration Services Committee made the following comments:

Library Service

Members questioned whether the review of the library service included the mobile library service. It was confirmed that it did and that a further report would be brought back to the Committee following the review.

Neighbourhood Services Committee (2 September 2013)

- 4.5 The Neighbourhood Services Committee made the following comments regarding the 2014/15 savings proposals:-

School Crossing Patrol Services

Members questioned whether the proposed savings from the School Crossing Patrol services would result in a reduction of jobs. It was confirmed that there would be no reduction of jobs and the proposed saving would be achieved through a reconfiguration of the services.

Reduction of Horticultural Features

The Committee requested clarification on the reduction of horticultural features and what it entailed. It was explained that this proposed saving would be achieved by reducing labour intensive areas / plots and replacing

with lower maintenance alternatives, for example an annual flower bed may be replaced with shrubs or trees.

Members were supportive of people / communities adopting areas / plots, where possible, to help with the maintenance.

Children's Services Committee (3 September 2013)

- 4.6 The Children's Services Committee expressed its support for the proposed savings and budget pressures, outlined in the report, with the exception of the £125,000 proposal relating to the 'review school transport including denominational transport provision and consideration of alternative service delivery arrangements'.
- 4.7 The Committee discussed in detail the proposal with particular emphasis on issues relation to the provision of denominational transport. Issues were discussed in relation to previous savings proposals in relation to the provision of denominational transport, the consultation exercise undertaken and any potential consultation.
- 4.8 Whilst Members acknowledged the need for budgetary savings, concerns were expressed regarding the proposal for a further review of school transport arrangements. In recognition of the sensitivity, and complexity, of the issue the Committee requested a further report detailing the options available to Members for the delivery of school transport, including denomination transport provision. This report will be considered prior to consideration of detailed budget savings and pressures by the Committee in November, as part of the MTFS consultation process.
- 4.8 In addition to the views expressed in 4.8 above, the Committee at its meeting on the 30 July 2013 agreed that recommendations from the Investigation into the 'Closure of Youth Centres and Children's Centres' carried out by the Young People's Representatives would be forwarded to the Finance and Policy Committee to inform future decision making in relation to building closures. On this basis, the recommendations / action plan relating to the investigation are attached as **Appendix A** for the Committee's attention.

Adult Services Committee (9 September 2013)

- 4.9 Savings Proposals:- Statutory notice for the circulation of this report was such that this Committee's comments were not available for inclusion in this report. Details will be circulated under separate cover prior to the meeting.
- 4.10 The Finance and Policy Committee is asked to note the views / comments expressed by the Policy Committees and it is recommended that they be referred to the Corporate Management Team for consideration in the preparation of further detailed reports in relation to the initial 2014/15 savings proposals. The structure and format of these reports will follow the template adopted for 2013/14 (copy attached at **Appendix B**), which includes key elements of the social return on investment process.

- 4.11 These reports will be presented to the Policy Committees, at their November 2013 meetings, to assist in the development of detailed savings proposals for consideration by the Finance and Policy Committee on the 29 November 2013. The dates of these meetings are as follows:-

Adult Services Committee - 4 November 2013
 Children's Services Committee - 5 November 2013
 Finance and Policy Committee - 8 November 2013
 Neighbourhood Services Committee - 11 November 2013
 Regeneration Services Committee - 12 November 2013

5. NEXT STAGE OF THE PROCESS

- 5.1 To assist the Committee, a summary of the planned MTFS consultation process from this point onwards is outlined below.

Finance and Policy Committee (29 November 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consideration and potential approval of detailed savings proposals developed by the individual Policy Committees - Approval of draft detailed budget and policy proposals for further consultation
Neighbourhood Forums - (11 December 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budget Face the Public Sessions
Finance and Policy Committee (20 December 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact of the Local Government Settlement
Finance and Policy Committee (31 January 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consideration of consultation feedback and approval of finalised budget proposals for referral to Council
Council (6 February 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consideration and approval of budget and policy proposals

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 That the Finance and Policy Committee notes and approves the views / comments expressed by each of the individual Policy Committees, outlined in Section 4 of the report;

- 6.2 That the responses received from the Policy Committees be fed back to the Corporate Management Team to assist in the preparation of more detailed reports in relation to savings proposals for 2014/15, for further consideration by the Policy Committees in November 2013; and
- 6.3 That the Committee notes and approves the MTFS consultation process outlined in Section 5 of the report.

7. CONTACT OFFICER

Chris Little
Chief Finance Officer
01429 523003
Chris.little@hartlepool.gov.uk

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN**NAME OF FORUM:** Young People's Representative of Children's Services Scrutiny Forum**NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY:** Closure of Youth Centres and Children's Centres

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION ⁺	FINANCIAL / OTHER IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	COMPLETION DATE*
(a) The impact of closure of buildings on the community is taken into consideration before any decisions are made.	Risk and impact assessment to be completed on environmental social and economic consequences of closure of any buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost to secure • Cost to demolish • Loss of income on closure • Extra costs of closure • Income / capital receipt from alternative use / sale to contribute to MTFS 	Albert Williams Colin Bolton Dale Clarke Dale Clarke	September 2013
(b) The use of all other buildings such as schools, leisure centres, museums etc. are considered for their ability to offer multi-use community space (as seen in the Seaton Carew example).	An assessment of alternative community multi use venues for service provision to be explored as proposals are developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any "net" cost of re-location • Potential "income" of relocation 	Beth Storey John Robinson	September 2013

(c) The total costs of running and staffing centres is compared to the cost of renting space.	A financial appraisal for each location / service change option to be undertaken. Condition and energy performance to be assessed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Savings in any closures to exceed any cost of revised service provision 	Jeanette Willis	September 2013
(d) Income generation for existing buildings is considered.	Identify and appraise potential income opportunities from service reviews options. A financial appraisal is undertaken for opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximise income opportunities and risk of non-achievement 	Beth Storey John Robinson	September 2013
(e) Transport links if buildings are reduced are taken in to account.	Undertake transport surveys on options for relocating services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost implications for users and staff Provision of transport needs 	Beth Storey John Robinson	September 2013
(f) School use capacity is explored if buildings are closed.	Approach neighbouring / linked schools and colleges for potential transfer / use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income / capital receipt potential contributions to MTFS 	Dale Clarke	September 2013
(g) Existing buildings (children's centres and youth centres) are used and or adapted to meet both service users needs.	Assess buildings against condition and suitability priorities for users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unbudgeted costs for improvement / upgrades Risk of investment in buildings not fit-for-purpose 	Colin Bolton Colin Bolton	September 2013
(h) That a review is undertaken of the way the 'youth offer' is communicated in Hartlepool, to enable young people to easily identify and attend the clubs,	Undertake review of the way the 'Youth Offer' is currently communicated in Hartlepool through Young Inspectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs to secure improved communication (i.e website development). 	Mark Smith	September 2013

activities and services that are available.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risks associated with e-network/mobile media if this is identified as a suitable communication tool.		
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<p style="text-align: center;">XX Committee</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DATE</p>
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Report of: Author (lower case)(14)

Subject: SAVINGS PROGRAMME 2014/15 – (INSERT TITLE)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to identify proposals for the delivery of savings in respect of the ***** service for consideration as part of the 2014/15 budget process.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 As part of the 2014/15 Savings Programme, a number of service areas were identified where potential savings could be made. As part of the process for the budget for 2014/15 it has been agreed that individual Policy Committees will consider these savings proposals prior to consideration by Finance and Policy Committee and then Council.
- 2.2 Details are provided in this report in relation to the:-
- i) Proposals identified to make the savings;
 - ii) Risks associated with the proposed savings; and
 - iii) Financial considerations taken into account in developing the proposals.
- 2.3 In further developing the information provided to Members to assist them in consideration of budget proposals, experience gained through the implementation of a Social Return on Investment (SROI) process by the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum is to be utilised. Key to the SROI process was the provision of additional information in relation to the aim and scope of the service, its service users and engagement, inputs, outputs and outcomes. On this basis, information in relation to the ***** service is also provided below.
- 2.4 *This section also to include information:-*

AIM - Background to the service under consideration, what is its purpose (what it provides, what it hopes to achieve, areas of the town it covers etc).

SCOPE - the scope of the bundle.

SERVICE USERS - Identify the key stakeholders in the service (e.g. town wide available to all households or mainly used by adults aged 18-25 etc).

ENGAGEMENT - Details of how the department undertakes engagement with service users to gather feedback on their experience of a service, how often this is undertaken and how the results are utilised.

INPUTS - The cost to the Council of providing the service in its current form.

OUTPUTS - A quantitative summary of the activity described in the aim of the service.

OUTCOMES – What are the outcomes obtained as the result of the output of the service

3. PROPOSALS

3.1 Describe the proposals being made.

And as part of this

IMPACT - The potential impact of the budget proposals on the future of service provision, consideration of how this will affect service users and details of any alternative services users may be able to access (also include services available from external providers

SAVINGS TARGET - the details of the savings target for the review.
*An Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix *.*

4. OPTIONS ANALYSIS

4.1 This section to include:-

- *other options discounted and the reasons why,*
- *explain why the recommended options have been determined as the most efficient and effective option.*

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are a number of risks implicit in the delivery of any package of savings and it is important to recognise these as part of any decision making. A summary of the risks considered as part of the proposals has been identified below:

- 5.2 *This section to describe the key risks to the Council arising from the review and the arrangements in place to mitigate these.*

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 It has been highlighted in previous reports that failure to take savings identified as part of the Savings Programme will only mean the need to make alternative unplanned cuts and redundancies elsewhere in the Authority to balance next year's budget.

This section to also include a statement regarding the sustainability of the new arrangements.

The proposals deliver the following proposed savings:-

Service	Proposed Savings
Element 1	£
Element 2	£
Element 3	£
Element 4	£
Total Proposed Savings	£

This section should also include an assessment of the potential costs of delivering the savings e.g. redundancy and other costs and relate to the section below on staffing implications

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That Members of the Committee note the content and formulate a response to be presented to Finance and Policy Committee on 29th November 2013.

Contact Officer:- [name] – [job title]
[department] – [section]
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 xxxxxx
Email: xx.xx@hartlepool.gov.uk

(To be amended as appropriate)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was used in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) Example.....Minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 July 2006.

The Adult Services Committee noted the challenge facing the authority in the continued provision of services with reducing resources, and acknowledged the difficult decisions that would need to be taken. The Committee noted the proposed savings and budget pressures outlined in the report and, pending receipt of a more detailed report in November, made the following comments:-

- (i) Adult Social Care (Carers Services) – The Committee noted concerns raised by Healthwatch representatives in relation to the potential impact of proposed savings from Carers Services and welcomed indications from the Assistant Director that with the provision of funding from the CCG the savings could be made without any impact on current services for the next three years.
- (ii) Services Across Adult Social Care – The Committee emphasised the importance of the continued provision of services that assisted people to remain in their own homes and welcomed assurances that adult social leads and the CCG remained committed to reablement services, with funding supporting these services coming from NHS funding for social care and the reablement funding stream. Provision of support to enable people to stay healthy and independent in their own homes remains a key priority across health and social care.
- (iii) Day Services – Members briefly discussed the proposed savings in relation to day services for older people and potentially increasing social isolation but were reassured by the Assistant Director that replacement services would be focused on supporting people to access resources in their communities as well as providing building based services for those that require this type of support. Whilst a view could not be expressed until more detail was available, Members noted with interest that adults with mental health needs would be able to continue accessing day opportunity services through personal budgets.
- (iv) Future information – The Committee supported a request from Healthwatch representatives that the more detailed report on the proposals in November should include details of:
 - How the various funding streams available for the provision of adult social care support these service areas;
 - How cuts impact on core strategic objectives; and
 - How front line services would be affected.

The Committee welcomed indications that the report to be submitted in November would include these details, alongside an indication of staffing implications and the results of an Equality Impact Assessment.

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

19th September 2013



Report of: Director of Public Health

Subject: PROCUREMENT OF SPECIALIST DRUG AND ALCOHOL PRESCRIBING SERVICE

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Key Decision – Test (i) and (ii) applies – Forward Plan Reference PH/01.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Committee to procure a specialist drug and alcohol prescribing service.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Since 1st April 2013 the Local Authority assumed responsibility for commissioning public health services. Included in this, is the commissioning of a specialist prescribing service for people who have substance misuse issues relating to the use of illicit drugs and excessive alcohol use.
- 3.2 The current contract for this service is a primary care contract incorporating a GP practice as well as the specialist drug and alcohol prescribing service under the Alternative Provider of Medical Services (APMS) and this contract will terminate on the 1st April 2014. Since the 1st April 2013, the management of the current contract is undertaken by NHS England as the current provider of this service is a primary care service provider. This was as a result of the statutory transfer of NHS contracts to receiver organizations required by the Health and Social Care Act 2012.
- 3.3 Given that the existing contract ends on the 1st April 2014, the Local Authority needs to commission a drug and alcohol specialist prescribing service, so a procurement exercise for a new provider must begin by the end of September 2013.

4. DRUG AND ALCOHOL SPECIALIST PRESCRIBING SERVICE

- 4.1 The key aims of the service to be procured are:

- reduce the present number of those dependant on substances
- mitigate substance misuse related harm, including drug or alcohol related death
- address blood borne disease
- safeguard the family and wider community
- stop the sharing of injecting equipment and provide current injecting drug users with clean injecting equipment
- encourage users to safely discard injecting equipment by actively promoting returns
- reduce the transmission of HIV, hepatitis and other infectious diseases through provision of quality information, advice and support.
- provide current injecting drug users with advice and information on harm reduction techniques and interventions
- work with injecting and non-injecting drug users to reduce injecting to non-injecting methods of use and reduce illicit drug use
- engage with the community and other Partnership agencies with regard to positive promotion of needle exchanges, harm minimization approaches and community safety issues
- deliver associated health risk brief interventions including smoking cessation, healthy eating, oral health etc.

- 4.2 The Service will be available for people who are ordinarily residents of the Borough of Hartlepool, are adults over the age of 18, with a wide range of substance misuse dependencies, including all illicit drugs, alcohol, and over the counter and prescribed addictive substances. A Think Family model will need to be adopted in supporting the children and families of substance misusers and robust transitional arrangements should be in place for any transfers from the Young People Substance Misuse Service.
- 4.3 The Service will provide an integrated response to drug and alcohol addiction in line with the Governments Drug Strategy, Models of Care, NICE and UK guidelines on clinical management, and must focus on the evolving Recovery and Reintegration approach and best practice. This will necessitate working within an integrated treatment model to agreed local protocols and referral structures.
- 4.4 The Service will be required to work with and ensure effective liaison and joint case working with other agencies contributing to the recovery plan particularly when addressing the needs of specific vulnerable groups e.g. women, children, offenders and dependent drinkers.
- 4.5 The Service will be required to support approximately 1,000 substance misusers e.g. in the region of 700 drug service users and 300 alcohol service users to stabilize, reduce and recover from drug and/or alcohol addiction.
- 4.6 The service will provide harm reduction and health promotion input and will be responsible for proactive Hepatitis B immunization and Hepatitis C testing and treatment. The Service will need to provide a range of flexible initiatives

and programmes as appropriate to address local need and utilize the widest range of treatment facilities, and community venues to maximize contact and access to service users and families. Strong links are required to community needle exchange service.

4.7 The Service will be required to work with and ensure effective referral, liaison and joint working with other providers including Pharmacists and prescribing services, as appropriate to the service users needs and identified in the recovery plan.

4.8 The Service will provide programmes and activities in order that individuals can:-

- Achieve and maintain control, reduction or abstinence from substance misuse
- Improve their health and wellbeing, developing confidence, motivation and self esteem
- Increase social functioning, support networks and develop positive family relationships
- If appropriate reduce criminal activity

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 It is expected that the procurement process will release significant savings on existing contract costs. It is proposed that this service is funded using an element of the ring fenced public health grant.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that Finance and Policy Committee approve the commencement of a procurement process for a specialist drug and alcohol specialist prescribing service. This procurement process will seek to award a contract to a service provider to commence on 1st April 2014.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The Health and Social Care Act 2012 mandates local authorities to take steps to improve and protect the health of their populations.

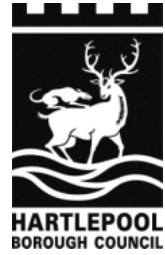
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FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

19th September 2013



Report of: Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods /
Assistant Director (Regeneration)

Subject: DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS ASSETS - LEASE
OF BRYAN HANSON HOUSE

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Key decision reference RN13/09, Key Decision Test (i) and (ii) applies.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval to the grant of a lease of Bryan Hanson House as show edged black in **Appendix 1** on terms as set out in **Confidential Appendix 2 (This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, (para 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)..**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As part of the rationalisation and Business Transformation process that has been undertaken within the Council a number of administrative buildings have been declared surplus and sold in order to generate capital receipts and reduce revenue running costs.
- 3.2 As part of the on-going process of rationalisation and accommodation review Bryan Hanson House has been identified as underutilised and the majority of staff are being moved in to the Civic Centre.
- 3.3 As part of the recent ICT tender process a number of bidders considered the potential of taking a lease of Bryan Hanson House in order to facilitate the delivery of the Councils contract and provide an opportunity to service other clients from the same

location.

- 3.4 Terms for a lease to commence with effect from 1st January 2014 have been negotiated with the successful ICT tenderer as set out in **Confidential Appendix 2. (This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, (para 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).**
- 3.5 The Council will benefit from the generation of a rental income, reduced running costs and the town will benefit from the creation of additional private sector jobs over a period of time as the occupation of the building increases.

4. OPTIONS AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The opportunity to combine the requirements of accommodation with a key partner whilst enabling the vacation of an additional administrative building by the Council on terms the Estates Manager considers acceptable provides a unique opportunity.
- 4.2 Details of the rental income and savings associated with current running costs are set out in **Confidential Appendix 2 (This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, (para 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).**

5. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The Chief Solicitor will prepare the lease documentation and ensure the legal interests of the Council are secured.

6. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The attention of Finance and Policy Committee is drawn to the Asset Management element of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The decision by Cabinet in January 2009 requires a commercial, proactive approach to be taken on Asset Management issues, the proceeds of this transaction being a contribution to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

- 6.2 The decision to adopt a commercial approach to asset management requires the Council to realise the full value of any properties or property rights that it disposes of.

7. SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 There are no Section 17 implications.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 There are no equality and diversity implications of the proposals, as all relocated staff will occupy suitable alternative premises and members of the public will access the services previously provided at Bryan Hanson House via the Contact Centre at the Civic.

9. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 Staff will be accommodated in suitable alternative premises.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 It is recommended that the terms as set out in **Confidential Appendix 2 (This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, (para 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)** are agreed.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS.

- 11.1 The grant of the lease will generate rental income for the Council, reduce revenue running costs and ensure that the building is occupied by a good quality tenant who proposes to retain employment within the town and extend employment opportunities providing further economic development benefits.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 Cabinet report 4th February 2013.

13. CONTACT OFFICER

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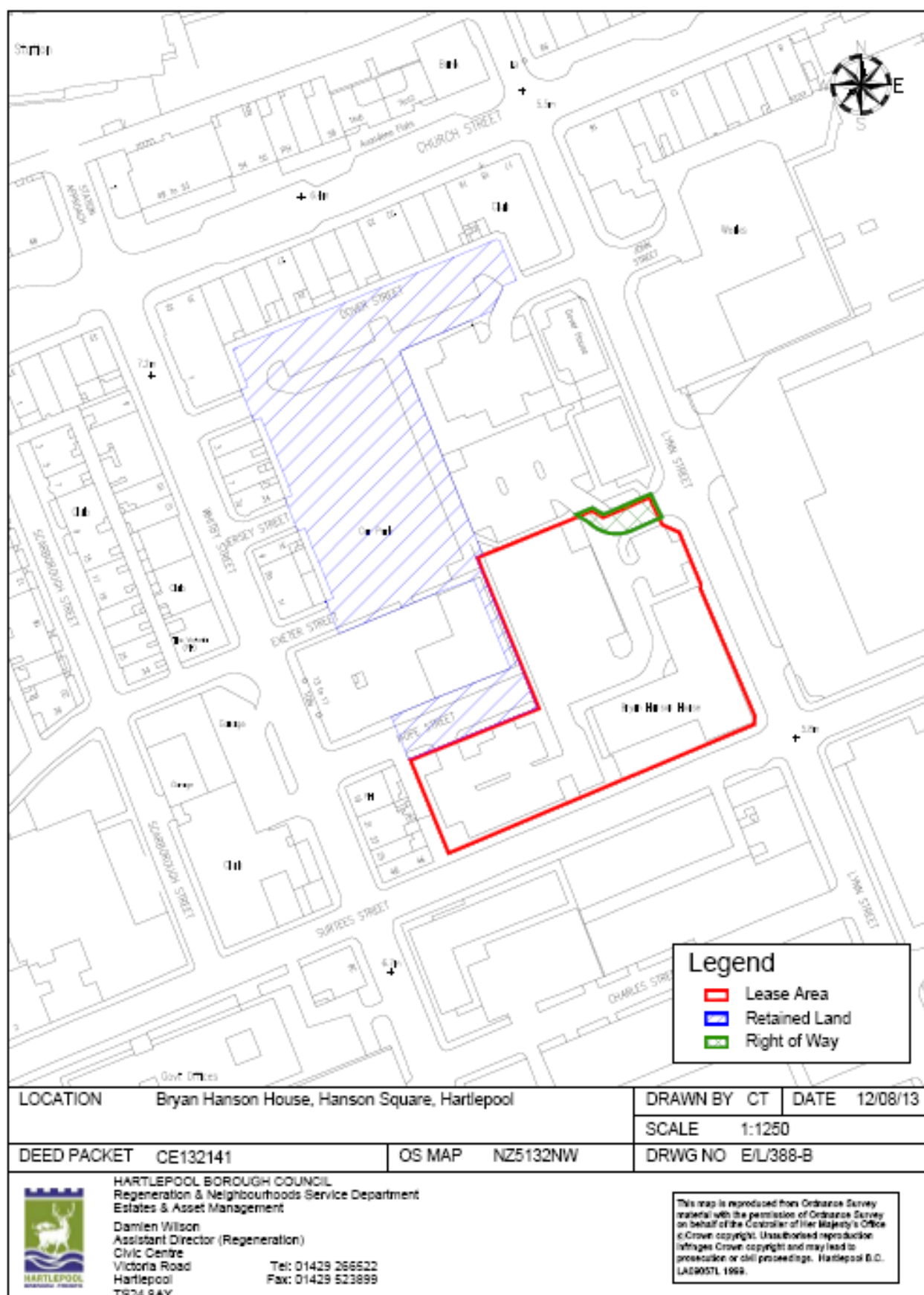
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APPENDIX 1



Finance and Policy Committee

19 September 2013



Report of: Chief Finance Officer

Subject: DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT
POLICY REVIEW

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Key Decision, Tests (I) and (II) apply. Forward Plan ref: CE61/13.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of the report is to enable members to approve a revised framework for awarding discretionary housing payments.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The statutory Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) scheme gives the legal authority to Councils to provide people receiving Housing Benefit with further financial assistance with their housing costs. Payments can only be made to those housing benefit claimants that are receiving a housing benefit award of at least a minimum amount and have a shortfall in their rent. The scheme is funded by an annual cash limited grant from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Councils can supplement the annual allocation from their own resources, subject to a maximum cap of 2.5 times the DWP allocation value.
- 3.2. DHP grant allocations to Local Authorities have increased for 2013/14 to take account of the impact of the welfare reforms. However, given the breadth and size of the welfare reform cuts of £2.4bn covering Housing Benefit and the Benefit Cap, the national DHP allocation to Local Authorities of £155m will be inadequate and will require Councils to make difficult local decisions as to which claimant circumstances merit receiving a discretionary award. DHP allocations cannot be applied to provide additional support to households associated with the Local Council Tax Support Scheme changes.
- 3.3. The Council is currently processing and awarding DHP support in accordance with an Administration Framework approved by Members on 4th March 2013 in line with then DWP guidance

(further details are set out in sections 4.5 & 7.1). Since 4th March, there have been a number of changes in the timing and nature of the Government's welfare reforms and the outcome of legal challenges in the High Court, which together impact on discretionary housing payment arrangements. It is therefore appropriate to review the current Hartlepool DHP Administration Framework to ensure that the available funding continues to be targeted most effectively for this financial year and future years.

4. CURRENT DHP FRAMEWORK / FUNDING

- 4.1. For 2013/14, the DWP has provided funding of £317,000 to Hartlepool for discretionary housing payment "top up" awards. The 2013/14 allocation has a number of components, continuing allocations from 2012/13 i.e. General DHP Support and Private Rented Sector Issues, and new allocations for 2013/14 to reflect the new challenges the Council is facing associated with the Bedroom Tax and the Benefit Cap. Details are set out in the table below:

**Hartlepool BC DWP Discretionary Housing Payment
Allocation
2013/14**

Allocation Type	Area of Support	£
Continuing	General DHP Support	38,000
Continuing	Local Housing Allowance (private rented sector issues)	83,000
<u>NEW</u>	Social Sector Size Criteria (Bedroom Tax)	62,000
<u>NEW</u>	Benefit Cap	134,000
	Total	317,000

- 4.2. As previously reported to members, the Bedroom Tax changes are impacting on 1,581 households in the Borough and the annual loss of housing benefit is £1.12m. In addition, the phased national roll out of the DWP Benefit Cap programme commenced in late July 2013. Hartlepool was placed within the first phase group of roll out Councils and all households initially affected have now had their benefit capped. In Hartlepool, only 61 households have been affected by the Benefit Cap, a much smaller number than originally forecast. The Benefit Cap is applied by reducing housing benefit payments by the value of any "excess income" above the cap. The average loss of housing benefit across the 61 households has been £60.74 per week, with the highest level of loss being £149.50 per week. The annual loss of housing benefit associated with the Benefit Cap is estimated in Hartlepool to be about £193,000 pa.

- 4.3. In Hartlepool, the total annual cut in housing benefit associated with the Bedroom Tax and the Benefit Cap is £1.31m. The available DHP allocation from Government to address this change is only £196,000, equivalent to 14.9% of the value of the benefits being cut.
- 4.4. For the Bedroom Tax changes, the Council's current DHP Administration Framework approved in early March 2013, recognised the DWP guidance that DHP's should be aimed at two specific groups i.e. disabled people who live in significantly adapted accommodation and also foster carers. However, in a Ministerial announcement on 12th March 2013, a matter of days before the Bedroom Tax was to be applied, the DWP made policy concessions covering foster carers and those situations where a soldier is living with parent(s) when not on operational duties. Importantly, the DWP policy change gave only limited protection to foster carers by granting them 1 spare bedroom, whereas some Hartlepool Foster Carers have more than 1 bedroom.
- 4.5 The current Hartlepool DHP arrangements covering Bedroom Tax cases provides for:
- Full protection from the Bedroom Tax for those foster carers with more than 1 spare bedroom;
 - Full Protection from the Bedroom Tax for those households where the householder is receiving Disability Living Allowance (High Care) and the property has been the subject of adaptation via a Disabled Facilities Grant.
 - Other non full protection cases to be subject to detailed financial assessment.

5. BEDROOM TAX CASE LAW DECISIONS

- 5.1. Since April 2013, there have been two significant legal decisions surrounding the Bedroom Tax. In the Gorry appellant case a judgement was made, that a child that had serious disabilities that made it inappropriate for them to share a bedroom should be allowed their own bedroom. The DWP decided to accept this judgement, the implications of which were that a number of households which satisfied the necessary criteria would no longer be subject to the bedroom tax. In Hartlepool, Benefits officers have applied this judgement to qualifying households that have raised the matter with the Council.
- 5.2 On 30th July 2013 at the High Court, a judgement was made that adults with a disability, who considered they needed a separate extra bedroom because of their disability condition, would not be

granted that extra bedroom under the Bedroom Tax under occupancy rules. In the view of the judge, the Bedroom Tax rules did not breach human rights. Lawyers representing the disabled families involved have indicated that they will appeal the judgement, however it is unclear at this stage the nature and timing of that appeal.

6. ALTERNATIVE BEDROOM TAX - DHP POLICY OPTIONS

6.1 2013/14 is the first year that Councils nationally have been awarding DHP's in respect of Bedroom Tax impacted households. Many Councils have been revisiting and reviewing their policies since the new arrangements came into effect to consider ways to target the available DHP resources to best effect. Research has been undertaken to identify the main types of bedroom tax protection priority policies considered by other Councils and these are set out below:

a) Protection priority should be given to households where children are on an age threshold which would result in an additional bedroom entitlement in the next 12 months

b) Protection priority should be given to pregnant mother claimants who are over 24 weeks pregnant and who may shortly have an additional bedroom entitlement following the birth of a child (children).

c) Protection priority should be given to terminally ill claimants.

d) Protection priority should be given to claimants who are within 12 months of Pension Credit qualifying age

e) Protection priority should be given to claimants whose property has been significantly adapted via a Disabled Facilities Grant to meet their disability needs.

f) Protection priority should be given to claimants requiring an additional bedroom under child access arrangements.

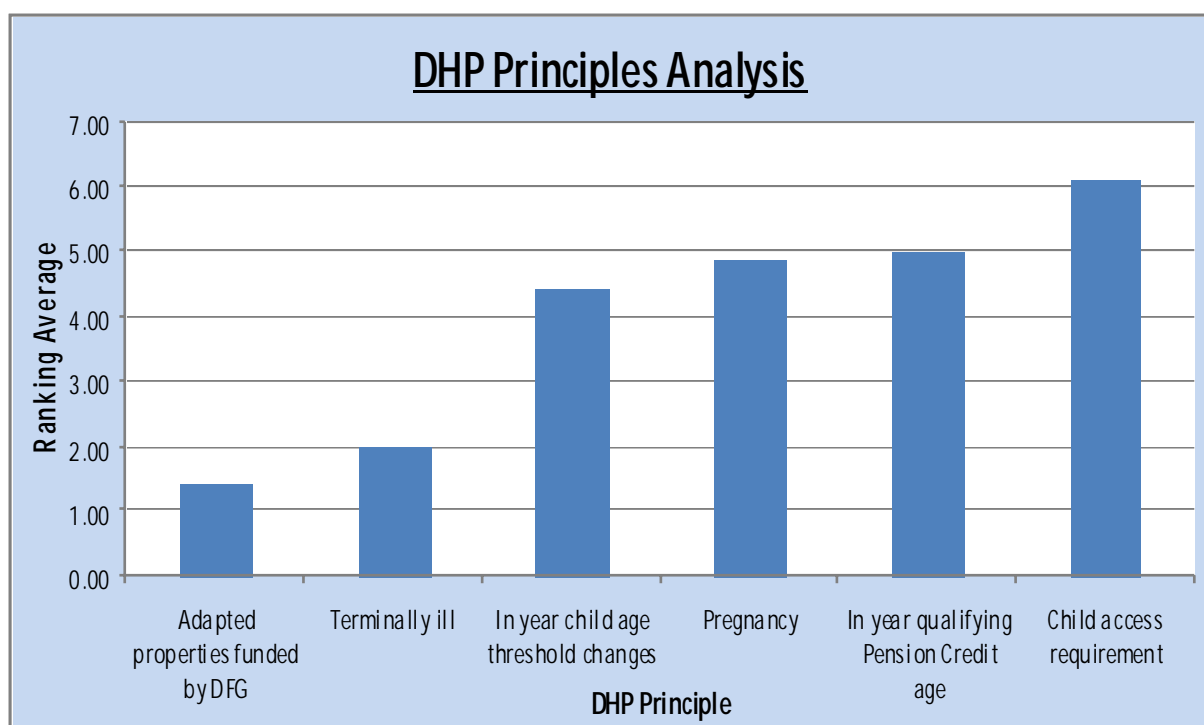
6.2 Registered Social Landlords (RSL) and Advice agencies operating within the Borough i.e. West View Advice and Resource Centre and the Citizen's Advice Bureau, by virtue of their dealing directly with those affected by the Bedroom Tax are in a position to provide an informed perspective on which groups of customers should be potentially considered for protection. A survey of 11 RSL's operating in the Borough, the 2 primary advice agencies and those Council officers dealing with strategic welfare reform issues was undertaken in August 2013.

- 6.3 In the survey, respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed with each protection group principle. The results are shown in the table below together with an estimate of the DHP cost of protection in 2013/14, in addition to the 16 weeks standard DHP award that Members have approved for all Bedroom Tax affected households.

Bedroom Tax Protection Principle	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Est Cost of DHP Protection
	%	%	%	%	%	£
1. Households where children on age threshold	33.3	55.6	11.1			11,000
2. Pregnant mothers over 24 weeks pregnant	11.1	77.8			11.1	10,000
3. Terminally ill claimants	55.6	44.4				10,000
4. Claimants within 12 months of Pension Credit entitlement	22.2	33.4	22.2	22.2		15,000
5. Any claimant whose property has been adapted via a DFG	55.6	44.4				14,000
6. Child access needs		66.7	22.2	11.1		80,000
Total						140,000

There was strong agreement support for every protection principle except cases where claimants require an additional bedroom under child access arrangements.

- 6.4. In addition, those consulted were asked to rank each protection principle with a ranking priority, with 1 being the most important and 6 the least important. The results are shown below and show that consultees felt the group that should have the highest level of protection i.e. the group with the lowest average ranking was bedroom tax properties which had been adapted and funded via a disabled facilities grant.



- 6.5. It is not financially sustainable to protect all those Bedroom Tax priority groups set out in section 6.3. Furthermore, the Council has already agreed to transfer a forecast 2013/14 saving on the Local Welfare Support Scheme of £346,000 to provide temporary Bedroom Tax assistance equivalent to 16 weeks lost housing benefit to all 1,581 households impacted by the Bedroom Tax.
- 6.6. Only about £10,000 of the £62,000 DWP Bedroom Tax DHP allocation has been awarded thus far in 2013/14, albeit a number of cases are currently being evaluated. Moving forward, a balanced response would be to use the remaining £52,000 DWP Bedroom Tax DHP allocation to provide targeted support covering all priority groups, except households with child access requirements. This would require the DWP Bedroom Tax DHP allocation to be “topped up” to ensure there remained some funding available for other non priority cases and to act as a contingency. It is proposed that this Bedroom Tax DHP “top up” could come from the existing DWP Benefit Cap DHP allocation, further details of which are set out in Section 7.

7. BENEFIT CAP / DHP SUPPORT

- 7.1 For those households affected by the Benefit Cap the loss of Housing Benefit will in general be more severe. As set out in section 4.2, the average weekly loss is estimated at about £61 per week albeit some households are losing £149.50 per week. The current Hartlepool DHP Administration Framework provides that tapered Discretionary Support is provided to those subject to the Benefit Cap at the rate of full protection housing benefit support for

8 weeks, reducing to 50% support of any loss for 6 weeks and then 4 weeks at 25% loss of support i.e. a total of 18 weeks help. The forecast cost of Benefit Cap DHP support in 2013/14 (including an appropriate contingency sum) is £60,700 as set out in the table below, as compared to the 2013/14 Benefit Cap DHP allocation of £134,000.

Forecast Cost of Benefit Cap DHP Support 2013/14 based on current DHP Framework

	Number of weeks support	Level of Support	Cost £
	8	100%	29,800
	6	50%	11,200
	4	25%	3,700
Contingency			16,000
Total	18		60,700

- 7.2 The current arrangements for tapering down Benefit Cap DHP are designed to treat all cases the same and to provide a period of time for individuals to respond to the changes by moving to alternative accommodation or securing employment. The current policy of tapering helps avoid “cliff edges” where households would drop immediately off protection.
- 7.3 As set out in section 4.2 the Council has completed the initial capping exercise, albeit further cases may emerge during the remainder of 2013/14. As the number of cases subject to the Benefit Cap is significantly lower than forecast, and the DWP have not reduced DHP allocations the Council is in a position to increase the period of time over which tapered financial support is provided. There remains a financial risk that the DWP may scale down DHP allocations for Bedroom Tax in 2013/14. Should this occur, then this would be reported to members with a request to scale back associated DHP. A possible revised DHP support option for Benefit Cap cases is set out below:

Cost of Revised DHP support for Benefit Cap cases

	Number of weeks support	Level of Support	Cost £
	12	100%	44,600
	10	60%	22,300
	4	30%	4,500
Total	26		71,400

- 7.4. If this option is progressed and an appropriate contingency sum of £16,000 is maintained, the Council will be able to sustain its policy for any new Benefit Cap cases that may emerge. On this basis £46,600 could be transferred to “top up” the DWP Bedroom Tax DHP allocation to supplement the funding for the challenges being faced. This will enable the Council to protect those Bedroom Tax claimants falling within five of the six potential priority groups ie. excluding as a priority households with child access requirements. This would permit an allocation for other Bedroom Tax cases that would be determined under the normal detailed income and expenditure assessment process of £34,844. Further details are set out in the Conclusions at section 9.
- 7.5. Alternatively, if members choose to maintain Benefit Cap support at the current Hartlepool DHP policy rate as set out in section 7.1. at a forecast annual cost of £60,700 then £73,300 could be transferred from the Benefit Cap DHP allocation to the Bedroom Tax DHP allocation. This will permit the Council to retain the £34,844 for financial means tested applications, protect the 5 primary priority groups and allow the Council to provide 33% support to Bedroom Tax households with child access arrangements issues. Further details are set out at Section 9.4.

8. HOUSING BENEFIT REFORMS TRANSITIONAL FUNDING

- 8.1. On 30th July 2013, the DWP announced a “one off” allocation to Local Authorities of Housing Benefit Reforms Transitional Funding for 2013/14. The Government’s intention is that these funds, totalling £10m nationally, should be used to provide targeted help for claimants affected by the Housing Benefit reforms eg. through money advice or providing additional DHP’s over and above the annual DWP allocation. The DWP have indicated that the funds are not intended to meet new administrative burdens arising from welfare reforms.
- 8.2. Hartlepool’s allocation of these “one off” funds for 2013/14 is £29,244. In response to the challenges of the welfare reforms and in particular the demand for advice services, the Council has commissioned additional advice sessions covering benefits advice, money advice and debt advice from West View Advice and Resource Centre covering the period April to September 2013 at a cost of £18,000 using “one off” funding announced by the Government in 2012/13.
- 8.3. As previously reported to Members, demand for these additional advice sessions is high and it is reasonable to assume that this position will continue as the wider welfare reforms begin to take effect. It is therefore proposed that, subject to positive contract monitoring, West View Advice and Resource Centre be requested

to extend the additional welfare reform advice services contract for a further 6 months on the same terms i.e. £18,000. On this basis, the balance of the one off DWP funds of £11,244 can be applied to “top up” the Bedroom Tax DHP allocation as this is the type of change that is causing the greatest impact locally.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1. The Council faces significant challenges in effectively targeting the annual limited DWP DHP allocation given the scale of the Welfare Reform changes. In recognition of the local impacts of the welfare reforms, in particular the Bedroom Tax changes, the Council has agreed previously to transfer resources from a forecast underspend on its Local Welfare Support Scheme to assist all those households impacted by the Bedroom Tax changes.
- 9.2. Given that the number of households affected by the Benefit Cap is significantly lower than forecast and as the DWP have not reduced Local Authority Benefit Cap DHP allocations, the Council has the flexibility to increase the level of Benefit Cap DHP support as set out in section 7, to 26 weeks on a tapering basis. This would provide additional time for households to respond to the Cap impacts. Alternatively the Council can maintain DHP support for Benefit Cap cases at the current level covering 18 weeks on the tapering basis and this is the recommended way forward.
- 9.3. The greatest impact locally of the welfare reforms has been the Bedroom Tax and the opportunity exists to more clearly target DHP support to Bedroom Tax Priority Groups and to transfer resources from the Benefit Cap DHP allocation to the Bedroom Tax DHP allocation. It is proposed that 5 of the 6 priority groups set out in Section 6 should be protected and Bedroom Tax households with a child access arrangements issue should receive help at 33%.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 It is recommended that Members:
 - i) Protect fully via DHP those five Bedroom Tax DHP priority groups 1 to 5 set out in Section 6.
 - ii) Retain Benefit Cap Discretionary Housing Payment support at the current level covering 18 weeks.
 - iii) Provide partial DHP support at 33% to those Bedroom Tax impacted claimants who need an additional bedroom for child access requirements
 - iv) Maintain a Benefit Cap Discretionary Housing Payment contingency of £16,000.

- v) Approve the transfer of surplus DHP resources from the DWP Benefit Cap allocation of £73,300 to supplement the Bedroom Tax DHP allocation.
- vi) Approve the application of the DWP 13/14 Benefits Transitional Funding Allocation of £29,244 by extending the current West View Advice and Resource Centre welfare impacts contract for an additional 6 months at a cost of £18,000 and applying the balance of £11,244 to top up the Bedroom Tax DHP allocation.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 To enable Members to approve a revised framework for awarding discretionary housing payments for Bedroom Tax and Benefit Cap cases.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 Cabinet report Local Welfare Support / Discretionary Housing Payment Administration 4th March 2013.

13. CONTACT OFFICER

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FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

19th September 2013



Report of: Assistant Director (Resources)

Subject: ADVICE AND GUIDANCE PROJECT

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Non-key decision

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To seek Finance and Policy Committee's comments on options to reconfigure the Council's advice and guidance services to the public.

2.2 To seek Finance and Policy Committee's approval to a preferred option to be developed.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW

3.1 The Advice and Guidance project was included in the 2013 / 14 Council Plan in order to address the increasing need for effective advice and guidance services to the public, particularly in relation to the pressures of welfare reform.

3.2 It was agreed that the project would undertake a review of the advice and guidance services provided by the Council to the public with a view to determining their most effective delivery model and as part of this, review the current provision of services through the Contact Centre.

3.3 The project was delegated to the Assistant Director (Resources) in order to achieve an independent assessment.

4. LINES OF ENQUIRY

4.1 Interviews, consultations and focus groups have taken place with a wide range of stakeholders to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current service and to ascertain what changes might be needed to achieve

advice and guidance services that will meet customer requirements now and in the future.

Stakeholders included:-

- Assistant Directors and Senior Officers in Chief Executives, Finance, Contact Centre, Child and Adults and Regeneration and Neighbourhoods.
- Contact Centre/ Registrars staff
- First Contact Support Hub (FCSH)
- West View Advice and Resource Centre (WVARC)
- Vela
- Welfare Reform Strategic Group and Customer Services sub-group
- Public Sector Partners Group

4.2 Meetings have also taken place with the Chair of the Committee for valuable input and updates on progress.

4.3 As the project has progressed other areas of operation linked to Advice and Guidance have been considered e.g. Scrutiny's report on the Registration Service (a linked report on this subject is also on this agenda).

5. IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

5.1 The Advice and Guidance project is a major one, impacting on our customers and potentially all staff across the Council in some form. The essential components for success will be project governance around a multi-disciplinary team and genuine 'buy in' from the Corporate Management Team, Members and staff.

5.2 Those who provide advice and guidance need to be trained and empowered with a culture of team working and customer focus.

6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Communication across Council teams and other partners was raised as a barrier.
- Generic and non-specialist responses can mean customers cannot be dealt with at first contact.
- Training is good in some places and not in others.
- Resources at both the front face and in the back office are stretched.
- There needs to be an approach that measures performance outputs where necessary whilst concentrating on customer experience.
- There are structural issues in the Contact Centre related to generic working. Sometimes genericism dilutes the service.
- Potential scope to reduce duplication on work claims e.g double work on paper claims/ 'keying in', different teams issuing food vouchers.
- Efficiencies and integrated working could see more customers dealt with at first contact.

- Silo working and lack of information sharing was evident in some areas.
- “Joined up teams” would mean customers have better opportunity to get advice, guidance and support on all their requirements.
- FCSH specialist service – communication issues are key in response for the customers they deal with.
- There needs to be increased advice and signposting on employment issues.
- Registration service works well generally but there may be an opportunity for a potential alternative location and more ‘dedication’ to address some sensitive areas. But to make it work better for the customer and the Council “resilience” is needed.
- Surgeries in localities would be beneficial.
- There is a need to develop “Digital First” / ICT Hub in Civic Centre and there is work taking place on this.
- Housing Advice can be incorporated in some form – but note future increase in “traffic”
- Services and staff moving to Civic Centre will increase “traffic” at Contact Centre e.g. Taxi inspections / planning / building control. This needs to be addressed and there could be further phases of first contact for some services moving into the contact centre.

7. UNIVERSAL CREDIT AND THE FUTURE FOR ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

- 7.1 In the future, depending on the national roll out, the majority of people will make their claim for Universal Credit online and payments will be made monthly and direct to the household. Indications from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) indicate that Councils will have a significant role to play in these new arrangements.
- 7.2 Most people on low incomes manage their money well and regularly use the internet to carry out everyday activities such as shopping, banking and carrying out job searches. But the introduction of Universal Credit and Universal Jobmatch means that we need to review the support households may need in this new environment.
- 7.3 This includes making sure that claimants, who are not yet ready to budget for themselves on a monthly basis, or are unable to use the internet, are protected and assisted onto the new system.
- 7.4 For example there is a need to ensure that claimants who have debt problems or other vulnerabilities such as poor numeracy skills, drug addiction or mental health issues are given practical support at the onset of their claim through a network of local services including the Council. The increase in ex-service personnel will also need to be addressed.
- 7.5 Partnership working will be essential and local authorities will be the key partners in providing targeted local support.

- 7.6 The Local Support Services Framework, produced by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), collaboratively with local authorities, sets out the principles for that support.
- 7.7 It covers the type of support that DWP would be willing to fund, how current partnerships work and how a partnership approach might work in the future, as well as outlining areas that require further development such as the funding model.
- 7.8 The Local Support Services Framework may involve the Council's Advice and Guidance Services in the following:-
- Provide information about UC and help guide claimants appropriately.
 - Signpost claimants to the most appropriate channel for them (based on identified need).
 - Identify those claimants who might require additional support as early as possible.
 - Provide support with online access.
 - Provide assistance with how to set up an account including information required to do that.
 - Help claimants to build their online skills including how to access online help and support.
 - Help claimants understand the information needed in order to make a claim and how to do it – including the security process.
 - Help claimants to sort bank details out / set up a bank account.
 - Ensure claimants understand their likely payment amount and when they will receive it.
 - Ensure they understand what the award covers, including the need to pay rent themselves.
 - Provide budgeting advice if appropriate.
 - Take details of any evidence the claimant has to support the claim (so they don't have to send it in separately).
 - Help to identify claimants needing immediate consideration for exceptional payment arrangements and refer for decision.
 - Provide advice about the documents to bring to interview and why they are needed.
 - Provide advice about looking for work and what they need to do before their first interview including support available (eg through Universal Jobmatch).
 - Ensure claimants understand what benefits they are passported to and how to access them.
- 7.9 It is important, therefore, that whatever advice and guidance arrangements we put in place in the short term can be adapted and developed to deal with Universal Credit in the future.

8. CONCLUSION TO THE ADVICE AND GUIDANCE PROJECT

8.1 As the demand for advice and guidance and the follow-on support that goes with it increases particularly due to the development and effects of welfare reform and the advent of Universal Credit the Council needs to offer a consistent and integrated service that is based on the following principles :-

- “Customer first” approach
- Delivering effective core contact services
- Addressing need and support at first point of contact.
- Co-ordinated assessment of and eligibility to, services and benefits
- Accountability and empowerment of staff with “here to help” culture
- High performance but not driven by statistics
- Excellent communication channels and information sharing
- Focus on outcomes – both transactional and personal need and support (including financial)
- Efficiencies and avoidance of duplication with improved “systems”
- Be able to be further developed in the future (e.g. for Universal Credit).

8.2 The **benefits** will be :-

- A Customer Services Centre that is joined-up, expert, resilient and effective to deal with simple non-variable tasks.
- The ability to potentially go deeper in resolving more complex queries at first contact.
- The ability to deliver services out to the community.
- Staff feel they are more responsible and the Customer Services Centre is a good place to work.
- Better use of technology and smarter working.
- Future proofing.

8.3 The **outcomes** of the project should be to:-

- Design a new style of service delivery around providing the best advice and guidance to customers
- Provide a seamless service – the public face of the Council
- Improve effectiveness and reduce costs
- Safeguard the most vulnerable members of our community
- Promote entitlements, on-line access and money management to reduce child poverty

8.4 Our **core service offer** should provide:-

- Effective triage and signposting
- First contact assessment
- First contact support
- Deeper resolution of queries at first contact
- Promote accessibility to and eligibility for support

8.5 Our **values and performance** should be:-

- Work to the target of giving a customer the service that they need.
- Make the processes work to achieve successful outcomes for customer
- Focus on outcomes for the customer rather than service “outputs”
- Good communication and sharing of information.
- Competency quality and value for money

8.6 **Identifying the Service a Customer Needs**

Effective triage will identify the simple and process driven services that a customer requires initially through a remodelled – “**Customer Service Centre**”.

More complex and variable personal and / or financial assistance could be through a first contact “**Advice and Guidance Hub**” that can deal with or effectively sign post customers to ensure their needs are met with a move away from process driven support and greater focus on the customer

8.7 Our **culture** needs to:-

- Promote active responsibility
- Understand the demand
- Focus on the person and solutions
- Provide end-to end support
- Take time to assess customer needs. There may be a need to deal with and accept that queues will occur.
- Develop our own “once-and-done” service.
- Show equality and respect for our staff and customers
- Develop staff and build on their range of contribution, expertise and talent

8.8 Our **aim** should be to:-

- Have the right expertise at first point of contact to satisfy predictable “value” demand
- Integrate and be able to “pull” expertise for less predictable demand e.g. access detailed benefits assessors, external agencies, Health colleagues, access to employment
- Manage systems to provide better outcomes with less management of people and activity.
- Provide solutions at the first point of contact which are efficient and effective for the Council and achieve customer expectations
- Provide good services which promotes staff morale and motivation which in turn gives more to the service

8.9 A recent Association of North East Council’s (ANEC) report on the Impact of Welfare Reform in the North East concluded the following on advice and guidance going forward:-

- Future directions: Hubs providing pathways to target advice and providing it more quickly. Characteristics of advice hubs should include:
 - an effective assessment system
 - access to different levels of staff expertise, from general to specialist,
 - accessible in terms of different settings where the service is provided
 - links into frontline services
 - training to the frontline and within more specialised services

9. OPTIONS FOR FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY

Each option is to be assessed considering:-

- A. What it will do
- B. What it won't do
- C. What will be done by the different 'elements'?
- D. What will be the cut off points between the different elements?
- E. What is needed to make it work?
- F. What are the benefits?
- G. What are the risks?
- H. How will it be different / better?

9.1 Option 1 – Remodel Existing

The current arrangements of a “contact centre” first point of contact with links to specialist teams such as Revenues and Benefits and the First Contact Support Hub (FCSH) West View Advice and Resource Centre (WVARC) could be developed by promoting existing teams to work in a more joined-up way to address some of the key findings of the project i.e.

- improve communications
- improve sharing of information
- have relevant officers available from any of the teams to meet customer face-to-face at point of contact
- improve team working across departments
- “Process and conclude” at first point of contact
- Improve technology to enable smarter working

This will require relevant managers and teams to have a greater synergy and a common approach.

A. What it will do

- Improves processes

- Improve communications between teams and therefore to customers
- Retains performance levels and robustness
- Retains FCSH “proof of concept”

B. What it won't do

- Achieve team integration
- Change culture
- Provide a single point of contact for all council services (although it is accepted that this cannot wholly be achieved).
- Deliver a step change in service delivery
- Encourage technology integration / smarter working
- Be a vehicle for the future development of Advice and Guidance needs particularly under Universal Credit.

C. What will be done by the different 'elements'?

Contact Centre	}	Generally do the same, unless processes, technology and access to information improves ability to process a customers need more effectively at first contact
FCSH		
Revs and Bens		

D. What will be the cut off points between the different elements?

- No change.

E. What is needed to make it work?

- Appetite and ability to improve processes, communications and team working.
- Stronger and integrated management systems.
- Change in culture / silo working.
- Agreement of high level management arrangements.

F. What are the benefits?

- Improved processes and communications;
- Less change / disruption.
- Team functions remain intact – no dilution of expertise.
- Current performance levels should be maintained.

G. What are the risks?

- No drive from those involved even though changes “minimal”.
- Improved processes / communications can't be delivered or don't make a difference to the customer.
- No change in culture.

- Does not meet Members and customer expectations.
- Doesn't address longer term needs.
- Much of the work on addressing the advice, guidance and support due to welfare reform has been successful and is developing. The FCSH is in its infancy and it maybe prudent therefore to adopt a 'wait and see' approach.

H. How will it be different / better?

- Difference is improved information sharing, communication and improved processes to make for a more efficient service – but will it make a difference to the customer?
- It may not look any different to Members or customers.

9.2 **Option 2 – CREATE “Customer Services Centre” and “Advice and Guidance Hub”**

9.2.1 The Council should be seen to be a body that can give the public all the necessary information or can signpost to relevant agencies for what queries they have and the reception staff or contacts should be aware of what all the agencies connected to the Council do.

9.2.2 The current contact centre goes some way to achieving this and its performance in the day-to-day process driven services and work on front-line environment management and enforcement is well regarded. This could be built upon using the outputs from the “**Conclusions**”, Section 8 of this report.

9.2.3 However rather than a contact centre providing for all services it could simply focus on the majority of process related business through a “**Customer Services Centre**” and a more specialist “**Advice and Guidance Hub**” deal with the more complex needs of customers. See diagram A below

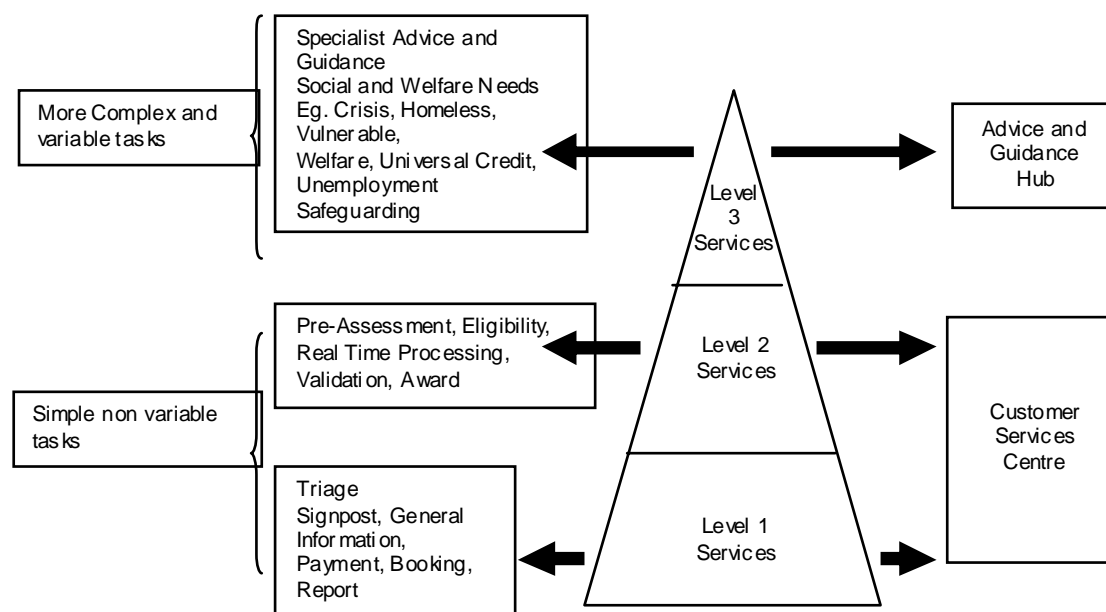


Diagram A

9.2.4 A reconfigured and streamlined Contact Centre to be called the “Customer Services Centre” could carry out non-variable tasks (Level 1 and 2 Services in Diagram A, including Registration Service and CEX Support Services).

9.2.5 A specialist “**Advice and Guidance Hub**” would provide an additional and enhanced first point of contact for those customers requiring personal and / or financial support. The hub could be formed by bringing together those members of staff in the current contact centre who deal with non-standard Revenues and Benefits enquiries with the First Contact Officers of the FCSH and possibly supplemented by further staff from the Revenue and Benefits service. This would be an integrated team dealing with and solving customer needs at the first point of contact and, wherever possible being responsible for end-to-end delivery but being guided by and utilising the important financial management assessment and verification expertise in the Revenues and Benefits section. That section would still retain their overseeing role to ensure the Council fulfils all of our legal and financial obligations, maintains overall financial performance and mitigates any risk of challenge from external audit.

9.2.6 The Advice and Guidance Hub could be formed (Level 3 Services in Diagram A) containing:-

- “Benefits” staff from the Contact Centre (4 no) potentially plus others subject to service requirements as defined
- First Contact Officers from the FCSH (Former Family Information Support Hub (FISH))
- Potential “Front Facing” staff from Benefits (Resources will need to be assessed)

- 9.2.7 Professional “back offices” staff remaining from FCSH (i.e. Duty Team) and Benefits remain in their respective Departments.
- 9.2.8 It is anticipated that the Housing Advice Team (“Options Centre”) will move into the Civic Centre in September 2014 at the 5 year break clause in the 10 year lease at Park Tower (unless an early release could be achieved). This could remain a separate entity or it could be part of the Advice and Guidance Hub.
- 9.2.9 The Advice and Guidance Hub could be the forerunner to the type of service that will be required when Universal Credit is phased in i.e. the need for an ICT hub for customers to access together with the advice to signpost and navigate through the claims process.
- 9.2.10 The “Advice and Guidance Hub” would be a focal point for external organisations and provide the one point of contact and centre of expertise and information for as an example, the West View Advice and Resource Centre (WVARC). This is a need they have highlighted. In time, it may be that the Advice and Guidance Hub could expand and take on some of the services provided by WVARC, however their current service is particularly well regarded.
- 9.2.11 The Customer Services Centre could act as an effective triage centre to signpost customers, but also in this model, it could still provide the Registration Service and support services to the Chief Executive’s Department.
- 9.2.12 The Registration Service is the subject of another report on this Committee Agenda, however, a significant amount of work has been undertaken in this project to understand how the Registration Service could be further developed within any new customer services arrangements.
- 9.2.13 If the option to retain the Registration service in the Civic Centre is chosen, and possibly relocate to Level 1 then greater dedication of staff and more sensitive access to customers could be achieved by:-
- First point of contact for appointments to remain with Customer Service Centre – mainly via telephone but could be online in future
 - Reception at Level 1 to be covered by staff from CEX Support Services
 - Registration staff will undertake some admin tasks when not dealing with customers eg certificate production, arrangement of Citizenship ceremonies, family history enquiries
 - Registration & Citizenship Officer will be operational and will take on responsibility for Civic Centre strong-room
 - Consideration of registration of births at other locations such as Children’s Centres
- 9.2.14 Management arrangements would be finalised when detailed structures are assembled and could be as follows:-

- Assistant Chief Executive – Customer Services Centre or
- Chief Finance Officer or Assistant Chief Executive or Assistant Director (Children's Services) – Advice and Guidance Hub or
- Chief Finance Officer or Assistant Chief Executive or Assistant Director (Children's Services) – Customer Services Centre and Advice & Guidance Hub.

A. What it will do

- Re-focuses a re-structured, streamlined and resilient Customer Services Centre on non-variable tasks and Registration Service and CEX support services.
- Improves processes and communications and opportunity to explore software for staff in the Hub to complete claims electronically at front face.
- Integrates teams who give front facing financial and personal advice, guidance and support – a “Team Around”.
- Opportunity to address customer need at first point of contact.
- Removes silos and protectionism in the A&G services – one manager, one team, one culture.
- Focal point for external organisations.
- Be main link to West View Advice and Resource Centre (WVARC).
- Hold surgeries / appointments in localities.
- Provides balance in terms of customers requiring a one-stop support service with a ‘front-face’ whilst retaining back office teams to deal with more complex and specialist caseloads.
- Moves towards a service that can be developed for advice and guidance under Universal Credit.

B. What it won't do

- Bring all Customer Contact together under one manager.
- Not all teams integrated.
- Retain FCSH ‘proof of concept’

C. What will be done by the different ‘elements’

- Customer Services Centre carries out non-variable tasks (Level 1 and 2 Services in Diagram A) including Registration Service and CEX Support Services)
- Advice and Guidance Hub carries out Level 3 services in the Diagram A i.e. Front facing (telephone, email, face-to-face) personal advice and guidance and signposting. And, for example, assessing eligibility by completing benefits claims at first point of contact and personal needs of vulnerable children, adults and families being addressed in the same team making the link with personal and financial support. Staff could become

more generic over time building up expertise over a wider range of advice, guidance and support as well as ‘processing’ financial claims (building on Advice and Guidance qualifications and training).

- Revenues and Benefits teams left in Finance will provide the financial performance management, professional overview and assessment / verification for more complex cases to mitigate challenge from external audit.
- The “Duty Team” (the professional team left-over after the First Contact officers have been taken into the Advice and Guidance Hub) will provide the personal support and services to customers which is beyond the Advice and Guidance Hub.

D. What will be the cut off points between the different elements?

- The Customer Services Centre will address all those “process related” tasks to conclusion at the point of contact as well as assisting and signposting customers on more specialist and/or “complex” needs.
- In terms of personal / financial support, the Advice and Guidance Hub would provide advice / guidance / assessment at first point of contact to complete their requirements as far as possible.
- Where more complex financial assessment / verification is required this would be handed over to the Revenues and Benefits Team.
- Where more specialist and/ or complex personal assessment / need is required this would be handed over to the “Duty” Team e.g. safeguarding issues.
- High volume back office processing would still be undertaken by the Revs and Bens team in Finance where there is an annual benefit caseload of 12,000, Council tax benefit of 15,000 and 70,000 change of circumstances (27 staff undertake these and other tasks).

E. What is needed to make it work?

- Appetite and ability to improve processes, communications and sharing of information particularly in the Advice and Guidance Hub so staff are able to maximise meeting customer need at first point of contact.
- A manager that brings together an integrated Advice and Guidance Team moulding its ability to deliver its culture and its team ethos.
- Clarity of the cut offs between the Customer Services Centre, the Advice and Guidance Hub and the professional teams and good working (and flexible) relationships between those teams.
- Ensure that financial management of “claims” is robust, legal and does not open the Council to risk.

- Ability to recognise and respond by handing over swiftly “safeguarding” and similar critical “people” needs.

F. What are the benefits?

- Improves focus and operation on non-variable / process based services
- Integrates teams to focus on financial needs and personal support
- Improved communication and information channels / sharing
- Brings services together with a first point of contact promoting accessibility to and eligibility for support
- More customers dealt with at first contact.
- Moves towards a long term solution particularly in respect to Welfare Reform and Universal Credit developments
- Meets Member and customer expectations (more than Option 1)

G. What are the risks?

- General risk of change in all areas
- Financial risks around assessment / verification unless Advice and Guidance Hub staff / management have clear direction, information, skills and management.
- Disruption to staff / services.
- The FCSH is in its infancy, but developing, and it maybe prudent to adopt a ‘wait and see’ approach.
- Safeguarding / complex need focus / control potential to be lost if FCSH contact officers removed from wider skill mix of team
- No appetite from those involved and culture does not change.
- The management of Advice and Guidance Hub does not drive the improvement.

H. How will it be different / better?

- Customer Services Centre concentrates on what it does best i.e. dealing with non-variable process related work.
- First contact personal and financial advice, guidance and support will be undertaken by one integrated team with the objective of dealing with the customers needs at that first point.
- Advice and Guidance Hub staff will be more informed and empowered to deal with customers at first contact.
- There will be a shift of emphasis to personal and financial support to customers.

9.3 **Option 3 – “Place” – based Customer Services Centre with ALL “People” – based services in the Advice and Guidance Hub**

- 9.3.1 Same as Option 2 but services within the Customer Services Centre stripped back to “place” – based services / bookings. Maybe Level 1 services of the Diagram A.
- 9.3.2 This would lead to the potential for this service to be in the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department.
- 9.3.3 If this was the case CEX Support Services would need to be configured in the CEX department – not seen as a problem.
- 9.3.4 The Registration Service could continue to be part of the Customer Services Centre and therefore part of the Regeneration and Neighbourhood Department.
- 9.3.5 Alternatively it could become part of the CEX Department, possibly linked to the CEX support function (for resilience) and possibly based on Level 1 - i.e. separate from the main Customer Contact Centre.
- 9.3.6 The “Questions A-H” will have much the same answers, but there will be a greater volume of more non variable financial and personal services moving into the Advice and Guidance Hub i.e. Level 2 services and Level 3 services would be in the Hub.
- 9.3.7 This would bring together more first contact for personal and financial advice guidance and support – i.e. the ‘processing of non-variable elements’ as well.
- 9.3.8 However there may be greater disruption and confusion caused by different Departmental management arrangements.

e.g. the Scenario where :-

R&N Manages Customer Services Centre

ACE Manages Registration Services

CFO or C&A Manages Advice and Guidance Hub

C&A Manages “Duty Team”

CFO Manages Revs and Bens

9.4 **Option 4 – Amalgamate All of FCSH into Advice and Guidance Hub**

- 9.4.1 This could be the same as Option 2 but instead of just taking the First Contact officers from FCSH into the Hub the whole of the FCSH is amalgamated into the Hub.

9.4.2 Variations included in Option 3 i.e. “stripped down” Customer Services Centre and options for management could also be considered.

A. What it will do

- This option does the same as Option 2 but further integrates the whole of the FCSH into the Advice and Guidance giving a greater opportunity to deal with customers personal needs in a more seamless and effective manner and increase the number of cases dealt with at ‘first contact’.
- Be a vehicle for the future development of Advice and Guidance needs particularly under Universal Credit.
- Brings more customer contact teams together under one manager.
- It retains the integrity and “proof of concept” of the FCSH and takes its culture and strengths into the Advice and Guidance Hub.

B. What it won't do

- Not all teams relating to “customer contact” are brought together under one manager. (ie. Contact Centre and Benefits separate – and note variations in option 3).

C. What will be done by the different ‘elements’?

- Same as Option 2 but the FCSH operation and delivery as a whole would be in the Advice and Guidance Hub.

D. What will be the cut off points between the different elements?

- Same as Option 2 but there would be no cut off in the operation and delivery of FCSH functions.

E. What is needed to make it work?

- Same as Option 2 but the Advice and Guidance Hub becomes more expansive in adding in all of the FCSH. Therefore the management of it needs to span and be able to deliver specialist financial and personal advice, guidance and support as well as access to all child and adults services, safeguarding and eligibility assessments.

F. What are the benefits?

- Same as Option 2 but the further integration of all FCSH into the Advice and Guidance Hub brings added benefits and provides a more seamless service in this particular area.

- By retaining the FCSH intact and adding to those financial support functions the option continues and enhances support to the most vulnerable members of the community.
- It may go even further to meet Member and customer expectations.

G. What are the risks?

- Same as Option 2 but safeguarding risk is mitigated by retaining all of the FCSH intact in the Advice and Guidance Hub.
- Significant span of control and potential for specialist expertise of management lost in term of people e.g. safeguarding and / or finance services
- The focus becomes wider than setting up something to deal with Advice and Guidance and potentially becoming a more significant restructure with the risk of losing the benefits we are aiming for.

H. How will it be different / better?

- Same as Option 2 but FCSH intact gives a more complete “wrap around” for personal advice guidance and support.

9.5 Option 5 – Amalgamate Benefits and First Contact Support Hub into Advice and Guidance Hub

9.5.1 An extension of Option 2 and 4 (with any variations from Option 3) could be the bringing together of all of the “Benefits” services and the First Contract Support Hub into the Advice and Guidance Hub.

9.5.2 This would have the effect of amalgamating all personal and financial support including the overall financial management into a single unit possibly under the management of the Chief Finance Officer or the Assistant Director (Children’s Services).

9.5.3 This would be a huge shift in our approach and bring with it the difficulties of a major restructure at a time of service change and high-level customer need. Additionally this option would require careful management of different work streams, all of which are currently performing effectively and to a high standard, covering advice and guidance services, safeguarding services and financial assessment/financial controls.

9.5.4 However for the longer term as Universal credit is rolled out there maybe a need to reduce, consolidate and/ or re-focus our operations and it is possible that Option 5 could be a long term option.

A. What it will do

- Same as Options 2 and 4
- Brings all personal and financial support together.

- Could be long term solution depending on government changes (e.g. Universal Credit).
- Centralises assessment verification support services and processes.

B. What it won't do

- Same as Options 2 and 4
- Depending on the management arrangements it will not have key Finance and / or safeguarding in the lead role.

C. What will be done by the different 'elements'?

- There will be one combined function incorporating the Customer Services Centre, Revenues and Benefits and FCSH and under one manager.
- The question would be do they operate as separate teams but with closer working relationships or are they rearranged / combined in some way?

D. What will be the cut off points between the different elements?

- There would be no cut off points to external teams – the integrated team under a single manager would be accountable.
- However there is then the cut off between any teams within the single entity. The entity may be too big. Or is the fact that a single manager oversees this powerful enough to deliver the "seamless" service?

E. What is needed to make it work?

- Same as Options 2 and 4 but with a greater emphasis on the skills and ability to lead the team and service or the "single" manager.
- Should this manager be a "financial" or "people" services / safeguarding specialist or is the emphasis on the requirements needed for the Chief Officer who becomes responsible.

F. What are the benefits?

- Same as Options 2 and 4
- Brings all personal and financial support together.
- Could be long term solution depending on government changes (e.g. Universal Credit).
- Centralises assessment verification support services and processes.

G. What are the risks?

- Major upheaval at time of change.
- Disruption to services.
- Loss of focus on key specialisms.
- Maybe premature depending on future Welfare Reform roll-out.
- As we make the entity larger there may be a greater risk in the loss of financial control and safeguarding issues.
- It may be difficult to get the appropriate senior management structure in place to cover the risks.
- Is it a finance “function” or a “people” function?
- The focus becomes wider than setting up something to deal with Advice and Guidance and potentially becoming a more significant restructure with the risk of losing the benefits we are aiming for.
- Same as Option 2 but safeguarding risk is mitigated by retaining all of the FCSH intact in the Advice and Guidance Hub.
- Significant span of control and potential for specialist expertise of management lost in terms of people e.g. safeguarding and / or finance services

H. How will it be different / better?

- Same as Options 2 and 4.
- It brings together teams from different divisions in the same and different departments – there is a risk in this but it does integrate those who provide advice and guidance and assessment on financial and personal support.
- Is it a step too far?
- Is it too big?
- Do we have the capacity to deliver it?

10. SUMMARY

- 10.1 The various options have been discussed with the Corporate Management Team. It is essential that the approach to advice and guidance is supported and driven from the top.
- 10.2 The risks associated with change were critical in CMT considerations and these have been assessed in detail with the team. This was not an easy process with, as an example financial control risks being considered against safeguarding risks.
- 10.3 In summary, suggestions for a delivery model by CMT and based on option 4 might include:-
- The creation of a restructured Customer Services Centre to deal with non-variable processes that will include the Registration Service and

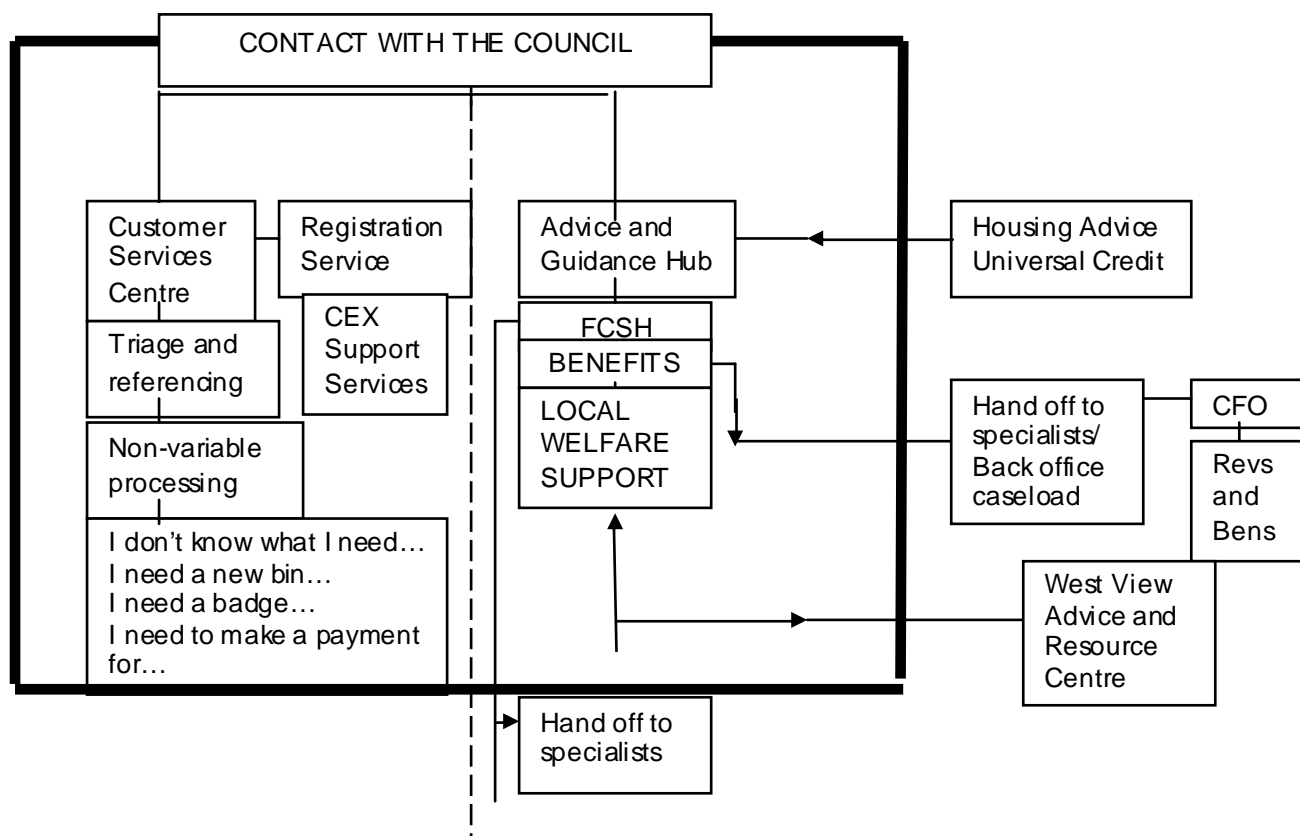
the Chief Executive's support service function. The Customer Services Centre could be responsible to the Assistant Chief Executive to retain its corporate identity and to provide resilience and a coordinated approach.

- The creation of an Advice and Guidance Hub containing benefits staff and the FCSH to deal with first contact financial and personal need including benefits claims and local welfare support. This could be a combination or variation around option 4 outlined in the report. Initially the front office benefits staff could transfer with potential for some of the back office benefits staff transferring as well (subject to workloads and system changes). Management arrangements would need to be considered in terms of the "people" services emphasis of the team and the financial management and controls needed to safeguard the Council. The "people" emphasis would lean toward the Assistant Director (Children's Services) taking the lead role.

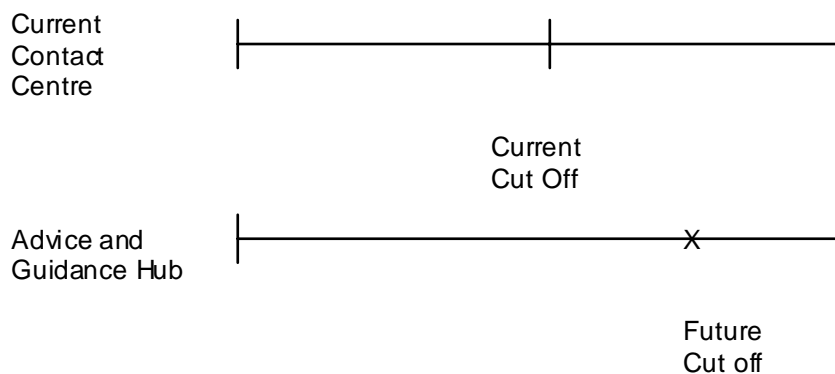
10.4 The model approved by the Committee for further development would require a number of detailed issues to be addressed:-

- Detailed management arrangements
- Staff restructuring of a revised Customer Services Centre including the Registration Service and CEX Support and the new Advice and Guidance Hub and the inter-links with departments and external agencies. This could be undertaken within changes about to be implemented as part of its 2014/15 budget process.
- Potential further integration of relevant non-variable service "first contact" into the Customer Services Centre as increased staff and services work from the Civic Centre.
- How improved technology and working practices can be introduced to save duplication and ensure "customers" benefit claims and support needs can be dealt with at the first contact, wherever possible.
- Any physical changes required in terms of the building (e.g. re-location of Registration Service) and re-location of staff to form integrated teams.
- Ensure financial management of assessment, verification and performance is maintained to the satisfaction of the Chief Finance Officer and external audit.
- Ensure efficient and effective hand off arrangements between Advice and Guidance Hub and specialist back office teams. Including recognition of different caseloads.
- Ensure amendments to the Registration Service is approved by the G.R.O.
- Ensure the focus of FCSH on safeguarding is maintained.
- How the advice and guidance service can be delivered in localities?
- How the high level of back office workload in Benefits and Local Welfare Support which is not driven by customer contact will continue to be provided.
- How the advent of Universal Credit is accommodated?

- How technology can be used to provide customer access to ICT in the Customer Service Centre – a customer “ICT Hub”?
- Staff training needs in terms of Customer Services versus Advice and Guidance qualifications and the potential of development schemes and apprenticeships

**Objective :-**

To increase the number of customers that are dealt with at first point of contact eg.

**DIAGRAM B****11. HOUSING ADVICE/OPTIONS CENTRE**

11.1 The recommendation is that when the 5 year break clause ends at Park Tower in September 2014 the Housing Options Centre moves to the Civic Centre. The Council is required to give 6 months notice to “break” i.e. in March 2014

11.2 Negotiations and review of the services provided will be required with Vela in the interim. Working and accommodation arrangements would need to be well planned to fit with advice and guidance going forward.

- 11.3 Assuming the integrated service remains, accommodation space to the rear of the Contact Centre will be explored together with occupation of areas of the Contact Centre itself.
- 11.4 The Housing Advice Service could remain within Housing Services in Regeneration and Neighbourhoods or it could be integrated into the Advice and Guidance Hub. An option appraisal could be undertaken in relation to the Committee's preferred option.

12. WEST VIEW ADVICE AND RESOURCE CENTRE

- 12.1 The West View Advice and Resource Centre offer free, independent advice for all Hartlepool residents, including debt advice, money advice, benefits advice, housing/homelessness advice. The service was commissioned, in competition, by the Council. It is managed through the Community Regeneration team within Neighbourhood Management in Regeneration and Neighbourhoods.
- 12.2 They provide free, confidential, impartial and independent specialist advice and information including putting forward a case for the client, advocacy and representation at Court/Tribunal. The Council's key priority areas for specialist advice and information services are:
- Welfare Benefits
 - Debt
 - Money Management
 - Employment Law
 - Housing and Homelessness issues
- 12.3 Through the performance management systems in place, evidence has verified the West View Advice and Resource Centre are providing a service as detailed in the contract and are meeting the requirements and targets. Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee previously received reports on the performance. The original contract was due to end in March 2013 but in recognition of the performance the contract was extended for a further 12 months until March 2014 in line with the original contract agreement.
- 12.4 At the end of the contract there maybe an option to bring the service 'in-house' and incorporate it into the Advice and Guidance Hub. If this was to take place it would be essential to maintain (and improve) the current service and this would involve transfer of staff from the current provider to the Council. Much of the advice provided, for example, debt advice is specialist and requires relevant skills and knowledge that may be best provided by other organisations.
- 12.5 The provision of the service at satellite locations could be linked to the Advice and Guidance Hub.

- 12.6 This option could be explored in liaison with West View Advice and Resource Centre over the next three months with the feasibility being reported back to the Committee.
- 12.7 The future of this service is, of course, dependent on the funding available to deliver it. The Council will need to consider whether this specialist advice and guidance is a priority for future funding.

13. USER PROPERTY & FINANCE TEAM, ADULT SERVICES

- 13.1 The User Property & Finance Team (UP&FT) are a specialist team that undertake a range of different functions including
- financial assessment (generating income for the Council of over £9m per year);
 - debt recovery in relation to payment of residential and non residential fees;
 - welfare benefit checks and completion of relevant application forms;
 - appointeeship (in cases where the Director of Child & Adult Services is the corporate appointee for whom the UP&FT have delegated responsibility to manage state benefits on the behalf of vulnerable people in the community who do not have the mental capacity to manage their own finances);
 - deputyship (for cases where the Director of Child & Adult Services is the corporate deputy for whom the UP&FT have delegated responsibility to manage all financial affairs including state benefits, occupational pensions, capital assets, properties including house sales etc for those individuals who do not have the mental capacity to manage their own finances);
 - safeguarding people against financial abuse;
 - arranging funerals for Ultimus Haeres deaths (i.e. a death in the community with no known blood relatives to deal with the funeral) National Assistance Act 1948 (statutory duty);
 - protection of Properties in accordance with Section 48 of the National Assistance Act 1948 – (statutory duty); and
 - boarding of pets in accordance with Section 48 of the National Assistance Act 1948 (statutory duty).
- 13.2 The team has a range of specialist skills with all Visiting Officers being multi skilled i.e. each visiting officer is trained in non-residential and residential assessment, appointeeship/deputyship work, protection of properties, boarding of pets, funerals in the community. Staff are in turn supported by a senior manager from Child & Adult Services who understands the ethos behind social care, the personalisation agenda, safeguarding etc.
- 13.3 A significant number of queries that the team deal with are in relation to the statutory duties that UP&FT carry out as discrete pieces of work.

Examples of this are:

- The repatriation of deceased people to their homeland;

- The distribution of estate to eight children (under the age of 18 years of age) all in foster care/special guardianships;
 - The boarding of a dangerous dog following the sectioning of its owner.
- 13.4 UP&FT is firmly embedded within adult social care, with the team supported and managed by a senior manager from Child & Adult Services who understands the ethos behind social care, the personalisation agenda, safeguarding etc and who can ensure the potential of CONTROCC and the impact of Departmental policies and practices on income collection is maximised. CONTROCC is a system from OCC (Oxford Computer Consultants) for social services contract management and financial assessment management. It includes methods for paying providers.
- 13.5 Any proposed change to the location and management arrangements for the team would need to take into account a range of potential risks:
- Diluting expertise may well put income generation of £9 million per year at risk. Any separation of current duties or merging of duties with other teams will create a significant risk of a negative impact on collection of income, debt recovery, reconciliations of accounts etc.
 - Appointeeships and deputyships work most successfully when there is strong partnership working between UP&FT and the Care Manager. This ensures the appropriate specialist support is given to service users, who are by definition vulnerable and that appropriate advice is given to staff by managers who have extensive experience of managing a specialist function.
 - The Contribution Policy is about to be reviewed. The systems that support it i.e. CONTROCC are still under development. The next 12 – 18 months are critical in terms of ensuring that non-residential services on CONTROCC are successfully implemented. During this time, links to the Management Information Team (MIT) and care management teams must be maintained robustly to inform system development.
 - Recent training on safeguarding vulnerable adults and financial abuse has highlighted that a fundamental change in departmental approach is needed in terms of the recording and management of these cases. It is essential as part of this new model, that working between the safeguarding team, care management teams and UP&FT is strengthened to enable the department to meet future legal requirements in 2014.
- 13.6 At this stage the recommendation is not to make any major changes to the UP&FT but to review it over time as the Contribution Policy and Services associated with the team develop but the work in connection with debt recovery in relation to fees and welfare benefits checks need to be considered within the Committee's preferred option.

14. IMPLEMENTATION

- 14.1 The Advice and Guidance project is a major one, impacting on our customers and potentially all staff across the Council in some form. The

essential components for success will be project governance around a multi disciplinary team and genuine 'buy in' from corporate management team and Members.

Those who provide advice and guidance need to be trained and empowered with a culture of team working and customer focus.

The benefits will be :-

- A Customer Services Centre that is joined-up, expert, resilient and effective.
- The ability to deliver services out to the community.
- Staff feel they are more responsible and the Customer Services Centre is a good place to work.
- Better use of technology and smarter working.

15. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 These are covered in each of the options described in Section 9.
- 15.2 In essence there is always a risk in major changes to service delivery where the outcome is expected to meet the future needs of our customers in a different environment.
- 15.3 In order to achieve the right outcomes the implementation of the changes needs to be carefully planned and delivered and it is proposed that comprehensive risk management arrangements for service delivery is put in place particularly around safeguarding and financial controls.

16. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 16.1 The implementation plan will consider the preferred option to establish the cost of this option, the potential scope to make efficiencies and savings where possible, which may need to be reinvested to get the right structure and supporting technology to achieve the outcomes.

17. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 17.1 Any legal implications of the changes will be addressed through the implementation plan in liaison with the Chief Solicitor.

18. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 18.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the implementation plan to meet the needs of customers and staff. Physical access arrangements will be included.

19. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 19.1 There will be a restructuring across a number of sections of the Council and consultation with staff and trade unions will be undertaken at key stages in line with the Council's policies.

20. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 20.1 The attention of the Committee is drawn to the Asset Management element of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The decision by Cabinet in January 2009 requires a commercial, proactive approach to be taken on Asset Management issues, the proceeds of this transaction being a contribution to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 20.2 The decision to adopt a commercial approach to asset management requires the Council to realise the full value of any properties or property rights that it disposes of. In this respect our priority is to maximize the use of the Civic Centre whilst utilizing appropriate satellite locations where required.
- 20.3 There is potential to relocate the Registration Service (subject to another item on the agenda). The funding and planning for this will need to be considered.
- 20.4 Where there are any other physical changes required they will be undertaken to ensure we maximize the use of our property and gain best value.

21. SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 CONSIDERATIONS

- 21.1 Any issues will be highlighted and addressed as part of the Implementation Plan.

22. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 22.1 That the Committee:-
1. Consider the report with comments welcomed.
 2. Consider the Options for Future Delivery in Section 9 together with the suggestions within Section 10 – Summary of the report.
 3. Approve a preferred option and requests a detailed implementation plan with structures and costings, addressing the needs outlined in section 10.4 with a view to implementing the changes by April 2014.

4. Considers whether there may be potential to develop the preferred option over time to further focus advice and guidance particularly as Universal Credit and its effects on the Council and our customers are rolled out
5. Authorise the Assistant Director (Resources) to work with CMT on the management structures, financial appraisal, implementation plan and proposed risk management arrangements for service delivery for the preferred option with a further report to the Committee in November/December 2013 for final approval.
6. Approve the commencement of the necessary consultations with staff and Trade Unions and associated stakeholders.
7. Consider and comment on, the future of services currently provided by the West View Advice and Resource Centre and agree to receive a report in November 2013 on options beyond 2013/14.
8. Consider and comment on the future provision of Housing Advice/Housing Options Centre post September 2014.

23. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 23.1 To address the needs identified in the Council Plan 2013 / 14.
- 23.2 To improve the front facing advice and guidance and support given to the public both in the short and long term.
- 23.3 To ensure customers are able to access all of the financial and personal support they are entitled to.

24. CONTACT OFFICER

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FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

19 September 2013



Report of: Assistant Chief Executive and Director of
Regeneration & Neighbourhoods

Subject: REGISTRATION SERVICE UPDATE

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Non-key decision

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the recommendations made at the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee held on 22 March 2013 namely that;

- All appropriate staff are fully trained;
- Marriage packages be explored as a means of income generation
- Consideration be given to the relocation of the Registration Service to a more "suitable" location

2.2 Elsewhere on this agenda is a report considering options in respect of Advice and Guidance service provided by the Council. The two reports, whilst separate in many ways have a significant number of links.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Registration Service is provided in partnership with the General Register Office (GRO), part of Her Majesty's Passport Office. GRO issues a Proper Officer's manual that details the roles and responsibilities of the Proper Officer. In addition, they produce a Good Practice Guide, Code of Practice and Guiding Principles documents that all include guidance on relocating registration services.

3.2 The Proper Officer's roles and responsibilities document includes a paragraph specifically in relation to accommodation and an extract of the relevant information is detailed below.

Registration Accommodation

Office of Superintendent Registrar (Register Office)

4.2 Local authorities are required to provide and maintain a register office in each district, which must be approved by the Registrar General. It must also include a fireproof repository for the birth, death and marriage records held by the district.

- 3.3 The Guiding Principles document details the requirements for delivering the Registration Service and also provides information in relation to accommodation provision for both officers and service users. An extract from the Guiding Principles document is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.4 The service has been delivered by the Customer and Support Services Section from Level 2 of the Civic Centre since March 2011 and offers birth and death registrations, notice of marriage/civil partnerships, ceremonies and copy certificate production.
- 3.5 GRO recommends that registrations and notices of marriage/civil partnership are arranged by appointment. All the Register Offices in the North East Region operate an appointment system for death registrations.

Table 1 below details the number of registration appointments that were undertaken over the last 2 financial years.

Table 1		
Registration Events	2011/12	2012/13
Stillbirth Registration/Declaration	1	0
Birth Registrations	283	254
Birth Declarations	906	908
Death Registrations	881	892
Notice of Marriage/Civil Partnership	590	512
Total Events	2661	2566

- 3.6 CEREMONIES
Ceremonies take place in 3 types of venue
- Superintendent Registrar's Office (one of the committee rooms)
 - Middlegate Room at the Borough Hall (our decommissioned marriage room)
 - Approved Premises
- 3.7 There are currently 10 Approved Premises including local hotels, HCFE, HMS Trincomalee together with various council premises including the Borough Hall, Town Hall, Hartlepool Maritime Experience and Summerhill. A full list of Ceremony Venues is attached at **Appendix 2**.

- 3.8 Table 2 below details the number and type of ceremonies undertaken during 2011/12 and 2012/13.

Table 2		
Ceremonies	2011/12	2012/13
Emergency Ceremonies	1	1
SR Office (Committee Room)	27	27
Middlegate Room (Decommissioned Marriage Room)	79	78
Approved Premises	67	80
Total Events	174	186

- 3.9 There are 3 types of ceremony – a statutory ceremony that takes place in the Superintendent Registrar's Office, Middlegate Room ceremonies and extended ceremonies with more individual choice and personalisation that are mainly held in approved premises but can be provided at the Middlegate Room.

Statutory Ceremonies take place in a small room/office with the only couple and their witnesses in attendance. Couples would tend to choose this type of ceremony as it is offered as a low cost option and provides choice to service users. Middlegate Room ceremonies seat between 30-40 guests and offer an alternative to full marriage packages that are available at approved venues and usually include catering, bar, entertainment etc.

- 3.10 There is a statutory requirement to undertake home visits for certain events including registration of deaths where the informant is housebound, still births and to undertake emergency and/or 'death bed' marriages. The numbers for each of these types of event are low.

3.11 GENERAL ENQUIRIES

In addition to the statutory functions listed above, the service deals with enquiries from the public mainly around booking appointments and providing copy birth, death and marriage certificates.

Table 3 below identifies the number of queries/requests received in relation to the other registration activities.

Table 3		
Registration Activities	2011/12	2012/13
Telephone enquiries	9500*	9015
Email enquiries	727	762
Requests for copy Certificates	2496	2735

* Estimated based on 6 month's statistics following transfer in Oct 2011

3.12 SAVINGS

Since April 2010 when the service transferred to the Customer & Support Services Section, a direct saving of around £69k has been achieved across the Registration Service. This saving has been made by

Realigning registration management responsibilities	£36,000
Deleting part-time Registration Officer post	£10,000
Removing uniform provision	£2,000
Transferring straightforward registrations to contact centre	£21,000
Total	£69,000

4. REVIEW OF SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**4.1 STAFF TRAINING**

Prior to the service transferring, Stockton Borough Council, as the Regional Training provider for the North East Registration area, provided Train the Trainer sessions across all activities. Our staff attended formal training sessions and utilised the e-learning packages that are available on GRO's website using their Good Practice Guide and Handbook.

The e-learning package includes a test at the end of each module to ensure that officers understand what is required of them. In addition, some work shadowing was included.

All appropriate staff were fully trained before they undertook registration appointments with customers. As is usual with services that operate within a legislative framework, training is an ongoing activity and is especially relevant as and when changes or amendments are made to regulations.

4.2 MARRIAGE PACKAGES

Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee also recommended that consideration be given to providing marriage packages as a possible means of generating income.

A small working group has been set up to consider whether there are any opportunities in this area. The group is led by the Customer & Support Services Manager who is working with the Facilities Management Manager and Head of Culture and Information to look at whether there are any opportunities to package catering, hall hire, ceremonies and events to generate additional funds. A review of suitable Council accommodation is progressing.

The group is undertaking some benchmarking both locally and around the region to ascertain how many other Councils promote wedding packages and how successful they are at generating income. Consideration is also being given to marriage packages offered by local businesses to ascertain whether the Council could offer a similar product whilst ensuring that costs are competitive.

4.3 ACCOMMODATION REQUIREMENTS

- 4.3.1 There are some essential requirements that need to be considered prior to relocating the Register Office. Access to any proposed building must meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and a reception point and waiting area are needed. In addition, interview rooms will be required to provide a private environment for registering events. Along with the usual network connections, a telephone system for transferring calls and leaving messages will also be required.

GRO requirements for Register Offices include provision of a Superintendent Registrar's Office that can be used as a statutory marriage room and a vault or secure fireproof storeroom for statutory registers.

- 4.3.2 The Council's asset management strategy is to maximise existing assets and dispose of surplus buildings.

In reviewing the Asset Management portfolio, consideration has been given to 2 town centre locations and the other most appropriate satellite locations.

These have been identified as

Civic Centre – existing location and other areas of the building
Sir William Gray House
Borough Hall
Tanfield Road

The main considerations to be taken into account when delivering a Registration Service are listed below at Table 4. Points 1-3 detail the minimum essential items that must be provided. Each venue has been marked as to whether or not it currently meets the standard.

Table 4					
No	Ideal Requirements	Venue			
		Civic Centre	Sir Wm Gray House	Borough Hall	Tanfield Offices
1	*Equality Act Compliant		X		X
2	*SR Office (Statutory Marriage Room)		X		X
3	*Vault/Secure Fireproof Storeroom		X	X	X
4	Reception Waiting Area			X	X
5	Interview Rooms/Offices		X		X
6	Network Connection				
7	Telephone System		X	X	X
8	Private Car Parking At Venue	X		X	
9	Public Car Parking Nearby		X		X
10	Public Transport (single journey)			X	X
11	Ground Floor Accommodation			X	X
12	Reception Desk		X	X	X
13	Secluded Waiting Area		X	X	X
14	General Office Area			X	X
15	Ceremonies Room	X	X		X
16	Public Toilets		X		
17	Disabled Toilet			X	
18	Baby Changing Facility		X	X	X
19	Aggregated/Integrated Services		X	X	X
20	Service Resilience			X	X
21	Sustainable Location				

* Legal requirements at any venue

** Services currently located within premises are to be reviewed over next 2 years

4.3.3 CIVIC CENTRE

The Civic Centre meets the majority of requirements detailed in Table 4. The main advantage of delivering registration services at the Civic Centre is it is a central location, easily accessible, available via public transport and is known to most residents. Services are currently integrated into the customer service centre which improves the customer experience by enabling staff to provide information on other services in a single visit.

In relation to death registrations, the shared waiting area at the Civic Centre can be a busy, noisy environment. To take into account the sensitivities involved in the certification process, the separate, smaller, more seduced waiting area adjacent to Information Point is currently used for visitors to the Register Office. However, customers are required to report to Information Point prior to being seen by the member of the team. Couples who arrive for their statutory wedding ceremony also wait in the main reception area and, although there are only a small number of these weddings, couples will have to wait in the shared area prior to being shown through to a room. For all Register Office customers, there is no private parking available at the Civic Centre, although public parking is available nearby.

4.3.4 SIR WILLIAM GRAY HOUSE

Sir William Gray House is a central location that is currently used by the Cultural Services Division for a number of their teams. Some of the rooms are fitted with temperature/moisture controls as the building is used to store documents and artefacts that are not currently on display. This building has some car parking spaces and has a limited number of visitors who usually arrive by appointment to see a member of staff meaning that their waiting area is a less busy and quieter environment.

The building's most accessible entry point is at the rear of the building where there is disabled access and a reception point. However, there are no suitable rooms that could be made available to undertake interviews in that area of the building. Although there are other areas of the building that could be improved and altered to meet the essential requirements, separate access arrangements would be required together with a reception and interview offices. Prior to any works being planned, the future sustainability of the building needs to be considered.

4.3.5 BOROUGH HALL

The Middlegate Room at the Borough Hall is currently used as our decommissioned marriage room with around 80 ceremonies being undertaken each year. Car parking is available immediately outside the venue and also across the road in a public car park. There are also some rooms that could be made available for use as interview rooms. The Borough Hall is one of the venues that the working group are considering for marriage packages.

However, direct, public transport is not available to the Headland from some areas of the town meaning that 2 buses would sometimes be necessary. The available rooms are located on the first floor of the building making access difficult for anyone who does not use a lift and there is little scope to provide a reception point. Other areas of the building on the ground floor are currently used by the Library Service and Hartlepool Headland Parish Council.

4.3.6 TANFIELD OFFICES

Works have recently been carried out at Tanfield Offices to create Inspirations Coffee House and the Facilities Management Manager is considering whether further improvements can be made to create a room that can be used for functions particularly following funerals for wakes. There are some linkages between the Registration Service and Cemetery & Crematorium Service around the death registration processes. Ample car parking is available at the site.

To provide a reception point and waiting area, extensive improvements would be required to the existing accommodation together with alterations to the office area to bring the building up to the required standard.

If the function room goes ahead, consideration needs to be given to the sensitivities of undertaking birth and death registrations, marriage notices and ceremonies at the same time that wakes may be taking place.

4.3.7 ALL ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS

In moving the service from the Civic Centre, Registration activities will become disaggregated meaning that some customers will potentially need to visit both the Register Office and the Civic Centre to advise the Council on changes to their personal circumstances.

For each of the other venues, some staff and/or activities would need to be relocated to free up space to create a suitable environment for registering events and undertaking ceremonies.

4.4

GRO considers that customer consultation is an essential part of planning any changes to the service. Since the Register Officer moved to the Civic Centre, customer satisfaction for the Registration Service has been included as part of the general customer service satisfaction surveys. Usual practice has been to undertake an annual survey each year, however, consultation is now undertaken more regularly with feedback encouraged via an online satisfaction survey and 'How did we do?' forms. Specialised feedback is undertaken as necessary.

5. PROPOSALS FOR ALTERNATIVE VENUES

All costs for physical changes to buildings have been prepared by the Council's Building Design and Management Team.

5.1 CIVIC CENTRE

5.1.1 OPTION 1 – MAIN RECEPTION ALTERATION PROPOSAL

The main reception area could be altered by moving Information Point to the opposite side of the entrance doors and creating a separate, enclosed reception and waiting area for the Register Office. Clear signage would be required to ensure that customers do not report to Information Point. The existing, secluded interview rooms would continue to be used by the Registration service.

However, this would substantially reduce the number of rooms available for general use. As the interview room that is used to undertake interviews 'under caution' would be within the Registration area, one of the general rooms would need to be soundproofed or move these type of interviews to another location. A review would need to be undertaken on general interview room usage with the possibility that the remaining reception area being reconfigured to accommodate additional interview rooms, if necessary.

For Statutory ceremonies, as there are a limited number, arrangements could be made for the couple and their witnesses to be met at either the Huckelhoven or North Entrance and escorted to the committee room. The Huckelhoven entrance is only suitable for able-bodied persons. For couples who want a standard ceremony where they are inviting up to 40 guests, the Middlegate Room at the Borough Hall would continue to be used.

This location would ensure that there is some resilience as other staff will be in close proximity and could be trained to deal with Registration activities.

Costs

Approx building costs	£69,000
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5.1.2 OPTION 2 - NORTH ENTRANCE LEVEL 1 – **CEX SUPPORT SERVICES/EMERGENCY PLANNING OFFICE**

This area is currently used by the Emergency Planning Officer and part of the CEX Support Services team particularly in relation to post and scanning activities. From 1976 for around 20 years, the Register Office services were provided via this entrance.

Disabled car parking is available at the bottom of the bank near to the entrance and an external platform lift could be provided at the steps nearest to the boiler-house. Provision of a platform lift will ensure that less able-bodied customers and visitors have access to the building without

having to use either of the sloped access roads and would ensure that this location meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

It is possible to relocate the post and scanning team to Level 2 with the remainder of the Support Services team, which would allow interview rooms to be provided together with a reception office.

A reception office at this location would benefit visitors who arrive for meetings, particularly those who have booked a car parking space, as they could access the building and meet relevant officers at Level 1. The reception point could also be used as a central point for deliveries. As more offices close and teams are relocated to the Civic Centre, eg Housing Options next year, the number of customers may increase. Visitors who arrive for meetings with staff could report to this separate entrance thus reducing the footfall to the customer service centre.

The Emergency Planning Office will remain operational as it houses some specialist equipment that would be expensive to relocate. In addition, this is a small room that is not suitable for use as our main ceremony room. If this option is chosen, ceremonies would continue to be held in the Middlegate Room at the Borough Hall.

This location is in close proximity to the wider team, which will ensure that some resilience can be provided during periods of peak demand and/or staff absences. There would be no additional staffing costs for this option.

Costs

Approx building costs	£68,000
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5.1.3 OPTION 3 - NORTH ENTRANCE LEVEL 1 – PRINT UNIT

The Print Unit currently utilises an area that was the Register Office until 1996. By relocating the Print Unit elsewhere, the accommodation could be altered to provide suitable reception and interviewing facilities. A marriage room could also be provided if the server room is moved when the new ICT contract is agreed.

However, this area currently houses some of the Council's main computer servers together with high volume printing equipment and any move to alternate premises will need careful consideration and require more extensive mechanical/electrical works the costs of which have not been included in the estimate. In addition, part of the area is used by BBC Tees and that facility has been identified as a suitable location for a disabled wc/baby change facility meaning that they would also need to be relocated. Their requirements would include the ability to record interviews in a soundproofed room.

However, as this location is in close proximity to the wider team, some resilience could be provided during periods of peak demand and staff absences. There would be no additional staffing costs for this option.

Costs

Approx building costs	£207,000
(excluding Print Room relocation costs)	

5.2 OPTION 4 - SIR WILLIAM GRAY HOUSE

Relocating the Register Office to this building would require some redevelopment and improvement particularly in relation to provision of an accessible entrance.

The most appropriate area for use would be the large room at the front of the building. However, there is no clear route from the existing entrance to the identified front room meaning that customers would currently need to access it through a number of secure staff areas. If the front entrance could be improved to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the venue would be more suitable. The room itself would need to be altered to provide interview rooms, a reception point and, possibly, a marriage room.

The team that currently uses that area of the building would need to be relocated elsewhere.

Providing some resilience and office cover would be more difficult as there will be no staff on hand to assist during peaks in service demand so additional staff would be required. However, the close proximity to the Civic Centre would mean that there would be a relatively short delay in making a member of staff available assuming that resilience would be provided by the customer service team.

Costs

Approx building costs	£166,000
Additional staffing costs	£33,000

5.3 OPTION 5 - BOROUGH HALL

The Borough Hall has some accommodation that could be made available for use as interview rooms.

The available rooms are on the first floor meaning that customers would have to use the lift from the main atrium to access the service. There are no stairs in the same vicinity that can be used by customers to access the first floor if they do not wish to use a lift.

Using the first floor would mean that access will be via the main entrance doors to the Borough Hall and currently there is no suitable location, either in the atrium or on the first floor, to provide a reception point. No amount has been included in the building costs for a reception and waiting area.

Staff that provide a reception service would need to be located as near to entrance doors as possible to ensure that customers are directed to their appointment room as quickly and efficiently as possible.

If a reception point was to be provided in the Atrium, that would be separate from service provision, health and safety requirements would need to be considered to ensure that the staff who operate in the area are working in a secure environment. In addition, there is no current provision for ICT or customer waiting in this area.

The identified rooms are currently used as meeting and/or activity rooms and are much larger than the usual interview rooms that are used for dealing with the public. They are used by community groups such as the Girls' Brigade and consideration would need to be given to relocating their activities to another venue.

Other accommodation on the ground floor would be more suitable but it is currently used by the Library Service and Hartlepool Headland Parish Council. If this area was available it would need some alterations to provide a reception point though some of the existing rooms could be used for interviewing customers. This option has not been costed.

Staff resilience would need to be considered at this location to ensure service delivery can meet the required standards during peaks in service demand and/or staff absences. Depending upon the location of a reception point, the additional staffing costs may be higher than identified below.

Costs

Approx building costs	£10,000 (plus other accommodation changes)
Additional staffing costs	£33,000

5.4 OPTION 6 - TANFIELD OFFICES

The existing office accommodation on the ground floor immediately adjacent to Inspirations Coffee House is not suitable for the Registration Service. However, other land could be made available in the grounds if some of the existing outbuildings were demolished.

New purpose built accommodation could be provided at the west end of the facility's car park. The building would meet all the requirements detailed in Table 4 including reception, interviewing and ceremony and office facilities. There would be minimal disruption during any works to the existing offices and Inspirations Coffee House. The ceremony room could be made available for use by other customers when ceremonies are not taking place.

Again, at this venue, staff resilience would need to be considered to ensure service delivery can meet the required standards during peaks in service demand and/or staff absences.

Costs

Approx building costs	£625,000
Additional staffing costs	£33,000

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for delivery of the Registration Service from the Civic Centre. This assessment would need to be reviewed and updated if a decision is made to relocate the team to another building. The Registration Service is provided to, and accessed by, a number of protected characteristics groups.

7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 As part of our partnership working arrangements with GRO, any change to the Register Office location will require approval to the alternative venue and register repository.

8. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The majority of standard, straightforward enquiries are handled following statutory procedures by the customer service team. Delivering the straightforward enquiries via this team provides resilience and ensures that there are a number of officers who are trained and available to deal with the required number of customer enquiries.
- 8.2 Complex or non-standard queries are handled by more senior, specialist officers who are trained to deal with a wider range of registration activities and are able to recognise when the enquiry needs to be escalated to the Registration Service Manager for advice or resolution.
- 8.3 However, as death registration appointments must be available on a daily basis, the staffing levels need to be higher than is necessary for the number of registration appointments. It may be that other activities will be needed to balance the team's workload based on the number of existing customer interactions that are undertaken each day.
- 8.4 Whilst the service is resilient at the Civic Centre by using additional, trained staff as and when needed, any move to alternative premises is likely to require extra staff. Also, the team that delivers registration services is integrated into the customer service team and they undertake other activities that will need to be reviewed prior to any relocation particularly if the team is moved to another venue.

- 8.5 Any proposed move away from the Civic Centre will require more dedicated registration staff to ensure that the service can continue to deliver to the required standard particularly during periods of peak demand and staff absences. Additional reception/support staff will be required to deal with customers, particularly on arrival. As this role will be needed throughout the whole of the working day and to provide some resilience, approximately 1.5 ftes would be required with salary costs being in the region of £33,000. However, no account has been taken of additional, casual staff that may be required to cover registrations.
- 8.6 Any staffing changes will need to follow the usual staff consultations and may result in protection arrangements applying.

9. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 Detailed below in Table 5 is a summary of the costs of relocating the service to each of the proposed venues together with approximate additional staffing costs.

Table 5			
Venue	Approx Building Costs	Approx Additional Staffing Costs	Total
	£	£	£
Option 1 – Civic Centre Level 2	69,000	Nil	69,000
Option 2 – Civic Centre Level 1 Cex Support Services	68,000	Nil	68,000
Option 3 – Civic Centre Level 1 Print Unit/Server Room	207,000	Nil	207,000
Option 4 – Sir Wm Gray House	166,000	33,000	199,000
Option 5 – Borough Hall	10,000	33,000	43,000
Option 6 – Tanfield Offices	625,000	33,000	658,000

- 9.2 The costs do not include provision of information technology, telephony, loose furniture and fittings. These are likely to be minimal for the office accommodation as existing furniture can probably be utilised. However, setting up a new ceremony room would incur additional costs and would need to be of a higher standard.
- 9.3 In addition to any building costs, consideration needs to be given to staff relocations. For all the options, except the new build at Tanfield Offices, existing teams located at the identified buildings will need to be moved elsewhere and there are likely to be some costs to undertake this exercise.
- 9.4 The estimated costs for additional staff that may be required if the service is relocated to another building have been included in Table 5.

- 9.5 However, utilising more dedicated staff may require changes to job roles that will need to follow our standard restructure policies and procedures. This would include reviewing relevant activities and, if necessary, updating job descriptions and person specifications. Any revisions to job roles will need to be considered and agreed by the Job Evaluation team. If there are changes to job grades, the usual staff consultations will need to be undertaken and protection arrangements will apply if grades are reduced.
- 9.6 Whichever option is chosen, unless we retain the current method of delivery, there will be a capital cost for relocation and an ongoing revenue cost for 3 of the options. Currently there is no budget allocation for either the additional revenue costs, where applicable to 3 options, or capital allocation for one-off capital costs.
- 9.7 In the event that Members adopt an option which incurs additional revenue costs these will need to be identified as budget pressures for 2014/15, which will increase the budget cuts which need to be identified.
- 9.8 In relation to the one-off capital costs these will need to be funded from either:
- Option 1 – Fund from Capital Receipts – this is not a viable option as all planned capital receipts over the next few years need to be allocated towards achieving the existing capital receipts target of £4.5m (£6.5m if the Brierton development is included). Previous Medium Term Financial Strategy Reports have advised Members of the risks of achieving these targets. It is therefore recommended that this risk is not increased by increasing the value of capital receipts which need to be achieved in a challenging financial environment;
 - Option 2 – Fund from Prudential borrowing - this option is not recommended as there is no existing budget to fund the resulting loan repayment costs;
 - Option 3 - Fund from 2013/14 Revenue Outturn – the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Report submitted to your Committee on 31 May 2013 advised Members that an initial assessment of the forecast outturn has been prepared, based on a very early assessment of current spending and the forecast year end position for a range of corporate budget areas. The MTFS update recommended that the initial forecast outturn of £1.060m should be allocated to support specific one-off financial commitments in relation to managing the Business Rate Risk, developing the Local Council Tax Support scheme for 2014/15 to 2016/17, supporting the 2014/15 revenue budget and the Highways Maintenance Programme.

Details of Departmental forecast outturn were then reported to your Committee on 23 August 2013 and the report identified a net uncommitted underspend of between **£19,000 and £693,000**. The range reflects the impact of seasonal and demand led budgets, which are difficult to predict after only three months actual activity. It was

recommended that this amount is not committed until the position is more certain for these areas. In addition, further work is needed to assess the impact of consultation proposals issued by the Government on 25th July 2013 in relation to the 2014/15 and 2015/16 Local Government Settlements and the impact this has on the MFTS forecasts.

At this stage of the financial year it would not be unreasonable, based on experience of managing the budget over the last few years, to allocate part of the forecast uncommitted departmental underspend to fund the one off capital costs of adopting option 2.

However, there is a small risk that if the net under spend on departmental budgets is only £19,000 this will not be sufficient to fund the one off costs. In this situation there will be a reduction in the resources available to support the initial proposals these monies are earmarked to fund. This would need to be addressed within the MFTS.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 It is recommended that

- (i) Option 2, Level 1 of the Civic Centre is agreed as a proposed, alternative location;
- (ii) The one off capital costs are funded from the forecast 2013/14 Outturn (option 3 in Section 9.8), note the risks of adopting this option detailed in paragraph 9.8 and seek Council approval to vire these funds.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 The Civic Centre is well-known and situated in the centre of the Borough. This venue is beneficial to Registration Service users as they will be familiar with the building location and transport arrangements.

Providing the Registration Service at the Civic Centre ensures that we meet the majority of the requirements identified in Table 4 and a move to an alternative venue will require additional funding for both building works and additional staffing.

This option would be the most cost effective, alternative to the current location and would cause the least disruption to customers.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee – 22 March 2013

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APPENDIX 1

**Extract of General Register Office's
National Delivery Standards and Guidance**

<u>Overriding Principles</u>	<u>Best Practice Guidance</u>
<p>The needs of the customer are paramount in developing a local framework for the delivery of the registration service. Key in this respect is a service which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is delivered sensitively and effectively to the satisfaction of users • provides an operational environment which respects the needs of the customer • meets the public's reasonable expectations on access and service delivery • allows the public to discharge their statutory obligations conveniently and confidentially. <p>There is therefore a recognition that whilst local authorities will wish to deliver registration services in an efficient and effective way, the key elements of customer care, operating environment and privacy are integral and must not be overlooked.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer feedback should be regularly sought and used as a measure of satisfaction and appropriateness of accommodation and facilities • To help ensure a common basis for customer feedback questions should include those developed nationally • Customer consultation and feedback to be taken into account by local authorities in planning / re-assessing service availability, accessibility, facilities and location of service points • Service planning to also take into account geography (type of authority), volume of business, and type of accommodation and cost effectiveness.

APPENDIX 2

**LIST OF APPROVED PREMISES
LICENSED FOR MARRIAGES & CIVIC PARTNERSHIPS**

Name and Address of Premises	Rooms Available
BOROUGH HALL Middlegate Hartlepool TS24 0JD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Main Hall ○ Croft Room ○ Middlegate Room
GRAND HOTEL Swainson Street Hartlepool TS24 8AA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Great Hall ○ Piper Room
HARTLEPOOL MARITIME EXPERIENCE Jackson Dock Maritime Avenue Hartlepool TS24 0XZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Baltic Suite ○ Sir William Gray Suite ○ Ward Room ○ Chart Room ○ PSS Wingfield Castle
HARTLEPOOL COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Flagship Restaurant ○ Conference Rooms 1-6 ○ The Atrium
HILLCARTER HOTEL 31-32 Church Street Hartlepool TS24 7DH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Hillcarter Suite ○ Junctions Bar ○ Rooftop Restaurant
HMS TRINCOMALEE Hartlepool Historic Quay Hartlepool TS24 0XZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Captain's Cabin
MARINE HOTEL 5 – 7 The Front Seaton Carew Hartlepool TS25 1BS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Restaurant ○ Conference Room
STAINCLIFFE HOTEL The Cliff Seaton Carew Hartlepool TS25 1AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ballroom ○ Barons' Hall ○ Palm Court
SUMMERHILL VISITOR CENTRE Summerhill Lane Hartlepool TS25 4LL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exhibition Room ○ Activity Room
TOWN HALL THEATRE Lauder Street Hartlepool TS24 8AH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Main Theatre ○ Lauder Suite ○ Empire Bar

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

19TH September 2013



Report of: Assistant Chief Executive

Subject: ADDITIONAL APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Non Key Decision

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To request that Finance and Policy Committee agree to create additional Apprenticeship opportunities restricted to young people leaving care in the first instance.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In February 2012, Council agreed to allocate a one-off saving arising from the previous year's industrial action of £50,000 to a ring-fenced reserve for the retraining of employees on the redeployment register. To date £1,300 of the redeployment budget has been accessed to retrain employees.
- 3.2 The Council has entered into a partnership with Hartlepool College of Further Education for the delivery of Councils Apprenticeship Programme which is due to expire in August 2014. The college acts as a managing training agency, employing the apprentice and placing them with the Council for the duration of the apprenticeship. The Council pays the college for the apprentice's services i.e., salary costs. All other costs associated with the apprenticeship e.g. training costs are currently borne by the college but there is the potential for the college to request some funding towards the training costs for 19+ apprentices as the funding available to them is lower compared to apprentices who are 18 and under.
- 3.3 The salary costs (which reflect the new national minimum wage rates from October 2013) to place an apprentice is provided in the Table 1

Table 1

Age	Hourly Rate	Annual Salary
16 - 18	£2.68	£5,170.20
19 + (in their first year)	£2.68	£5,170.20
19 – 20 (in their second year)	£5.03	£9,703.78
21 + (in their second year)	£6.08	£12,173.13

- 3.4 Following the September intake of apprentices it is expected that the Council will have a total of 29 apprentices placed with them for the remainder of 2013/14 as detailed in Table 2:

Table 2

Department	Apprenticeship Framework	Currently placed with the Council	Expected September intake	Total
Chief Executives	Customer Service	1	2	3
	Business Administration	0	2	2
Child & Adult Services	Business Administration	3	2	5
Regeneration & Neighborhoods	Business Administration	1	5	6
	Customer Service	1	0	1
	Civil Engineering	3	0	3
	Fitter	3	0	3
	Building Control	1	0	1
	Electrician	2	0	2
	Heating Engineer	1	0	1

	Housing Strategy	0	1	1
	Waste Management	0	1	1
Total		16	13	29

- 3.5 Typically, an apprenticeship leading to an NVQ2 or NVQ3 qualification lasts for between 1 and 2 year. By way of example it takes 1 year to achieve either an NVQ2 or NVQ3 in Business Admin, Customer Care and 2 years to achieve NVQ3 in Horticulture, electrical work and plumbing and 2 years to achieve NVQ 2 and NVQ 3 in Business Admin and Customer Care.
- 3.6 The National Care Advisory Service (NCAS) is the leading national body aiming to improve policy and practice relating to young people's transition from care to adulthood. As part of this work they have developed a number of initiatives for young people leaving care including work experience placements, apprenticeships and other employability opportunities.
- 3.7 The Council's Economic Development and Through Care Teams offer a range of support to young people leaving care such as advice and guidance, work placements and apprenticeships however as an employer to date the Council has offered limited employment opportunities.

4. **ADDITIONAL APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

- 4.1 At the request of the Finance and Policy Committee, Corporate Management Team (CMT) has explored the potential to use the remaining redeployment budget to increase apprenticeship opportunities across the Council.
- 4.2 Within the available budget there are two main options as follows:
- Three apprentices undertaking a 2 year apprenticeship
 - Nine apprentices undertaking a 1 year apprenticeship
- The cost will vary depending upon the age of the apprentice on commencement. The cost of 3 apprentices undertaking a 2 year apprenticeship if aged 18 is estimated at £44,622 and the cost of 9 apprentices undertaking a 1 year apprenticeship if aged 18 is estimated at £46,532.
- 4.3 CMT recommends that 3 apprentices undertaking a 2 year apprenticeship be agreed and departments will determine the areas where the apprenticeships will be located.
- 4.4 In addition, this is an ideal opportunity to make apprenticeships available to young people leaving care to further support the work outlined in 3.8 above and CMT recommend that the above opportunities be restricted to young people leaving care in the first instance. In the event that young people leaving care do not meet the entry requirements then the opportunities will be made available more widely. Formal qualification requirements are often

a barrier to young people leaving care being able to access apprenticeships and further discussions about the entry requirements are planned with the college in this regard. Depending upon the outcome it may be necessary for young people leaving care to spend more time away from the workplace in order to achieve formal qualifications.

5. RECRUITMENT PROCESS AND TIMETABLE

- 5.1 It may be possible for the additional apprentices to start their apprenticeship late this year/early next year as some apprenticeships are able to start at any time e.g., business admin and customer service whereas others may need to start in the next academic year e.g., Horticulture and therefore the apprenticeships will start September 2014.
- 5.2 All vacancies will be advertised via the National Apprenticeship Service website (our website has a link) for a period of up to one month and will indicate that the applications are restricted to young people leaving care if this is agreed by members. Hartlepool College of Further Education shortlist and assess suitable applicants for selection by the Council.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Finance and Policy Committee are recommended to:

- a) Create 3 x 2 year apprenticeships at an estimated cost of £44,622
- b) Note that departments will determine the areas where the apprenticeships will be located
- c) Agree the above opportunities be restricted to young people leaving care in the first instance and in the event that young people leaving care do not meet the entry requirements then the opportunities will be made available more widely.
- d) Finance and Policy Committee agree the proposal to vire £44,622 of the ring fenced redeployment reserve into an apprenticeship reserve which will be released over a two year period to fund 3 additional apprenticeship opportunities and seek Council approval to vire these funds.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

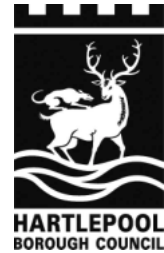
- 7.1 To increase apprenticeship opportunities for young people leaving care

8. CONTACT OFFICER

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FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

19th September 2013



Report of: Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

Subject: FUNCTION CATERING SERVICE

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Non-Key Decision

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To present Finance and Policy Committee with an overview of the current service arrangements, and options on the range of catering outlets within the Function Catering service.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Hartlepool Borough Council has had an established catering service since the 1970's. Initially the 'buffet' service was encompassed with the catering service based at the Windsor Restaurant. The buffet service was then transferred to the school meal service when the Windsor Restaurant closed due to no longer being financially viable. The core buffet service was moved to Golden Flatts school kitchen, where the service continues to be based.
- 3.2 In 2010, the service expanded from the core buffet service, by way of providing lunch time 'take away' catering services to Council officers based at the Civic Centre.
- 3.3 In September 2011, the Wingfield Castle, the Art Gallery and the Central Library coffee shops were transferred from Child and Adults Department to Facilities Management. The transfer included 6 part time staff with a subsidy of £23,000. In spite of this subsidy the three sites have continued to run at a loss.
- 3.4 More recently, in April 2013, the section extended their coffee house business, by opening the new venture of Inspirations Coffee House. The coffee house is the first phase of a potential larger service development for Tanfield Garden Centre.

- 3.5 Including the recently appointed staff at Inspirations, the team is relatively small (14 no.) given the number of outlets that provide services to customers who live, work and visit Hartlepool.
- 3.6 Due to the range of locations and services included within function catering the report will include a breakdown of each location within the service.

4. ART GALLERY COFFEE SHOP

- 4.1 Access to the coffee shop is governed by the days that the Art Gallery is open to the public, which has historically been Tuesday through to Saturday. This is with the exception of Bank Holidays and the Christmas period. Although two catering staff are based at the site, only one member of the team works each day from 10.30am – 3.30pm. The coffee shop is based at the rear of the gallery, and can seat approx 24 customers at any given time.
- 4.2 The kitchen is in general good repair, with the exception of some minor redecoration in the kitchen / preparation area. The service counter is not particularly aesthetically pleasing to customers, however it remains serviceable.
- 4.3 In June, Cultural Services invested funds for the provision of new soft furnishings, to assist with their new 'library' culture feel. The additional furniture has provided a further 6 seats for customers. There are a number of scheduled events over the coming months, and whilst the furnishings have certainly improved the aesthetics of the coffee shop, it is too soon to say if this, in conjunction with a change of menu will make a significant financial improvement. The coffee shop is situated in what appears a good location, however, there has always been a large amount of competition from the surrounding private sector catering outlets and the footfall around the area, particularly on the weekend, can be limited.
- 4.4 There are two employees working at the Art Gallery coffee shop, their contracted hours are as follows:-
- 1 x 15hrs Catering Assistant
 - 1 x 15hrs Catering Assistant
- 4.5 25hrs are worked on site per week, Tuesday to Saturday, one employee working 5 hours per day (*note – both members of staff take in turn to work every other Saturday whilst the other staff member works on the Wingfield Castle every other Sunday which equates to their contracted hours):-
- 4.6 Historically, the financial viability of this site was under question. Before the coffee shop was transferred to FM in September 2011, the potential closure had been discussed as the previous private sector operator was looking to withdraw, however, it had been agreed that the facility would remain open until a final decision was made. **Confidential Appendix A This item contains 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)** provides details of the financial outturn for 2012/13.

4.7 The financial outturn confirms that this outlet is running at a net loss and is no longer viable and therefore the following options are presented for consideration.

4.8 Options:

- a) Close the coffee shop
- b) Put out to tenders
- c) Install a vending machine
- d) Continue the current position at a loss

4.9 Implications

4.9.1 If option a) and/or c) were implemented, the contracted hours of the two staff based at the site would not be required. The staff would be placed onto the redeployment register, and could potentially be made redundant. Should option b) be implemented, the financial risk of operating the coffee shop would fall to an external company and this has proven a problem previously. If an alternative provider took over the outlet staff would be subject to TUPE. Option d) is unsustainable in the current financial position.

Option a) and/or c) is the preferred option.

4.9.2 Consultation has been undertaken with cultural services in considering the options.

4.9.3 Should the site close, the authority would save the direct labour costs and food costs associated with the site. However, this would put financial pressure on the other locations within function catering, as the overheads would need to be reallocated to the remaining sites. Overhead costs will therefore be reviewed across the service as part of the 14 /15 budget process.

5. WINGFIELD CASTLE COFFEE SHOP

5.1 The Wingfield Castle coffee shop opening days and times have been dependant on what historically have been the busier periods during the year. The opening times are split between high and low season:-

High season - 1st April – 31st October

Coffee Shop opening days & times - Monday to Sunday 11.00 am to 3.30pm

Staffing hours – from 11.00 am to 4.00pm, and extended hours during busy times as required.

Low season - 1st November to 31st March

Coffee shop opening days & times – Thursday to Sunday 11.00am – 2.30 / 3.30pm

Staffing hours – from 11.00am to 3.00 / 4.00pm

5.2 Two catering staff work at varying times during the day in high season and one person during low season. Additional staff may be required for special events. The

Wingfield Castle is currently closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day.

- 5.3 There are 69 seats in the coffee shop, with an additional 24 seats on the external decking area (weather permitting). This is a recent addition in order to generate an increase in turnover at this site.
- 5.4 The majority of the furniture has been in situ for a number of years. FM had to invest in new table tops as the current furniture is approximately 20 years old and the tops were in need of repair. The main kitchen / food preparation area is also dated, and FM has had to finance a number of on going repairs to the refrigeration units to maintain the service. FM also recently invested in a bar area in the coffee shop, which assists with both day to day custom and also events.
- 5.5 The current contracted hours for the staff based at the Wingfield Castle are extremely low. Although these hours are adequate during low season, it would be impossible to operate the coffee shop on the number of contracted hours detailed below:-
- 1 x 8hr Catering Asst
 - 1 x 5hr Catering Assistant (2 staff work alternate weekends)
 - 1 x 5hr Catering Assistant
- 5.6 As the coffee shop is open 7 days per week high season, the above 18hrs do not cover the required hours of opening. Historically the staff have worked additional hours during high season, and these costs are reflected in the financial outturn for 2012/13 in **Confidential Appendix A This item contains 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).**
- 5.7 In addition to the daily coffee shop trade, events are requested on occasions. Following the installation of the bar, the section has started to receive requests for functions to include a bar service. However, at present, requests for functions during the day are prohibitive, as the coffee shop is open to the public until 4pm.
- 5.8 It is pertinent to mention that the Hartlepool Maritime Experience (HME) is currently under review, and this includes the Wingfield Castle and the lease of the external catering company (Cleveland Caterers) who currently provide function catering and coffee shop services to customers. Cleveland Caterers are direct competition to the Wingfield Castle, as there are two coffee shops within close proximity on site.
- 5.9 The financial outturn confirms that this outlet is running at a net loss and is no longer viable and therefore the following options are presented for consideration:-
- a) Close the coffee shop
 - b) Retain the coffee shop for functions and events only
 - c) Close coffee shop low season
 - d) Continue the current position at a loss

5.10 Implications

- 5.10.1 If option a) and b) were implemented, staff would need to be placed on to the redeployment register. Potentially if no alternative roles were found, one employee would lose their 8 hour permanent contract, and three other employees' would have their permanent contracted hours affected by losing 5 hours each per week. Option c) would affect the weekly contracted hours, as the hours would cease low season. However, it could be a consideration that the weekly hours in low season could be transferred to high season to assist the additional hours that would normally be required. The overall financial position of the outlet would not change. Option d) would be unsustainable in the current financial position.
- 5.10.2 **Option a) and b) are recommended** and this will allow function catering options at the Wingfield Castle, such as small weddings and other events to be considered as part of the HME Review.
- 5.10.3 Consultation has been undertaken with cultural services in considering the options.
- 5.10.4 Should the site close, the authority would save the direct labour costs and food costs associated with the site. However, this would put financial pressure on the other locations within function catering, as the overheads would need to be reallocated to the remaining sites. Overhead costs will therefore be reviewed across the service as part of the 14 /15 budget process.
- 5.10.5 The Wingfield Castle's other cultural services activities would still continue to be part of the Museum of Hartlepool offering.

6. CENTRAL LIBRARY COFFEE SHOP

- 6.1 The coffee shop is currently open to the public Monday to Friday 10.00am to 3.30pm, and Saturday 10.00am to 1.30pm, with the exception of Bank holidays and the Christmas period.
- 6.2 Customers tend to be small regular groups and individuals whose spending power is limited. Competition from nearby outlets continues to grow and is having an adverse effect.
- 6.3 The coffee shop furniture has been renewed in recent years, and is a mix of modern seating which includes a range of high stools and tables, chairs and tables and leather settee's. The coffee shop seats approximately 50 customers at any one time. A small investment on signage was recently made from the Central Library budget. The kitchen requires approximately £6,000 investment to renew the kitchen cupboards, work surfaces and serving area which hasn't had any investment for over 20 years. The kitchen and serving, is extremely tired and not pleasing to look at from either a customer or staffing perspective.
- 6.4 The following staffing are currently based at the site.
- 1 x 11.75hrs Catering Assistants
1 x 6.75 Catering Assistant

1 x 21.25 Catering Assistant

Confidential Appendix A This item contains 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) provides details of the financial outturn for 2012/13.

6.5 The financial outturn confirms that this outlet is running at a net loss and is no longer viable in addition the Library service will be reviewed over the coming months and this additional space may be needed and therefore the following options are presented for consideration.

6.6 Options:

- a) Close the coffee shop – and incorporate the space into the wider library development
- b) Put out to tenders
- c) Install a vending machine
- d) Continue the current position at a loss

6.7 Implications

6.7.1 If option a) or c) was implemented, the contracted hours of the three staff based at the site would not be required. The staff would be placed onto the redeployment register, and could potentially be made redundant. Should option b) be implemented, the financial risk of operating the coffee shop would fall to an external company but there is a difficulty with the viability and competitive market and the small nature of this outlet. If an alternative provider took over the outlet staff would be subject to TUPE. Option d) is unsustainable in the current financial position.

Option a) is the recommended option which potential to include option c).

6.7.2 Consultation has been undertaken with cultural services in considering the options.

6.7.3 Should the site close, the authority would save the direct labour costs and food costs associated with the site. However, this would put financial pressure on the other locations within function catering, as the overheads would need to be reallocated to the remaining sites. Overhead costs will therefore be reviewed across the service as part of the 14 /15 budget process.

7. CIVIC CENTRE

7.1 Until April 2013, the functions team provided a 'take away' service to HBC staff based at the Civic Centre. The service proved popular, but the logistics involved in providing this service was not easy, as food and beverages had to be prepared and transported to the Civic Centre from Golden Flatts kitchen. The service was situated in a communal area, which was convenient for staff, but was never

considered an ideal location. As such, the team tried hard to provide a quality varied menu from what was essentially a make shift service counter / area.

- 7.2 Following the financial outturn for 2012/13 detailed in **Confidential Appendix A** **This item contains 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 equipment has been removed from site, until clarification on the future of the service is confirmed. There is no suitable alternative location in the Civic Centre.

- 7.3 The food was prepared by the functions team, one member of staff working 10hrs per week served customers.

- 7.4 The financial outturn confirms that this outlet is running at a net loss and is no longer viable and therefore the following options are presented for consideration.

- 7.5 Options

- a) Don't resume service
- b) Resume service and continue at a loss

- 7.6 Implications

- 7.6.1 Should option a) be implemented, the 10hr Kitchen Assistant post would no longer be required.

- 7.6.2 Should option b) be implemented, a more streamlined service would need to be offered to ensure the service was financially viable. In addition, a suitable base would need to be established to serve customers, as the current location is no longer available. This option is very limited.

Option a) is recommended

- 7.6.3 As with the above coffee shops, should the site close, the authority would save the direct labour costs and food costs associated with the site. However, this would put financial pressure on the other locations within function catering, as the overheads would need to be reallocated to the remaining sites. Overhead costs will be reviewed across the service as part of the 14 / 15 budget process.

8. INSPIRATIONS COFFEE HOUSE

- 8.1 Inspirations Coffee House, as mentioned in this report is the first phase of a potential larger development for Tanfield Road site linking with the Nursery. However, it has quickly become apparent that there is potential to extend the coffee house due to its location, into a function catering events provision.
- 8.2 Staff have been approached by a number of customers in relation to using the facility for funerals, christenings and birthday events. A feasibility study is currently underway to look at extending the coffee house into the cemetery offices, in order

to provide a function room. A sound business case will be required prior to any further development.

- 8.3 Inspiration's has been open just a little over three months, and a sound customer base is currently being established. The sale of alcohol has recently been introduced, and wifi will be installed in the very near future. The menu and staffing costs are reviewed regularly to ensure the service is adapted in line with the trends. As a brand new business, Inspirations requires time to develop and expand, so the full business plan envisaged for the Tanfield Road site can be fully realised. Set up costs have been incurred in the current year however it is too early to predict the year end position at this stage.

9. BUFFET / FUNCTION SERVICE

- 9.1 The service is currently based at Golden Flatts school kitchen, where the facilities are shared with the school meals service team. This arrangement is often problematic due to the size of the kitchen and catering facilities. The team consists of two staff, one 35hr Cook and a 16hour Kitchen Assistant. The team provides a range of functions to internal and external customers, this includes a small buffet for 5 people to larger events for up to 500 guests, including civic events.
- 9.2 The two members of staff also support the coffee shops within function catering, with fresh bakery goods on a daily basis. Until recently, they also supplied the lunchtime 'take away' service at the Civic Centre.
- 9.3 The team would also provide larger functions to other locations such as the Borough Hall and Town Hall. However, requests for the provision of functions are restricted due to the lack of appropriate kitchen facilities' in both sites.
- 9.4 As detailed above, the two members of staff are currently based at Golden Flatts school kitchen and they could in time be relocated to the Inspirations site with a broader business model to consolidate the function catering service at this location.
- 9.5 The buffet service was of least concern financially in 2012/13, as detailed in **Confidential Appendix A This item contains 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.** However, there are the following options for consideration:-
- 9.6 Options
- a) Cease the service
 - b) Maintain and reconfigure as part of the wider business plan
- 9.8.1 If option a) was implemented, the contracted hours of the two staff would not be required. The staff would be placed onto the redeployment register, and could

potentially be made redundant. If the service ceased, there would be no catering service provision for the proposed events at Inspirations (e.g. funeral parties, christenings etc). The buffet service would also cease for internal and external customers.

Option b) would be the preferred option in the first instance with a business case to be approved to any extension of the current services.

10. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 To continue the existing function catering service presents a short and long term financial risk to the authority. Reducing the service as outlined in the report provides the opportunity to sustain function catering in a smaller capacity, with the opportunity to grow and flourish in future years

11. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 Some service outlets are currently running at a financial loss, as outlined in the report. Consideration as to the long term sustainability of the existing service is required based on the development of the Inspirations Café in particular and the promotion generally of functions and events. These tasks will be the focus of attention for the forthcoming year.

12. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.1 None

13. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 13.1 None

14. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 14.1 Closing the outlets will result in reduction of existing staffing levels. However, every effort would be made to find alternative positions of employment with the Facilities Management school catering and building cleaning sections. Consultation with staff and unions will be conducted in line with the Council's procedures.

15. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 15.1 All outlets illustrated in the report are the property of HBC, and would continue to be in use should the outlets be closed.

16. SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 CONSIDERATIONS

16.1 None

17. CONCLUSIONS

17.1 As with any catering establishment, it is extremely challenging to provide a service in the ongoing recession. Circumstances beyond our control can impact financially on any given day. It could be as widespread as what the weather is like, if a road is temporarily closed, if there are events on and more importantly what disposable income the customer has. A further challenge is that of the single status agreement, where staff are paid enhanced rates on a weekend and Bank Holiday. This can make it extremely difficult to compete with the private sector who generally pay the minimum wage, and flat rates on Bank Holidays and weekends. This latter barrier is being explored both within the service and corporately through review of the Single Status Agreement.

17.2 However it is apparent that the Council cannot continue to provide the number of Coffee Houses it currently does therefore it is proposed we close the Art Gallery and Central Library Coffee Shops, close the Wingfield Castle but retain it for functions, do not resume the Civic Centre service and relocate the core buffet / function service to the Inspirations Coffee House this will release capacity and reduce labour costs across the service areas.

18. RECOMMENDATIONS

18.1 The Committee is requested to approve:-

- i) The closure of the Art Gallery and Central Library Coffee Shops and the Civic Centre service.
- ii) The closure of the Wingfield Castle Coffee Shop but retain it for functions and events.
- iii) The relocation of the core buffet / catering service to the Inspirations Coffee House over time as part of the development of a broader business model for function catering based on the Inspirations site.

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FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

19th September 2013



Report of: Assistant Director Community Services and Assistant Director Resources

Subject: SKILLS SUPPORT FOR THE WORKFORCE - PROCUREMENT

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Non key decision

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To seek approval of the Finance & Policy Committee to the proposed procurement arrangements for the ESF Skills Support for the workforce project via the identified and approved partners.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Following the successful bidding to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) for the European Social Fund (ESF) Skills support for the workforce project there have been discussions concerning how best to procure the delivery aspects. Hartlepool is the lead Authority and therefore responsible for the procurement arrangements.

3.2 Within the bid there is an allocation of £1.7 million for the delivery of training programmes which is set against agreed targets. There is a fixed amount of income assigned to each start and each achievement.

3.3 In total the project needs to engage 2162 participants over the next 2 years. The project is spread over the whole of the Tees Valley and is a partnership project with all the Tees Valley Local Authorities as partners.

3.4 The nature of the delivery will depend on the needs identified by the employers engaged.

3.5 At present 5 priority sectors have been identified and delivery needs to be within these sectors or their supply chains. Some of these are specialist areas and will require specialist providers to develop and deliver the training.

The priority sectors are:-

- Health and Social Care,
- Logistics,
- Digital Technology,
- Chemical processing and
- Advanced Manufacturing.

- 3.6 The original bid as submitted stated that the delivery would be carried out by a range of training providers including the local authority Adult Learning services.
- 3.7 Hartlepool as the lead Authority would need to commission the delivery provision in a number of ways. The process needs to be flexible to be able to respond to the identified need from employers.
- 3.8 In the original bid 50 % of the delivery funding was set aside as a notional allocation for the five Local Authorities Adult Learning services. This was apportioned according to the % of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in each area. This is a notional allocation and the funding can only be achieved if the correct delivery targets are met.
- 3.9 The remaining 50% of the delivery targets would be commissioned from specialist providers.
- 3.10 As the notional funding allocations within the project for the LAs are large, a process was needed to pre exempt possible contract procedure limits. Paragraph 4.2 below describes the circumstances and exemption required in order to address this element of the process.
- 3.11 In order to fulfill SFA requirements, all organisations with whom the project would subcontract would need to be registered on the UK register of Learning providers. Furthermore they would need to have an Ofsted grade of grade 3 or better.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Four possible procurement routes have been identified which will be able to respond to employers and fulfill the procurement processes.
- 4.2 Route 1 - This is the 50% of the delivery funding which has been set aside as a notional allocation for the five Local Authorities Adult Learning services.

Finance and Policy Committee are requested to approve an exemption to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules which will allow the Council to award business to the partner Authorities directly, i.e. without undertaking a competitive procurement process.

In order to ensure that Hartlepool Borough Council do not operate outside the parameters of the Public Contracts Regulations, the maximum total value of awards to any one of the partner Authorities by this route will not exceed £174,000 (the threshold at which the Public Contracts Regulations will require a compliant competitive procurement process to be undertaken).

Once a total of £174,000 has been reached with an individual partner Authority, any future business would have to be awarded via a competitive procurement process.

Work allocated through Route 1 to partner Authorities would address the scenario where Local Authority Adult Learning services would be contracted to deliver directly to those employers who were referred to them by the Project staff or Regeneration team in their local area. This would be under the terms of the contract for the 'notional allocation'.

- 4.3 Route 2 - Any need which was identified which could not be delivered by the LA teams would be referred to the HBC project team who would then seek to sub-contract to the most suitable provider under the normal 'Quick Quote system'.

This procurement approach is compliant with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and as such, no exemption is requested from the Finance and Policy Committee.

The other LAs could not subcontract as under ESF rules, 'second' level subcontracting is not allowed. Only the lead authority can sub contract.

- 4.5 Route 3 - Where a training provider, such as a College, already has in place very good direct links with an employer who has specifically requested that that particular College deliver the training. In this case the sub contract would be awarded directly to that provider who had engaged the employer, without undertaking a competitive procurement process. This route would be limited to the £60K limit.

Finance and Policy Committee are requested to approve an exemption to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules which will allow the Council to award business directly, i.e. without undertaking a competitive procurement process.

- 4.6 Route 4 – Where a referral is received via an alternative referrer (e.g. the LEP, TVU etc.) then a provider would be sought through the execution of a competitive procurement process in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

This procurement approach is compliant with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and as such, no exemption is requested from the Finance and Policy Committee.

- 4.7 The various procurement routes are detailed on the chart in **Appendix 1**.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 This project is fully funded by the Skills funding agency so there are no financial implications for the Council. Funding would only be given to sub contractors when the agreed targets are met.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Finance & Policy Committee approve the 4 proposed procurement routes and grant exemptions to the Contract Procedure Rules in respect of routes 1 and 3 as described above.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

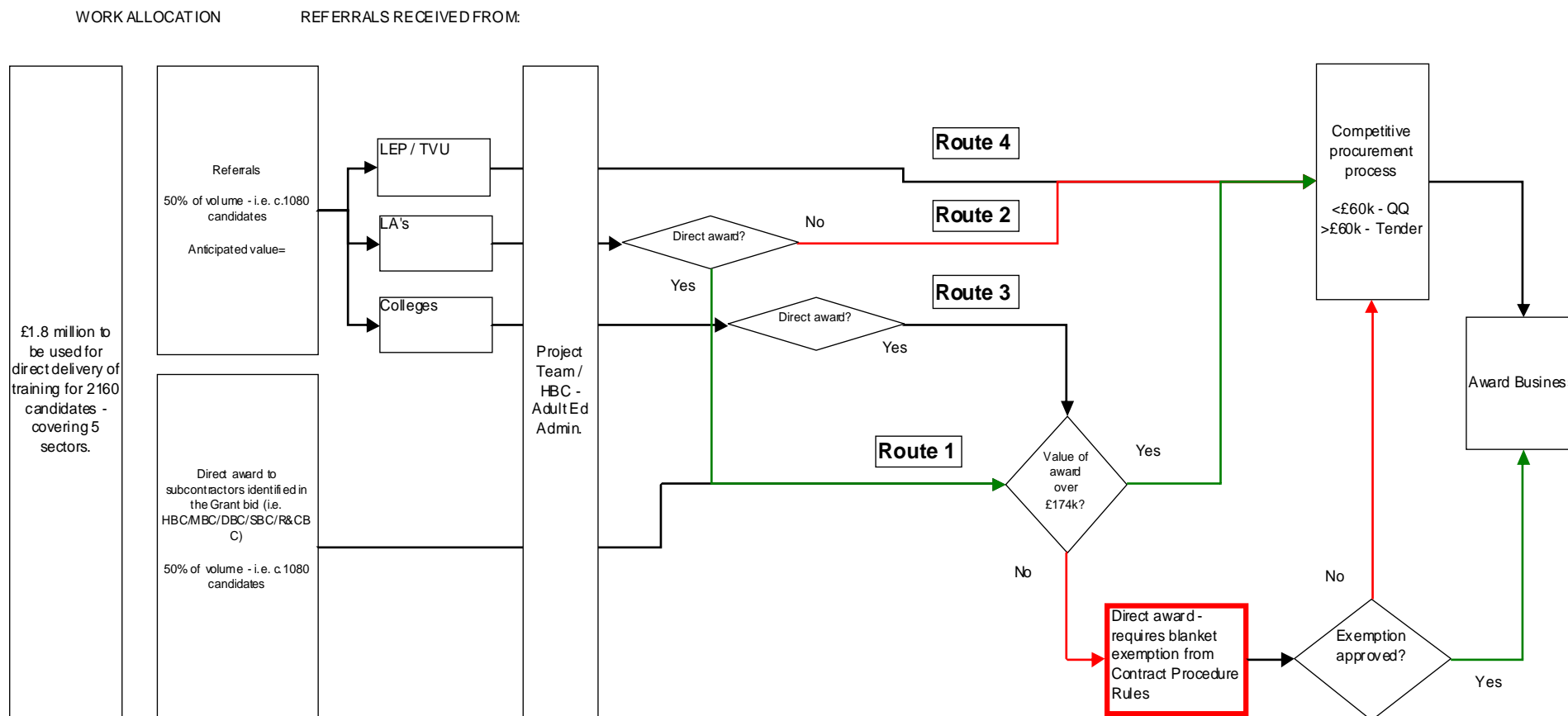
- 7.1 These proposed processes and procurement routes will ensure that the project can be flexible to respond to the needs of the employers and ensure it reaches its targets whilst ensuring robust and legitimate procurement arrangements.

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APPENDIX 1 – PROCUREMENT ROUTE CHART



Finance and Policy Committee

19 September 2013



Report of: Chief Finance Officer

Subject: LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT 2014/15

SUMMARY

1. TYPE OF DECISION / APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Non key.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 The purposes of the report are to:

- i) provide information on the operation of the current 2013/14 Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme;
- ii) set out potential options for the Council's 2014/15 scheme and later financial years; and
- iii) enable Members to approve consultation arrangements for 2014/15.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Government abolished the national Council Tax benefit scheme on 31st March 2013 and replaced it with a requirement for Councils to determine and operate their own LCTS schemes from 1st April 2013. Each year, Councils must determine the LCTS scheme which will be operated for the following financial year and once set, the scheme cannot be altered for that year.
- 3.2 An important feature of the Government's transfer of responsibility for Council Tax support to Local Authorities was a national cut in funding available to Councils to operate their local schemes of 10%. However when account is taken of the value of awards, the actual grant cut for Hartlepool for 2013/14 was 13.4%.
- 3.3 There is a requirement that LCTS schemes must protect low income pensioners i.e. they must receive the same level of means tested support that they would have done under the former Council Tax Benefit

scheme. The effect of this requirement is to push the burden of the Government funding cut within LCTS schemes onto working age households. For 2013/14, Members decided to help working age households by limiting the cut in Council Tax support to 8.5%. As previously reported, this will not be sustainable in the medium term owing to the impact of the Government grant cut and at some stage the Council will not be able to avoid increasing the reduction in support to 20%. This assumes there are no further cuts in Government funding for LCTS schemes.

- 3.4 To limit the cut to 8.5% for 2013/14, the Council had to bridge a net funding shortfall of £0.5m from its own resources and also agree to commit the forecast extra Council Tax yield from making a number of changes to Council Tax charges covering exemptions, second homes etc.
- 3.5 The effect of the 8.5% cut in LCTS support was an increase in the amount of Council Tax to be collected in 2013/14 of about £0.65m, which is due from households that are financially less well off. The Council's arrangements for communicating the new LCTS scheme to the public and the progress on collecting the sums due was covered in a report to Finance and Policy Committee in August 2013.
- 3.6 The Council was one of 190 Local authorities that accessed the Government's one off grant for 2013/14 by restricting the level of cut in its 2013/14 LCTS scheme to 8.5% or less. The Government had set aside nationally £100m in Transitional Grant for this purpose. Many Local authorities had implemented LCTS schemes which meant they could not access the Transitional Grant which resulted in only about half the national £100m being spent.
- 3.7 The Leader of the Council wrote to the Local Government Minister in June 2013 requesting that the unspent 2013/14 Transitional Grant be carried over to 2014/15 and made available to those Councils that had received Transitional Grant in 2013/14. Regrettably, the Minister has confirmed that 'the funding for the grant came from my Department's budget and the under spend was returned to other programmes so there is not a pot to utilise'.
- 3.8 The updated Medium Term Financial Strategy reported to Finance and Policy Committee on 31st May 2013 set out the results of indicative financial modelling of options for a 2014/15 LCTS scheme and also for the financial years 2015/16 and 2016/17. This modelling was based on the indicative Council Tax increases approved by Council in February for 2014/15 and 2015/16 of 1.99% and 2.5% respectively. Details are set out in section 6 to reflect the impact of freezing Council Tax in 2014/15 and 2015/16.
- 3.9 Precepting Authorities on the Council's Collection Fund i.e. Cleveland Police and Cleveland Fire Authority are also affected by Local Council

Tax Support Scheme arrangements. Since April 2013, Precepting Authorities receive a share of the reduced former national Council Tax Benefit funding and are each responsible for their share of the financial risks of operating the Local Council Tax Support Scheme. The Council is maintaining a close dialogue with these bodies as part of the monitoring of the 2013/14 scheme and the development of the 2014/15 LCTS scheme.

4. UPDATE ON 2013/14 LCTS SCHEME

- 4.1 The actual cost of the Council's LCTS scheme is determined by a range of external factors including, the total numbers of households accessing support, the balance of claimants between pensionable age and working age and the particular financial circumstances of individual claimants as Council Tax support continues to be a means tested support. The total number of LCTS claimants as at August 2013, of 15,100 is broadly consistent with the caseload modelling that was undertaken when the current year scheme was approved by Members.
- 4.2 In setting the 2013/14 LCTS scheme, the Council agreed to commit the additional Council Tax income generated from implementing Council Tax changes covering empty properties that are uninhabitable / undergoing major repairs, short term empty unfurnished properties and second homes to assist with the Local scheme budget gap arising from the Government's funding cut. Financial monitoring indicates that at this stage the forecast yield in 2013/14 of £300,000 associated with these changes should be achieved. However, it was always difficult to forecast the impact of individual changes and variances are shown in the table below. Further explanation of these variances is provided in paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4.

Table 1 - Revised Forecast Council Tax yield from Changes to Exemptions and Discounts 2013/14 to support the LCTS scheme

Class	Description	Charging Policy 13/14	Initial Forecast Yield £	Revised Forecast Yield 2013/14 £
A	Properties undergoing or in need of major structural repair and uninhabitable	50% discount for up to 12 months	53,000	43,000
C	Properties Empty and unfurnished	100% discount for 1 month only	148,000	91,000
	2 nd Homes	Zero % discount	29,000	30,000
	Properties empty over 2 years	150%	70,000	142,000
		Total	300,000	306,000

- 4.3 The yield from empty unoccupied homes (former Class C) is now estimated at £91,000 which is lower than forecast as a number of Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) operating in Hartlepool ie. Vela Group, Three Rivers, Accent Homes, Guinness Northern Counties and Endeavour Housing have applied for a technical exemption under Council Tax Regulations, known as a Class B exemption. These Class B type exemption requests have been received by many councils nationally. This position was not unexpected and was recognised as a financial risk by officers when the overall additional Council Tax yield from the above changes was forecast.
- 4.4 It was envisaged that this position would not become clearer until a RSL submitted an application for a Class B exemption and the Council had sought a legal opinion from Counsel. Counsel's opinion has been obtained and this has confirmed that providing a number of key criteria are satisfied i.e. the RSL has charitable status, the RSL has appropriate business objectives (and acts in accordance with those objectives) and is providing rented accommodation at less than market rent level, then a Class B exemption should be granted. On the basis of this legal advice, applications for Class B exemptions are being validated and actioned. As indicated in the above table the forecast lost yield from awarding Class B exemptions is being compensated for from a higher number of properties falling liable to Council Tax at 150% (property unoccupied for more than 2 years).
- 4.5 As reported previously there continues to be a risk that the increased Council Tax yield detailed in table 1 may not be sustainable and this is a further risk which needs managing as part of the overall LCTS scheme. In the context of total expenditure on the LCTS of £12.3m this is a low risk.
- 4.6 As anticipated the local policy changes to Council Tax charging introduced on 1st April 2013 have been unpopular across both individual householders and landlords and also across both the private and RSL rented sectors. A particularly sensitive issue in a small number of cases has been the scenario of the 150% Council Tax charge levied on properties that had been inherited by family members following the death of a relative. Hartlepool's policy is consistent with Local policies operating within the north east and also nationally.
- 4.7 To help mitigate the immediate impact, the Council has offered the family members the opportunity to defer payment of the Council Tax due, until such time as the property is sold. Under such circumstances, the Council would protect its financial position by entering into a formal voluntary agreement with the family to enter a charge against the property in the Land Registry records. As such the debt would be identified during the conveyancing process when the property is ultimately sold.
- 4.8 Members have however requested that analysis be undertaken to establish the numbers of inherited properties in Hartlepool that are being

impacted by these new rules and that an evaluation is made of the financial impact of amending this particular policy. Provisional analysis indicates that only about 6 inherited properties are being affected by the 150% charge.

- 4.9 If the Council were to amend its policy to exclude inherited properties from the 50% premium, this policy change could only be effected in accordance with statutory rules from the next financial year i.e. 2014/15. Those properties would then attract the standard Council Tax charge and the annual cost of the lost Council Tax yield to support the LCTS scheme is estimated at £4,000 pa. In cases of financial hardship, arrangements to defer this reduced charge until the property is sold could still be made.

5. 2014/15 LCTS SCHEME PRINCIPLES

- 5.1 In common with those LCTS schemes established by many other Council's, the Hartlepool 2013/14 LCTS scheme is centred around a number of core principles.

A - Every working age household should pay something towards Council Tax

Working age claimants should have their LCTS entitlements recalculated and reduced to ensure an affordable and sustainable scheme.

B - Everyone in the Household should contribute appropriately

Hartlepool would implement the government's annual increases in the value of non dependant adult deductions from Council Tax Support entitlements.

C - The LCTS scheme should encourage work

Claimants should be allowed to keep more of their earnings before they are taken into account in the LCTS award calculation. The Hartlepool LCTS scheme increased earnings disregards by £5 per week; to £10, £15 and £30 for single person, couple and single parent households respectively.

D - Streamline / Simplify the LCTS Scheme

The Hartlepool LCTS scheme involved the removal of 2nd Adult Rebate, and the restriction of backdating to a maximum of 4 weeks.

E - Retain War Widows / War Pensions Local disregards framework

Under the national CTB regulations Local Authorities are required to disregard the first £10 per week of War Pension Scheme and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments. In addition Local Authorities have the discretion to top up the disregard to the full amount. Hartlepool

had historically applied the discretionary top up and this was carried over to the Council's 2013/14 LCTS scheme.

- 5.2 For 2013/14, the Council had initially intended to operate a scheme whereby LCTS would not be paid to those with capital / savings greater than £10,000. However this principle was not progressed to the final 2013/14 LCTS scheme as it would have meant the Council would not have complied with the Government's Transitional Grant qualifying criteria, which would have prevented the Council from accessing the £0.26m of one off Transitional Scheme monies.
- 5.3 For 2014/15, it is proposed that the existing scheme principles should continue to be applied, as they are clear, fair and were generally supported in the previous consultation on the 2013/14 scheme. However, Members may also wish to consider progressing for 2014/15, the Capital Threshold at the £10,000 level. This change would reduce the annual cost of the Local Council Tax Support scheme by £15,000. This has not been factored into the scheme financial modelling at this stage.
- 5.4. The government have advised that LCTS schemes should encourage work incentives. The Hartlepool 2013/14 scheme complies with this advice (as set out in Section 5.1. Principle C). The Council could determine to abandon Principle C for 2014/15 and this would generate a LCTS scheme saving of £66,000. This has not been factored into the Council's local Scheme financial modelling calculations as such would conflict with government advice increasing the risk of challenge.
- 5.5. If for 2014/15 the Council made changes to the Capital Threshold or earnings disregards the Council would be obliged to undertake formal consultation. This aspect is considered further at Section 7.

6. LCTS FINANCIAL MODELLING UPDATE

- 6.1 The replacement of the former national Council Tax Benefit scheme with a LCTS scheme has transferred a significant additional financial risk to the Council from the following factors:

- **The level of Central Government funding for LCTS schemes in 2014/15 and future years linked to the wider welfare reforms and changes to the Local Government funding system.**

Provisional data from the Government shows that the national funding control totals for Council Tax Support schemes in England are estimated to reduce from £3.387 billion in 2013/14 to £3.383 billion in 2014/15, a reduction of £4 million. When account is taken of Council Tax increases and potential demand pressures the real term reduction is greater, which will increase the financial challenge Councils need to manage.

As reported previously, from 2014/15 this funding will no longer be provided as a separate grant allocation and will be included in the main revenue grant allocation for individual Council's. There is therefore a risk that when this funding is mainstreamed it may be cut in future years and this may have a disproportionate impact on more deprived areas if the pattern of cuts implemented over the last 3 years continues. Further details on this issue are provided later in the report.

For planning purposes it is currently assumed that the element of the core revenue grant available to support the LCTS scheme will remain at £9.6m per year for the period 2014/15 to 2016/17. This position will need to be reviewed when the actual grant allocations for these years are confirmed as this planning assumption may not be sustainable, which would impact on the current LCTS proposals detailed in the report, particularly in 2015/16 and beyond.

- **Potential increases in demand for Council Tax Support.**

LCTS caseload levels are remaining broadly stable with the number of LCTS claimants as at August 2013 totalling approximately 15,100. However, over time the numbers of older people eligible may increase owing to demographic pressures and low income pensioners must be protected within local schemes. Caseloads for working age adults will be affected by economic conditions.

- **The impact on Council Tax collection rates from reducing existing Council Tax support to low income households.**

This is a significant issue and the greater the cut in existing Council Tax support the greater the anticipated impact on collection rates.

The Council operates effective arrangements for collecting Council Tax and in 2012/13 collected 97% of the annual Council Tax due, which is slightly above the unitary and metropolitan authority average of 96.8%. Initial Hartlepool Council Tax collection data for 2013/14 is positive and this position reflects the Council's effective strategy for informing households of the changes, dealing with customer enquiries and offering flexibility in payments.

As reported to members in August 2013, a new monitoring framework has been set up covering the additional £0.65m Council Tax due in 2013/14 from those households affected by the 8.5% reduction in Council Tax Support this year. Analysis shows that about 60% of households have either paid or are paying by instalments the Council Tax due. Recovery action via the magistrates' court is being taken against the remaining 40% of households. This position is positive and reflects a view expressed by some householders that although they have limited financial flexibility the amount they are being asked to pay when allied with a

Council Tax freeze is achievable. 2013/14 Council Tax collection levels are at this stage within the financial planning parameters that underpin the 2013/14 LCTS scheme.

The additional workload associated with dealing with those households impacted by the 2013/14 LCTS scheme has been undertaken and absorbed by the Council's Revenues and Benefits services without any additional staff numbers, in line with the proposed collection strategy. This risk of reducing collection rates will increase in future years when the Council will have to increase the cut in Council Tax support as it will become increasingly difficult to collect increased Council Tax from some of the most financially vulnerable households in Hartlepool.

- 6.2 The Council will be able to partly mitigate the 2014/15 LCTS scheme gross funding gap by continuing to apply the additional Council Tax yield generated from the changes to Council Tax exemptions and reductions. For planning purposes it is assumed that Members will continue to support this strategy.
- 6.3 As detailed in the May 2013 MFTS report, the Council will also be able to partly mitigate the impact of the cut in support by using the one-off resources earmarked to support the LCTS scheme. However, this funding does not provide a permanent solution to the Government funding cut. Therefore, as previously reported the Council will at some stage need to increase the cut in Council Tax support for working age households to 20% to address the initial cut Government grant for LCTS implemented in 2013/14. There is a risk even higher cuts may be required if the Government funding for LCTS schemes is cut further in future years.
- 6.4 The initial LCTS forecasts reported in May 2013 have been updated to reflect the proposed Council Tax freeze in 2014/15 and 2015/16 approved at your meeting on 2nd August. The forecasts have also been updated to reflect the issues set out in Sections 6.5 and 6.7 which will provide a forecast net annual reduction in the costs of the LCTS scheme of £3.39m over the years 2013/14 to 2017/18.
- 6.5 Two options for the development of the LCTS scheme have been identified which provide a different phasing for increasing the cut in Council Tax Support to address the permanent cut in Government grant for LCTS schemes. The Council is only able to consider these options as a result of previous decisions to earmark one-off funding to temporarily support the LCTS scheme and minimise the impact on low income working age households. Both options are based on the following planning assumptions:
 - The Council resolution on 24th January 2013 to allocate £0.67m of the one-off resources identified from the 2011/12 outturn to support the LCTS scheme over period 2013/14 to 2015/16 to partly mitigate

the impact of cuts in support for working age households and the allocation of £0.52m to manage LCTS financial risks, including the impact of higher LCTS grant cuts over the period of the MTFS;

- The allocation of the residual Family Poverty Reserve of £0.15m to support the 2014/15 LCTS scheme;
- The phased use of the additional one-off funding allocated for the LCTS scheme of £0.86m over the period 2014/15 to 2017/18.

6.6 Forecasting the annual cost of LCTS is challenging owing to the claimant based nature of the scheme and the range of factors affecting the eligibility of individual households for 'means tested' Council Tax support. These forecasts become more challenging the longer the period covered by the forecasts and need to be considered in the context of annual LCTS scheme support expenditure of £12.33m and around 15,100 claimant households.

6.7 To enable Members to consider an initial LCTS scheme for 2014/15 and the implications this will have on future year's schemes, detailed financial forecast for the LCTS scheme have been prepared for the period 2014/15 to 2017/18. These forecasts are based on the following planning assumptions:

Planning assumptions underpinning LCTS forecasts for 2014/15 to 2017/18

- i) The existing caseload remains stable at approximately 15,100 households per year;
- ii) Within the caseload forecast for 2014/15 and future years provision has been made for a small anticipated increase in pensioners eligible for LCTS;
- iii) The Council is able to continue to allocate annual Government Grant funding of £9.6m towards the cost of operating the LCTS scheme. This is a significant risk area as detailed in section 6.1.
- iv) Members support the phased use of the one-off 2012/13 and 2013/14 LCTS Reserves to partly mitigate the impact of the Government Grant cut on working age households;
- v) As approved by Council in January 2013 £0.52m of the 2012/13 LCTS Reserves is retained to manage LCTS financial risks, particularly the impact of an anticipated higher grant cut in 2015/16 than currently anticipated and included in the LCTS financial forecast. The availability of this uncommitted funding would not provide a permanent solution to a higher grant cut, but it would provide a slightly longer lead time for the Council to manage this change and to work with households which would be affected by a higher cut in Council Tax Support.

6.8 An annual review of these factors will need to be undertaken to assess the implications of changes in these planning assumptions which are

inevitable and unavoidable, as the majority of factors are outside the Council's direct control. Prior to 2013/14 these financial risks were managed at a national level by Central Government. From 1st April 2013 these risks fall on individual Councils and need to be managed with less Government grant for LCTS schemes and within the context of the cuts in Government grant for core services. As part of the Council's risk management approach one-off resources have been set aside to help manage these risks, as detailed in (iv) and (v) above.

6.9 In terms of the options available for Members consideration two options have been identified:

Option 1 – maintain LCTS cut at 8.5% in 2014/15 and then implement phased reductions in support over the period 2015/16 to 2017/18

- The advantage of this option compared to Option 2 is the ability to maintain the existing level of support to working age households.
- There are a number of disadvantages to this option compared to Option 2:
 - i) The option commits £0.205m of the 2013/14 LCTS reserve, compared to £0.110m under option 2. This therefore reduces the uncommitted resources available to support future years schemes and manage the risk referred to in the previous paragraphs;
 - ii) Phased reductions in Council Tax support will take place over 3 years, compared to 4 years under option 2, and the annual reductions in Council Tax support will be slightly higher;
 - iii) A 20% cut in Council Tax support will need to be implemented in 2017/18 (based on current forecasts);
 - iv) Working age households will become used to the level of Council Tax support provided in 2013/14 being maintained in 2014/15 and may not begin to plan for lower levels of support in future years as they may believe the Council will not implement higher cuts after 2014/15;
 - v) It will become increasingly difficult for the Council to demonstrate that the cut in Council Tax support is the result of the Government decision in 2012 to replace the national Council Tax Benefit scheme with a LCTS scheme.

Option 2 – implement phased reductions in support commencing 2014/15

- There are a number of advantages of this option compared to Option 1:
 - i) The option commits £0.110m of the 2013/14 LCTS reserve, compared to £0.205m under option 1. This reduced committed one off resource means this amount is available to support future years schemes and manage the risk referred to in the previous paragraphs;

- ii) Phased reductions in Council Tax support will take place over 4 years, compared to 3 years under option 1, and annual reductions in Council Tax support will be slightly lower;
 - iii) A 18% cut in Council Tax support will need to be implemented in 2017/18 (based on current forecasts);
 - iv) Working age households will become used to the level of Council Tax support provided being gradually reduced and will begin to plan for lower levels of support in future years.
- The disadvantage of this option compared to Option 1 is a reduced level of support to working age households in 2014/15.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Total
Option 1						
Cut in Council Tax Support	8.5%	8.5%	12%	16%	20%	
Annual Council Tax increase	0%	0%	0%	2.5%	2.5%	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Reduction in Government LCTS Grant, net of changes to Council Tax exemptions	1,290	1,540	1,540	1,850	2,160	8,380
Less - One -off Transitional Grant	(260)	0	0	0	0	(260)
Less - One-off Collection Fund Surplus	(140)					(140)
Less - Permanent funding included in MTFS	(70)	(530)	(270)	(270)	(270)	(1,410)
Less - Use Family Poverty reserve	(160)	(150)	0	0	0	(310)
Less - Use 2012/13 LCTS Reserve	(10)	(20)	(290)	(274)	(76)	(670)
Less - Use 2013/14 LCTS Reserve	0	(205)	(78)	(214)	(363)	(860)
Total Resources allocated to offset Reduction in LCTS grant cut	(640)	(905)	(638)	(758)	(709)	(3,650)
Cut in Council Tax Support for low income working age households.	650	635	902	1,092	1,451	4,730

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Total
Option 2						
Cut in Council Tax Support	8.5%	10%	13%	16%	18%	
Annual Council Tax increase	0%	0%	0%	2.5%	2.5%	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Reduction in Government LCTS Grant, net of changes to Council Tax exemptions	1,290	1,540	1,540	1,850	2,160	8,380
Less - One -off Transitional Grant	(260)	0	0	0	0	(260)
Less - One-off Collection Fund Surplus	(140)					(140)
Less - Permanent funding included in MTFS	(70)	(530)	(270)	(270)	(270)	(1,410)
Less - Use Family Poverty reserve	(160)	(150)	0	0	0	(310)
Less - Use 2012/13 LCTS Reserve	(10)	0	(156)	(350)	(154)	(670)
Less - Use 2013/14 LCTS Reserve	0	(110)	(74)	(138)	(538)	(860)
Total Resources allocated to offset Reduction in LCTS grant cut	(640)	(790)	(500)	(758)	(962)	(3,650)
Cut in Council Tax Support for low income working age households.	650	750	1,040	1,092	1,198	4,730

6.10 In financial terms both options are viable for 2014/15 and over the period up to 2017/18, based on current forecasts. However, Option 2 is the recommended option as it reduces the annual financial risk of managing the LCTS scheme and also provides a slightly longer time for working age households to prepare for reduced levels of Council Tax Support as a result of the Government Grant cuts implemented in 2013/14 and continuing in future years.

7. Consultation and Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.1 Consultation is a requirement of developing each financial year's LCTS scheme to increase awareness, understanding and the impact of changes to CTS amongst stakeholders, including residents, claimants and representative groups. The consultation process facilitates an appreciation of stakeholder views and supports the delivery of the Council's Equality Impact Assessment responsibility.
- 7.2. It is important to operate arrangements that will engage and illicit a broad balance of views and that will provide a reliable insight and real opportunities for interested stakeholders to comment. Extensive consultation was undertaken for the Council's first LCTS scheme for 2013/14 including:

- Hartbeat and Council Website information
- Public Questionnaire survey
- Engagement with Advice and Welfare Groups
- Neighbourhood Forums.

If the Council were to implement Option 1 as set out in 6.9 which would involve maintaining an 8.5% cut and all the existing principles from the 2013/14 scheme there would be no need to undertake formal consultation. However, if the decision was taken to implement in 2014/15 changes to some of the scheme principles (details are set out in Section 5.3. to 5.5) then formal consultation would be required. If Option 2 is approved there would be a requirement to undertake formal consultation. Should a 2014/15 scheme be approved that will require consultation, members will need to consider the scope and extent of consultation to be undertaken eg. public questionnaire survey and the October 2013 Neighbourhood Forums.

- 7.3 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed in respect of the 2013/14 LCTS scheme. This assessment has been reviewed and updated in light of the Council's first year experiences.

8. Proposed Timetable 2014/15 LCTS scheme

- 8.1 There is a statutory requirement that by the 31st January 2014, full Council must have approved the 2014/15 LCTS scheme. However, given that there is no full Council meeting scheduled for January 2014, it is proposed at this stage that plans should be based on a 2014/15 scheme being finalised for consideration by full Council on 5th December 2013. On this basis the following timeplan is proposed:

Proposed 2014/15 LCTS Timeplan

Draft LCTS Scheme - Finance & Policy Committee	19 September 13
Consultation on Draft CTS Scheme (4 weeks) (Dependent on Option chosen)	Late Sept early Oct 13
Final 2014/15 LCTS scheme – Finance & Policy Committee	8 November 2013
LCTS scheme considered by Full Council	5 December 2013*
IT system amendments / testing	Jan 14
Communication of New Policy to claimants	Jan – Feb 14
2014/15 Council Tax Bills produced / issued	Feb 14 – Mar 14.

*A contingency position would be to arrange a special Council in January 2014 to ensure the Council meets its statutory responsibilities.

9. LINKAGES TO THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS)

- 9.1 The previous paragraphs covered the detailed issues which need to be addressed in developing the LCTS scheme for 2014/15 and the initial forecasts for 2015/16 to 2017/18.
- 9.2 The development of the LCTS scheme cannot be undertaken in isolation from the MTFS and there are three key linkages between the LCTS scheme and MTFS as follows:

- **The level of Government funding towards the LCTS**

After the level of demand for Council Tax support this is by far the most important factor linking LCTS and the MTFS.

As previously reported, the Government's decision to mainstream the initial grant paid to support LCTS schemes within the core revenue grant paid to Council's from 2014/15 is a key issue, particularly for Councils which are more dependant on Government grant, such as Hartlepool. It would have been much clearer for Councils and the public if funding for LCTS schemes had continued to be paid as a specific grant. This arrangement would also have ensured the impact of the significant shift in responsibility for supporting low income households from Central to Local Government was fully understood and properly resourced. The new arrangements have a significantly greater impact on Council's which are more dependent on Government grant and which serve more deprived communities. It is not yet clear if the longer term implications of the Government's policy change are fully understood, either at a national or individual Authority level.

Whilst, the Government has stated that the reduced level of support for LCTS schemes will be protected in 2014/15 and future years, no evidence has been provided to support this statement at an individual Local Authority level. In reality, no evidence can be provided to

support this statement as once this grant has been mainstreamed it is simply subsumed within the overall funding allocation for individual Councils. As previously reported this situation means it is actually impossible to determine if funding for LCTS schemes has been protected, or cut. The only information available to Councils is the Government statement that LCTS funding has been protected.

Furthermore, even if there was clear evidence that LCTS funding had been protected, the new system for providing Council Tax support passes on annual cost pressures to Councils owing to the potential impact of increased demand and the cost pressures built in to LCTS schemes from Council Tax increases.

In view of the above position the forecasts included in this report are currently predicated on the assumption of the Council continuing to allocate £9.6m (i.e. the amount the Government previously indicated would be mainstreamed in 2014/15) of the overall Core Revenue grant to support the LCTS scheme. **This planning assumption will need to be reviewed latter in the year** when the Government provide the actual 2014/15 grant allocation and the provisional figure for 2015/16, assuming there is a two year settlement. At that time Members will need to determine how they allocate the overall level of grant funding between LCTS and the MTFS and the resulting cuts in Council Tax Support or cuts in services. This position will be addressed in the MTFS update report once the 2014/15 and 2015/16 grant figures are know.

- **The Level of Council Tax increase**

After reflecting the level of demand for support with Council Tax and the amount of Government grant for LCTS this is the third most important factor in determining the sustainability of the LCTS scheme. As detailed earlier in the report and the MTFS Council Tax rises increase the cost of LCTS and therefore reduce the financial benefit of implementing Council Tax increase.

There is still a net financial benefit to the MTFS of implementing Council Tax increases of £0.3m for each 1% increase.

However, for 2014/15 the same financial benefit to the MTFS can be achieved by freezing Council Tax owing to the impact of the Government's proposed Council Tax freeze scheme. Therefore, on this basis this Committee has previously determined to recommend a Council Tax freeze for 2014/15 and for planning purposes an indicative 2015/16 Council Tax freeze.

- **The level of budget pressures included in the MTFS for the LCTS**

The level of cuts in the LCTS scheme will also be impacted by the funding contribution included in the MTFS. As detailed earlier in the

report this has been set at £0.53m for 2014/15 and £0.27m for 2015/16 and 2016/17. As reported in the updated MTFS report on 2nd August 2013 the lower support for 2015/16 and 2016/17 reflects the cumulative benefit of freezing Council Tax in 2014/15 and 2015/16.

The level of contribution included in the MTFS may need to be reviewed if cuts in core grant funding are higher than currently anticipated. In this situation Members may determine to reduce this support to protect General Fund services and approve moving to a 20% cut in Council Tax support earlier than forecast in this report.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 The Council continues to manage significant financial risks associated with the MTFS and the LCTS scheme. As reported previously, from 2014/15 this funding will no longer be provided as a separate grant allocation and will be included in main revenue grant allocation for individual Council's. There is therefore a risk that when this funding is mainstreamed it may be cut in future years and this may have a disproportionate impact on more deprived areas if the pattern of cuts implemented over the last 3 years continues.
- 10.2 For planning purposes it is currently assumed that the element of the core revenue grant available to support the LCTS scheme will remain at £9.6m per year for the period 2014/15 to 2016/17. This position will need to be reviewed when the actual grant allocations for these years are known and this may impact on the LCTS scheme proposals detailed in this report, particularly in 2015/16 and beyond.
- 10.3 In relation to LCTS there are range of specific risks arising from the claimant demand, the requirement to protect low income pensioners, the Government's funding cut for LCTS schemes in 2013/14 and the ongoing uncertainty regarding levels of future government funding for LCTS schemes especially 2015/16 onwards. The Government's financial model assumes at a national level that demand for Council Tax support will reduce over the next two years, predicated on economic recovery. If this does not materialise then in the absence of adjustments by Government to the funding it provides Councils for their LCTS schemes, Councils will face significant financial risks or potentially need to increase the level of cut in their LCTS schemes.
- 10.4 When account is taken of the statutory requirement to protect low income pensioners, a principle Members have previously indicated they support, the Council will continue to face an unavoidable and extremely difficult decision in setting its LCTS scheme for future years especially given the wider budgetary pressures the Council is facing.
- 10.5 For Hartlepool, the proposal detailed in this report will enable Members to limit the level of cut in support to low income households over a

slightly longer period than anticipated when the 2013/14 LCTS was approved. The report details two options for developing the LCTS support scheme and recommends option 2, as this balances financial risk to the Council and provides a phased reduction in support for low income working age households.

10.6 The Council's ability to phase the cut in Council Tax support reflects Members decision to allocate additional one-off funding towards the LCTS scheme as part of the overall MTFS. On this basis over the period 2013/14 to 2017/18 the cut in Government funding for the LCTS of £8.38m is being funded from a combination of:

- Council funding to offset these cuts of £3.39m, which includes the use of one-off funding of £0.86m (allocating this funding to support the LCTS means this funding is not available for other purposes)
- Cuts in Council Tax support for low income Working Age households of £4.73m.
- One off government Transitional Grant in 2013/14 of £0.26m.

10.7 Its needs to be recognised that in the medium term the Council cannot sustain one-off support for the LCTS schemes and at some stage the cut will need to increase to 20%. It is currently anticipated this will occur in 2017/18, although it may need to be earlier depending on Government grants levels from 2015/16.

10.8 The key risks to the LCTS scheme continue to be:

- The level of Government funding available to support the LCTS scheme (as detailed in paragraph 10.2) in 2015/16 and future years;
- the impact of increased in-year demand which will need to be funded from the General Fund budget, or the Local Council Tax Support Transitional Reserve as once a Local Council Tax Scheme is set it cannot be changed until the following year; and
- the impact on Council Tax collection rates and the costs of collection from a significant increase in the number of households that Council Tax needs to be collected from.

10.9 The report recommends that Option 2 which increases the level of LCTS cut to 10% whilst retaining the core principles from the 2013/14 scheme and protecting low income pensioners should be the subject of formal consultation. This proposal should enable the Council to implement a sustainable scheme for 2014/15. The forecast for 2015/16 and future years will need to be closely monitored to ensure scheme costs, actual claimant numbers, forecast Council Tax yield and collection rates are in

line with current forecasts as any variances will either require the Council to revise the Local scheme or result in an additional General Fund budget pressure.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 It is recommended that Members approve the following proposals:

- i) Approve the continuation in 2014/15 of the current Local Council Tax exemptions and reductions policy as detailed in paragraph 4.2 with the proviso that the 150% Council Tax charge on those properties that have been inherited by family members which remain empty and unfurnished after 2 years is reduced to 100% and arrangements for deferring payment until the property is sold continue. To note the annual cost of approving this change is £4,000 and is reflected in the updated LCTS forecasts.
- ii) Approve the continuation in 2014/15 of the current policy of applying the yield from the Local Council Tax exemptions and reductions policy to mitigate the national government funding shortfall for the LCTS scheme.
- iii) Approve the continuation of the principles A to E set out in section 5.
- iv) Note officer advice in relation to the two LCTS options as detailed in section 6.9, which recommends Option 2 and determine a preferred option 1 or 2.
- v) Approve the proposed timetable detailed in paragraph 8.1.
- vi) Should Option 2 be approved, confirm a preferred consultation arrangement of Public Survey Questionnaire and Neighbourhood Forums and authorise the Chief Finance Officer to co-ordinate the completion of that consultation and report the results back to Finance and Policy Committee in November 2013.
- vii) Note that the proposed LCTS for future years will need to be reviewed when the actual grant allocation for 2015/16 onwards are known, to enable Members to determine their overall priorities.

12. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 To allow Finance and Policy Committee to make an in principle decision for potential formal consultation.

13. APPENDICES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST, IN THE MEMBERS LIBRARY AND ON-LINE

13.1 Not Applicable

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 Financial and Policy Committee 31st May 2013 - Medium Term Financial Strategy Report 2014/15 to 2016/17.

15. CONTACT OFFICER

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FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

19th September 2013



Report of: Assistant Chief Executive

Subject: Hartlepool Household Survey – Headline Results

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 The report is for information.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To provide members of the Finance and Policy Committee with the headline results of the Household Survey.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 This report details results from the Hartlepool Household Survey. The Household Survey (or MORI Survey as it has previously been known) has taken place every two years since 2004. In the past the borough-wide, face-to-face survey built upon the national NDC survey contract with Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) monies being used to extend the survey so that neighbourhood renewal area level data could be produced.

3.2 In spring 2012 the Local Government Association (LGA) consulted on proposals for benchmarking public perceptions of Local Government and in September 2012 issued guidance for Local Authorities. This guidance sets out the questions that should be included and the methodology that should be followed in order for the results to be compared against other local authorities. All results will be uploaded to the LGA's website LG Inform in the Autumn where results will be available for comparison in the detailed analysis report.

3.3 The cost of delivering the survey is estimated at £22k based on a 30% response rate. The majority of this work will be undertaken in house by the Performance and Partnership Team and Support Services. The survey is being funded in the majority by partners utilising contributions which have been made towards the Strategic Partners

Group with the remainder being funded by Hartlepool Borough Council through a managed underspend specifically identified for this consultation.

Methodology

- 3.4 In May 2013, a questionnaire was hand delivered to a random sample of 18,960 Hartlepool residents. The sample was selected from the electoral register to provide statistically reliable results to ward level.
- 3.5 After 5 weeks, a reminder survey was hand delivered to all non-responders. The survey was in the field for ten weeks in total.
- 3.6 The response rate for each ward was closely monitored, and the decision was made to increase the sample size in three wards, to ensure the target response rate was achieved. This additional 1,100 sample was delivered with the reminder survey in June 2013. This sample only received one mailing of the survey.
- 3.7 Respondents had the option of completing the paper survey, and returning it a pre-paid envelope enclosed, or completing an online version, using the URL and unique identifier code printed on the survey. The vast majority of surveys were completed in paper format, with only 150 surveys being completed online.

Response rates

- 3.8 The response rate to the Hartlepool Household Survey was 30.6%, with 6,028 completed surveys being returned. A small number of cases were removed from the sample; this was due to residents contacting the Council to let us know they did not wish to take part, or because of properties being inaccessible at the time of delivery (boarded up/demolished).
- 3.9 The response rates for individual wards ranged between 24.7% and 40%, with the more deprived areas of Hartlepool obtaining the lower response rates.
- 3.10 Table 1.1 describes the response rate obtained at Hartlepool level. Table 1.2 describes the response rates obtained at Hartlepool ward level.

Table 1.1 Response rates - Hartlepool

	Number of cases
Total original sample	18960
Additional sample	1100
Removals (inc. demolished / boarded up properties, and resident self removal)	370
Total possible sample	19690
Completed questionnaires	6028
Response rate	30.6%

Table 1.2 Response rates – wards

Ward	Main sample	Additional sample	Total sample	Removals	Final sample	Total response	Response rate
Burn Valley	1740	400	2140	1	2139	546	25.5%
De Bruce	1705		1705	16	1689	501	29.7%
Fens & Rossmere	1740		1740	5	1735	647	37.3%
Foggy Furze	1720		1720	11	1709	547	32.0%
Hart	1695		1695	14	1681	545	32.4%
Headland & Harbour	1725		1725	19	1706	488	28.6%
Jesmond	1735		1735	82	1653	484	29.3%
Manor House	1765	300	2065	45	2020	502	24.9%
Rural West	1665		1665	27	1638	656	40.0%
Seaton	1720		1720	19	1701	597	35.1%
Victoria	1750	400	2150	131	2019	498	24.7%
Blank						17	
Total	18960	1100	20060	370	19690	6028	30.6%

4. SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR HARTLEPOOL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

4.1 Attached, as Appendix A, is a copy of the survey containing the headline results. A number of questions included in the Hartlepool Household survey will be comparable with previous questionnaires, including the 2008 Place survey, past BVPI surveys, the 2010 MORI household survey, and Viewpoint surveys. However, the purpose of the following is to briefly summarise the findings from the Hartlepool Household Survey. In some instances, a comparison will be made with results received from the 2008 Place survey where this is possible, in those instances where this is not the case no comparative information is included.

4.2 A full report will be presented at the 8 November which will include a more detailed with comparisons and demographic break downs including at a ward level.

About your Local Authority

4.3 Respondents were asked to tell us how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with their area as a place to live, and reassuringly eight out of ten (78%) were either very or fairly satisfied. This proportion is similar to that obtained from the Place survey results (76%).

4.4 Next, Hartlepool residents were asked to tell us how satisfied they are overall with the way Hartlepool Borough Council runs things. Nearly six out of ten (56%) were either very or fairly satisfied. This is a marked increase from 37% from the Place survey results.

4.5 When asked to what extent Hartlepool residents agree or disagree that the Council provides value for money, results were split, with a third of residents agreeing (35%), a third disagreeing (31%), and a third taking the neutral response (34%). The proportion of people who tend to or strongly agreed that the Council provides value for money is slightly higher than that received through the Place survey results (28%).

4.6 Again, opinion was split when Hartlepool residents were asked to choose a statement which reflected how they feel about Hartlepool Borough Council. Three out of ten (31%) residents would speak positively about the Council (with and without being asked), a similar proportions (28%) would speak negatively about the Council (with and without being asked), and four out of ten (41%) respondents had no views one way or another.

4.7 Over half (54%) of residents felt the Council listens to the concerns of local residents, and over two thirds (67%) of residents feel the Council

keeps them very or fairly well informed about the services and the benefits it provides.

- 4.8 When asked how much Hartlepool residents trust Hartlepool Borough Council, results were split, with over half (55%) of respondents saying they trust the Council a great deal or a fair amount, and under half (45%) saying the trust the Council not very much, or not at all. This is a new question and therefore there is no comparison data available.
- 4.9 Next, residents were asked to tell us how strongly they feel they belong to their local area, and seven out of ten responded very or fairly strongly (71%). This question was asked in the 2008 Place survey, although with slightly different wording. Reassuringly, the proportion of people who feel fairly or very strongly that they belong to their local area has increased since 2008 (60%).
- 4.10 Next, residents were asked how safe they felt when outside in their local area after dark and during the day. Reassuringly, almost nine out of ten (87%) respondents said they feel either very or fairly safe when out in their local area during the day. This reduces to just over half (54%) when outside after dark. These results are very similar to those obtained through the Place Survey in 2008.
- 4.11 Four out of ten (42%) respondents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Unfortunately, this is a marked reduction from responses received in 2008, when 72% of respondents definitely or tended to agree with this statement. We can see a shift away from people selecting 'tend to agree' in 2008 (64%) to neither agree nor disagree in 2013 (42%). Reassuringly, there has been reduction in the proportion of respondents who either definitely or tended to disagree with this statement from 28% in 2008, to 16% in 2013.
- 4.12 When asked to what extent they agree that people in the local area pull together to improve the local area, four out of ten (38%) respondents agreed.
- 4.13 Hartlepool residents were presented with a list of anti-social behaviour issues, and asked to tell us which they felt were a very or a fairly big problem in their local area. Residents were more likely to say the following were very or fairly big problems:
- Rubbish or litter lying around (38%)
 - The speed and volume of road traffic (34%)
 - People using or dealing drugs (29%)
- 4.14 In looking at the results obtained through the Place survey, we can see that the following issues have had a notable reduction since 2008:

- Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles (reduced from 27% in 2008 to 17% in 2013)
- People being drunk or rowdy in public places (reduced from 28% in 2008 to 19% in 2013)
- Rubbish or litter lying around (reduced from 45% in 2008 to 38% in 2013).

About your Local Area

- 4.15 When asked if residents feel they can influence decisions in their local area, only 12% thought they could. Over half (56%) said no, and a third (32%) said they did not know. When excluding the 'don't know' responses from the analysis, eight out of ten (82%) respondents said they did not feel they could influence decisions in their local area.
- 4.16 Less than half (47%) of respondents said they felt like part of the local community.
- 4.17 Six out of ten (59%) respondents said they are very or fairly satisfied with the quality of the service provided by the police.

Health & Wellbeing

- 4.18 Over half (53%) of respondents felt their health was good or very good. However, just under half (47%) of residents said they had a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity, of which three quarters (76%) said it limited their activities. This is an increase from the results obtained from the 2008 Place survey, where 35% felt they had a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity (72% of which said it limited their daily activities).
- 4.19 Hartlepool residents were presented with a list of illnesses and were asked to tell us whether they, or a member of their household, had any of these illnesses or were receiving support for the health problems listed. The majority of responders stated they did not have, and were not receiving treatment for, any of the health problems listed. The health problems most likely to be selected by Hartlepool residents were:
- Breathing difficulties / respiratory illness (20% have, 13% receiving support)
 - Anxiety / problems with nerves / depression / stress (19% have, 11% receiving support)
 - Weight issues / obesity (15% have, 4% receiving support).
- 4.20 Hartlepool residents were presented with a list of support services, and were asked to tell us how satisfied they were with each. The support services included in the questionnaire focused on older people, people with mental health needs, people with disabilities, and carers. Therefore, unsurprisingly, the majority of responders (52% and

61%) said the questions did not apply to them. For those who the services were applicable for, a quarter were satisfied with the service which provides support for older people, such as residential homes, home care and day services (26%), and with the services providing support for carers (e.g. advice, information and support services) (24%). Only between 6% and 7% of respondents said they were dissatisfied with these services.

- 4.21 Residents were then asked to tell us how likely they are to recommend a range of health care services which serve the Hartlepool area. Residents were most likely to say they would recommend their GP (79%), and their dentist (78%). When asked about the Hospitals, two thirds (67%) said they would recommend the University Hospital of Hartlepool, compared with 40% saying they would recommend the University Hospital of North Tees.
- 4.22 Next, we wanted to find out what proportion of Hartlepool residents currently smoke, and what proportion have quit. In total, fifteen per cent of residents are currently a smoker, and two out of ten members (22%) are ex smokers. Two thirds of residents (63%) are non-smokers. Of the 22% of current smokers, a fifth (20%) say they do not wish to stop, three out of ten said they would like to stop one day, but not just yet, and thirteen per cent of smokers are currently trying to quit smoking. When asked where smokers would like to go for 'stop smoking' support, a third (33%) would choose to do it by themselves. A similar proportion (30%) would go to the Local NHS Stop Smoking Services and a similar proportion (29%) would go to their GP. Only two per cent of respondents said they would use online services to help them quit.
- 4.23 Hartlepool residents were then told about Clinical Commissioning Groups, which were formally established in April 2013, and were asked to tell us if they were aware of them, and their role. Over eight out of ten (81%) residents said they were not aware of the CCG or its role. When asked how residents would like to be kept informed about the CCG or to have their say about the CCG, the majority of responses said through leaflets or consultations sent to their home (53% and 30% respectively), through newspaper articles (31% and 14% respectively), or that they were not interested (26% and 46% respectively).

About where you live

- 4.24 Responders were more likely to tell us they own their home outright (43%), they are buying their property with a loan or mortgage (27%) or they are renting from a Housing Association or Trust (21%).
- 4.25 The majority of respondent household composition was one (32%) or two (41%) people (adult or child). A further 27% of households had three or more people living there.

- 4.26 The majority of respondents had lived in both their home (80%) and area (88%) for five years or more.
- 4.27 Hartlepool residents were presented with a list of services they provide, and wanted to know how satisfied residents were with these services. Reassuringly, Hartlepool residents had a tendency to be more satisfied than dissatisfied with all the services listed, predominantly:
- Refuse collection (80%)
 - Local tips and household waste recycling centres (78%)
 - Doorstep recycling (77%)
 - Parks and open spaces (76%)
- 4.28 Residents were presented with a long list of things which could be potential problems in their area, and were asked to tell us which from the list, they felt were problems in their local area. Hartlepool residents were more likely to select:
- Transport / Roads / Pavements - Condition of roads (63%)
 - Environment - Dog / dog mess (56%)
 - Employment and the local economy - Employment / Job opportunities / prospects (51%)
 - Employment and the local economy - Cost of living (44%)
 - Environment - Litter / rubbish / clean streets (38%)

About yourself

- 4.29 Respondents were asked to provide some demographic information. Reassuringly, the survey appears to have elicited a well balanced response from Hartlepool residents, in terms of gender and age. There is a tendency for females and older residents to complete postal surveys, and to some extent this is reflected in the demographics. It is also harder to obtain responses from more disadvantaged groups and areas, which is also reflected in the proportion of responses received from these areas. However, because of the large sample received for the survey, and for each ward, the survey is robust enough that the data did not warrant a weighting factor.

Taking part in other consultations

- 4.30 Residents were given the opportunity to let us know if they would like to take part in either Viewpoint or the Hartlepool Online Panel (HOP). Over 1,400 residents said they would like to take part in Viewpoint and over 500 residents said they would like to join Hartlepool Online Panel.

- 4.31 The residents who requested to join HOP will be added to the online panel with immediate effect. The people who requested to join Viewpoint will be sent out a recruitment survey as part of the Viewpoint refresh, in October 2013.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Finance & Policy Committee note the results of the Hartlepool Household Survey.
- 5.2 That members note that there will be a further report to the committee providing a more detailed breakdown of findings to the 8 November committee meeting

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The report is for information only therefore the Policy Committee is only requested to note the results of Hartlepool Household Survey.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet Report, 2nd April 2013 -
[http://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/egov_downloads/13.04.02 -
_Cabinet_Agenda.pdf](http://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/egov_downloads/13.04.02_-_Cabinet_Agenda.pdf)

8. CONTACT OFFICER

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FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

19 September 2013



Report of: Assistant Chief Executive

Subject: HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Not applicable.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To provide the committee with an annual report on health, safety and wellbeing performance.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In September 2011 the Health and Safety Executive and the Institute of Directors published a joint guide on Leading Health and Safety at Work which outlined the actions senior managers should be taking in relation to health and safety matters. One of the key recommendations of this guidance is to ensure regular health and safety information is reported to senior managers.

4. CONSIDERATION OF ISSUES

- 4.1 Whilst health and safety issues are reported to relevant management teams historically the Council has not reported health and safety performance in a formal way. In order to improve this situation the Chief Executive agreed that in future an annual health, safety and wellbeing report would be produced. This is the first such annual report covering the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013 a copy of the report has been attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.2 The report clearly indicates that the number of RIDDOR reportable injuries is falling due to improved health and safety performance and partly attributable to the changes in the reporting regulations from April 2012.
- 4.3 It is best practice to report on health and safety performance to elected members and to make these reports available to the public. It is proposed

that once it has been discussed by this committee it will be then placed on the Council's intranet and external facing internet.

4.4 **Local Joint Consultative Committee**

- 4.5 The Annual Health and Safety Report was discussed at the Local Joint Consultative Committee held on 13th July 2013 and the report was welcomed. The content of the report was discussed which raised a number of queries. One of the queries was regarding why information on other Hartlepool businesses was not included. The Council has a Public Protection Division which enforces health and safety legislation in a number of businesses and whilst they collect RIDDOR data this is for the premises such as offices, shops, warehouses etc. this is for purely for the enforcement of health and safety law in premises for which they are the enforcing authority. In addition the HSE, which is the Government service responsible for countries health and safety regulatory regime, also enforces in some higher risk premises such as constructions sites, factories etc. also collects data nationally for enforcement and reporting purposes.
- 4.6 This annual report was prepared for the Council in its role as employer and as such it would not be appropriate to incorporate data from other companies unless it was for benchmarking purposes. Unfortunately the HSE acknowledges that nationally under reporting of RIDDOR notifiable occurrences can be as much as 50%. This under reporting may be due to not understanding the law or simply to avoid coming to the attention of the health and safety enforcement agencies. This means that if the Council which does notify its accidents in accordance with the regulations cannot make realistic comparison with national statistics. due to potential inaccuracies due to under reporting by various organisations. It may be possible to benchmark against other councils but there are also difficulties in this as the RIDDOR rate is significantly affected if an organisation undertakes higher risk activities most notably waste collection, recycling and construction. This requires identification of a council with a similar structure and function of the Council. It is hoped to do this in future reports if the data is meaningful for assessing health and safety performance.
- 4.7 Schools accident figures have not been included as these predominantly relate to pupils and there have been significant changes from the HSE regarding what constitutes a RIDDOR notifiable injury to pupils. For pupils this is an accident which results in a pupil being taken from the site of the accident direct to a hospital. There has been clarification as to what constitutes a hospital, as a walk in centre (so referral to the One Life Centre in Hartlepool) would no longer apply. In addition curriculum sport used to be included if the injury occurred during a lesson but this is no longer the case unless the accident was a result of something such as broken glass being left on the school field. There have been a number of other changes made which mean that comparison of previous data would be meaningless.

- 4.8 Concerns were raised by trade union colleagues on the purpose of these changes and whilst the Council noted the changes and would follow the law the data on accidents is still collected.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That the Committee notes the content of the annual report.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 To meet best practice in that accident performance data should be reported to the leadership of an organisation.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Joint Consultative Committee report 24 July 2013

8. CONTACT OFFICER

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Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Annual Report 2012-13

Introduction

In the past health and safety performance has traditionally been reported in a number of different areas and in a variety of formats. To coincide with the review of the Council's governance arrangements it is an opportune time to formalise this reporting procedure. The Health and Safety Executive, who are the governing body for health and safety across the country, recommends reporting on an annual basis and it is this approach the Council has adopted.

The main driver for the Council's improvements in health and safety management is the Employee Wellbeing Strategy which was adopted in April 2011. This strategy has resulted in a much more focussed approach to Health, Safety and Wellbeing and has resulted in significant improvements across the Council.

Health and safety over the last few years has been much maligned in the media predominantly due to people making disproportionate decisions with the best of intentions to control very minor or trivial risks. The Council continues to have an ongoing emphasis is on a sensible, risk-based approach which minimises the risks to staff but is also mindful that Council services also need to be delivered in a cost effective way. The attitude of all staff and those with management responsibilities in adopting this approach is to be commended particularly considering the current challenging financial climate. It should be noted that it has been proven that effective health and safety management can have financial benefits due reduced sickness absence and lost time. It can also minimise damage to equipment.

This report covers the Council's financial reporting period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013.

Achievements of the Year

- The Corporate Health and Safety Policy was revised following the appointment of Dave Stubbs as Chief Executive.
- The Council became an accredited centre to deliver the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) Managing Safely
- A number of Council policies on employee wellbeing have been revised.
- The Health, Safety and Wellbeing team have increased the number of internal health and safety courses the team can provide on a variety of topics such as fire safety, personal safety, working at height, etc.
- A suite of guidance for managers on common health and safety issues has been developed.
- Enhanced the Council's fire risk assessment and fire safety advisory arrangements through the use of existing Health, Safety and Wellbeing staff.
- Improved the inspection arrangements for community and school based play equipment.

Due to the Council's ongoing budget strategy significant savings have had to be made across the Council. This has resulted in organisational change which has involved some managers taking on more responsibility and in some cases greater spans of control. In order to support managers through these changes

they are now trained to the IOSH Managing Safely standard . This course is aimed at ensuring managers are fully aware of their responsibilities and properly assess health and safety risk. This also applies to staff who manage significant contracts as there are also risks to the staff of partner organisations with whom the Council works closely. Over the last year 78 people have been trained and passed the course.

Although the financial position is challenging health and safety training is still being provided across all departments with specialist training being provided on such topics as Moving and handling of people to staff working in social care and the National Plant Operators Registration Scheme for drivers of machinery such as excavators. To support this specialist training the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team have developed bespoke health and safety training for Council and school staff. This training is designed to be short and focussed to maximise its effectiveness considering the pressures on staff to continue to deliver services. The feedback on this style of courses has been very positive. Table 1 provides a breakdown of that training.

Table 1 – Number of delegates attending Health and Safety Training Sessions provided by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team

Fire Warden	12
Health and Safety Awareness	78
Personal Safety	139
Fire Safety Awareness	138
Manual Handling	127
Risk Assessment	76
COSHH Awareness	105
Asbestos Awareness	84
Plant & Equipment	61
PPE	24
Shaping Accident Free Environments	13
Safe use of lifting equipment	18
Working at Height	11
Working in occupied areas	27
Confined Spaces	4
Excavation and Earth Works	47
Working in Occupied Premises	11
Personal Protective Equipment	23
Noise Dust & Vibration	11
Harness Awareness	41
Noise, Dust & Vibration	43
Woodworking Machinery	5
Reversing Assistants	31
Accident Reporting	10
Full Day Health and Safety	21

To improve the health and safety arrangements across the Council the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team have been working with management and trade union colleagues to improve employee wellbeing policies such as the substance misuse policy and smoking at work policy. In addition a suite of

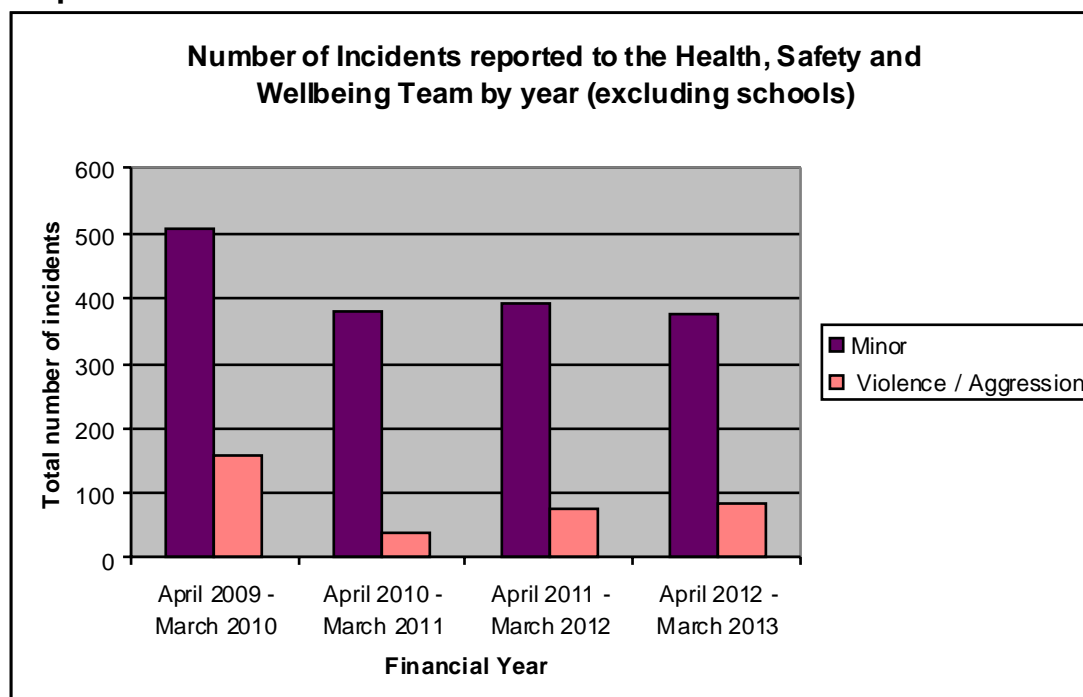
guidance on health and safety provide simple advice on the Council's approach to managing health and safety risks arising from these issues e.g. first aid, provision of work equipment. These guides will be launched in May 2013.

Over the past year the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team have been enhancing their skills to deliver more health and safety services. For example some staff have become competent to inspect play equipment by passing the Register of Play Inspectors International (RPII) operational inspectors course. This is an area which may lead to serious injury and potential civil liability claims in the future.

Accident Performance Statistics

The total number of accidents/incident/issues reports can vary significantly depending upon issues raised and the willingness of staff to formally report these incidents. The Council has regular campaigns to encourage reporting of accidents and incidents. One area of specific improvement has been the willingness of staff to report violence and aggression. In one case, fortunately not involving any injury, to the member of staff the perpetrator of the aggression was arrested shortly after the incident. The incident involving a car parking attendant was recorded on the head cam which provided invaluable evidence and demonstrated the justification for implementing this system. Unfortunately due to the nature of some of the caring roles it is very difficult to deal with some of the violence and aggression due to challenging needs of the people for whom we provide the services. The council continues to look at ways to minimise the risks in these situations.

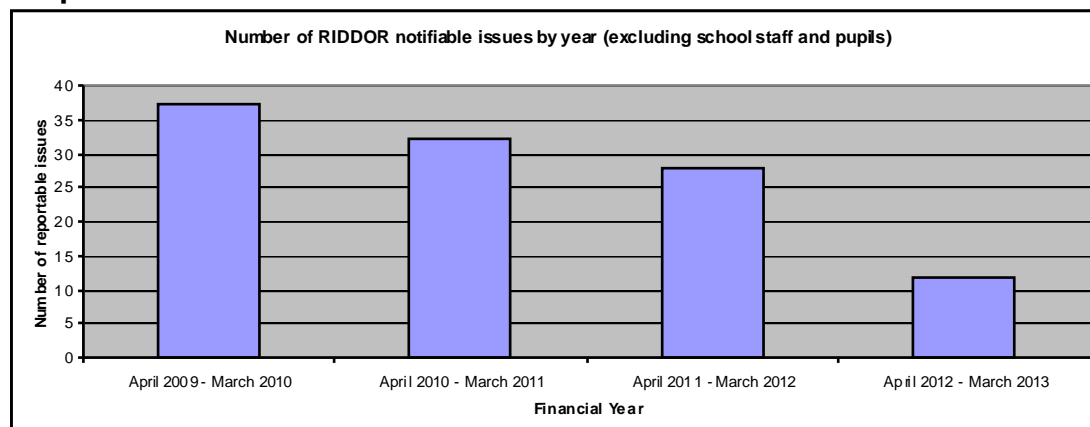
Graph 1



The most significant accidents and work related health conditions may justify notification to the Health and Safety Executive under the provisions of the

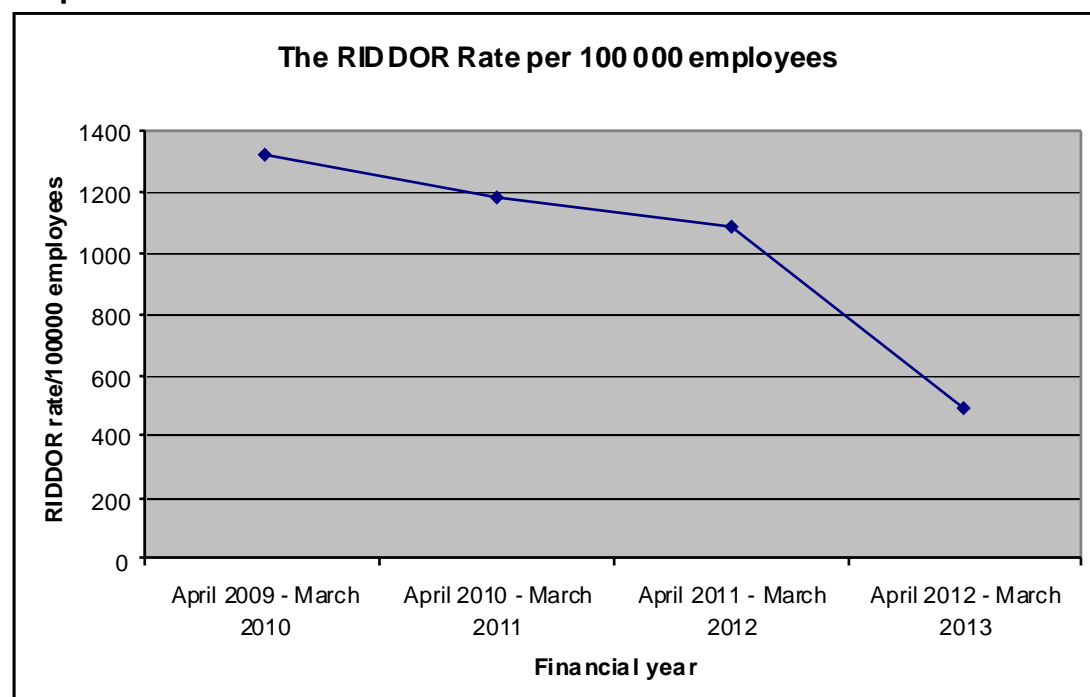
Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). Graph 2 shows a breakdown of the number of incidents in this category by year. It should be noted that whilst there has been a significant drop in the numbers of reportable incidents in the year 12-13 there was a change in the reporting requirements for those accidents where the person was injured and could not return to work for more than 3 days to over 7 days.

Graph 2



In order to compare the results year on year particularly as staffing levels change it is more appropriate to calculate this as a RIDDOR rate where it is a ratio per 100 000 employees which is shown that the RIDDOR rate is moving downwards which is positive.

Graph 3

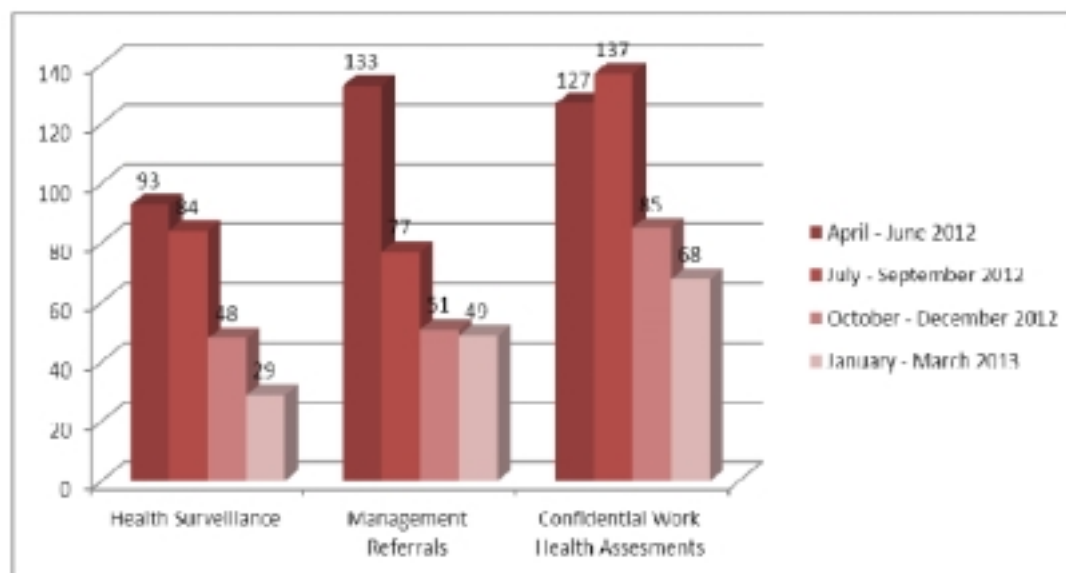


Employee Wellbeing

The Council continues to be active in protecting employees health and as such uses the service of an Occupational Health provider, Santia. Graph 4 demonstrates the usage of the service.

Graph 4

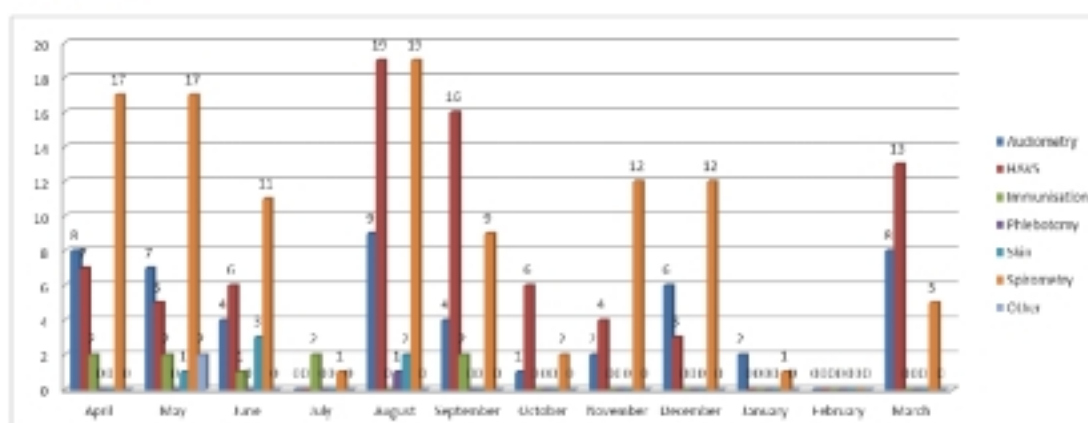
Referral Type



Health surveillance predominantly consists of monitoring of staff for Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome and Audiometry (hearing tests to identify hearing changes as a result of exposure to noise). Both of these health conditions are associated with the use of powered tools.

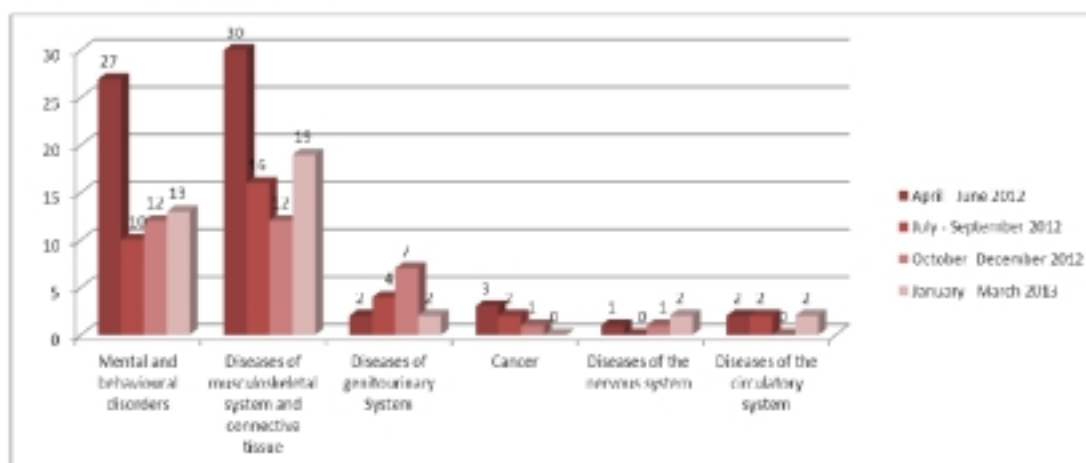
Graph 5

Health Surveillance



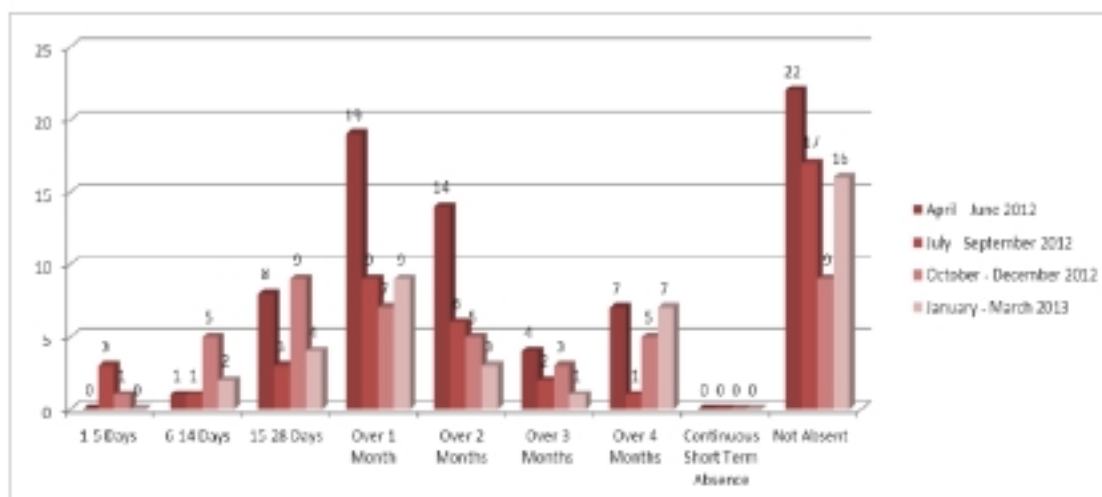
Management referrals can be due to a variety of causes from work or home related stress, through to musculoskeletal disorders and Graph 5 provides a breakdown of these referrals by reason.

Graph 6
Most Common Reasons for Referral



Managers are encouraged to refer, where appropriate, cases to occupational health for advice and guidance early in the process depending upon the condition with the optimum time being less than 28 days. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team have run two employee support seminars to advise managers on the services available to support staff either to remain in work, minimise periods of sickness or minimise the impact of their work on their health.

Graph 7
Speed of Referral to Occupational Health



Looking forward to the coming year

Over the coming year the plans of the Council are to;

- Develop arrangements to report appropriate health and safety issues to elected members.
- Review and consolidate where practical risk assessments across the Council departments.
- Review current working practices to ensure they are consistent with the Council's Health and Safety Guides for Managers.

- Undertake more enhanced health and safety audits of high risk service areas.
- Improve the contract monitoring arrangements of the employee support services to ensure they are effective.
- Introduce an enhanced driving at work policy and associated procedures.

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

19th September 2013



Report of: Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

Subject: UPDATE ON STRATEGIC REVIEW OF
PROCUREMENT IN THE NORTH EAST LOCAL
GOVERNMENT SECTOR

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 For information.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To update the Committee on the consulting team's findings in relation to the North East Procurement Organisation's (NEPO's) success in meeting its objectives and their options appraisal in terms of the future role and shape of NEPO and procurement generally in the north east local government sector.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 In February 2013, the twelve North East Leaders and Mayors' jointly decided that a review of how collaborative procurement was undertaken in the North East was appropriate. There were three main reasons for this:

- The significant changing landscape for local government resulting from national Government policy on providing and funding public services; and how to procure goods and services to the best advantage of local authorities, local communities and local suppliers.
- That NEPO had been refocused as a collaborative procurement organisation in 2010, and it was now opportune to review the success of that revised collaborative approach.
- That the NEPO Joint Committee had undertaken during 2012 a significant review of certain elements of NEPO's operation, particularly around the Opt-Out Protocol, and had concluded that a wider ranging review of collaborative procurement across the Region would be timely and beneficial.

- 3.2 The Review Group appointed senior, independent consultants to undertake key elements of the review, in addition to work undertaken by the 12 authorities and NEPO themselves. Following a comprehensive consultation process which covered a wide range of stakeholders, from Members and Chief Executives through to Suppliers a set of findings were produced. The review was presented to the North East Leaders' & Mayors' Meeting on 12th July, and its findings and recommendations were discussed and accepted.

4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

- 4.1 The consultancy team was asked to consider the following:
- i). What is, or maybe, best procured at a national level now and in the future; what is or maybe best procured at a local level; and by extension that that remains is susceptible to procurement at sub-regional or regional levels
 - ii). NEPOs objectives, and assess how well it has delivered outcomes against each of the 19 objectives, and the original vision statement
 - iii). Whether after two years of operating there is learning about how to enhance the effectiveness of collaborative procurement, and the Hub and Spoke model
 - iv). Issues over the delivery of envisaged outcomes, performance management, accountability and governance which would benefit from an external, independent review and consideration
 - v). the findings of the Joint Committee Scrutiny Review and its issues of weak communication, slippage in timescales, significant barriers to involvement and lack of value for money.

The following paragraphs describe the consultancy teams' conclusions.

- 4.2 *What is, or maybe, best procured at a national level now and in the future; what is or maybe best procured at a local level; and by extension that that remains is susceptible to procurement at sub-regional or regional levels*

The answer to the above point would normally flow from a collaborative regional procurement strategy, which does not exist.

Any strategy developed as a result of this review will be fundamental to the size and shape of a future NEPO organisation – this is especially the case given the lack of consensus on the procurement of social care.

£478m is the minimum identified spend a NEPO-like body should oversee in areas such as energy, furniture, agency staff, office support, print, security etc., which are felt to work well on a collaborative basis.

The consultancy team also state that more could be done in areas such as highways, recruitment, construction and professional services.

4.3 *NEPOs objectives, and assess how well it has delivered outcomes against each of the 19 objectives, and the original vision statement*

The consultancy team issued a questionnaire to a range of stakeholders with specific NEPO related questions being asked on the themes of Clarity, Credibility, Deliverability and Accountability.

In summary the consultancy team's findings were as follows:

4.3.1 **Clarity : Strategy, Collaboration**

- i). Lack of clear strategy to collaborate and lack of clarity on areas of common buy-in
- ii). No agreed programme of collaborations where NEPO can add value
- iii). Category management effective in some areas (Energy) not in others, or pace very slow and savings are at the margins (Adults)
- iv). Hub and Spoke has not worked well 'operates at the pace of the slowest'
- v). Changing environment - more collaborative choices – lower spend
- vi). NEPO trying to cover all 19 objectives in a difficult operating environment
- vii). Strategic deficit – lack of direction, challenge and support for collaboration and/or NEPO

4.3.2 **Credibility: Leading, Innovating**

- i). Some successes – training, portal, certain categories (energy), national voice

Concerns:

- a. Lack of pace
- b. Failure to deliver promises (procurements, contracts, savings, accountability statements, changing business plans, hub & spoke)
- c. Lack of trust
- d. Lack of collective will - NEPO and Local Authorities
- e. Lack of partnership ethos – NEPO and Procurement Leads

4.3.3 **Deliverability: Procurements, Skills, Efficiencies, Outcomes**

- i). Difficulties in progressing collaborations (Adults, Agency, Legal)

- ii). Business Plans changed each year but not informed by an agreed regional procurement strategy
- iii). Savings targets over-ambitious initially, and not being delivered
- iv). Rebate income used to cover rising costs of NEPO, funding model not seen as sustainable
- v). Stakeholder Board value training and support, but less clear on how SMEs helped to compete
- vi). NEPO's successes are in areas Local Authorities (LA's) value relatively less
- vii). CNE (the 12 Procurement Leads and NEPO) is a poor forum for collective strategic thinking and direction
- viii). Ineffective partnership working between procurement leads and NEPO

4.3.4 **Accountability** : *Councils, Associates, Suppliers, Public*

- i). Accountability not delivering for Members, Local Authorities, or NEPO.
- ii). There is a lack of accountability at senior member and senior officer level for both the performance of NEPO and the lack of collaboration at local authority level
- iii). Joint Committee isn't a Board, and its size / constitution / diary of meetings prevent it from acting as a Board. Role in holding to account handicapped by lack of clear purpose, remit, and agenda planning
- iv). Business Plans produced, but unclear who 'owns' and challenges them
- v). Performance Management system ineffective : difficult to trace vision / strategy / issue / action / impact. LA frustration with NEPO non-delivery evident in meeting and via questionnaires, and key theme of Scrutiny Review. NEPO frustration with LAs similarly clear.

5. **OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

- 5.1 In light of the above findings, the consultancy team has developed a range of options for the realignment of the NEPO organisation.

In developing these options the following considerations were integrated:

Considerations:

- i). We do not believe 'abolish it' and replace with 'discretionary collaboration' across the Councils would give better value for money or clarity, credibility, deliverability or accountability
- ii). The best way to secure an environment in which collaborative procurement in the North East can thrive
- iii). How to preserve the good parts of NEPO including its brand
- iv). What looks credible to the outside world without undermining their confidence in procurement across the region
- v). What are the realistic options
- vi). Depending on the option chosen, there will be a need to consider the people, organisational and financial implications, legal issues and risks, of any option worthy of more detailed consideration

5.2 The resulting options are described below:

Option 1 – Tweak it does....	Option 1 : Tweak it doesn't
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address reasons for this review, and the Scrutiny Review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain the existing structure and arms length arrangement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address credibility and key issues of collective will, trust and collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit the objectives in the light of this review within a new focused business plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address issues of trust and confidence at the heart of failure to co-operate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain the existing functions but with greater realism about areas of shared benefit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create clarity about where there is consensus for collaboration – in an environment where the need for the current NEPO vehicle has changed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a more robust performance management and reporting mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate the reporting and performance management arrangements into an established structure of management and governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve risk management and reporting arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to changing landscape.

Option 2: Fix it does	Option 2: Fix it : doesn't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a regional procurement strategy owned by all Councils and NEPO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address the strategic deficit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain an arms length organisation with its own governance arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Totally address the need for a more effective officer group involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and improve the skills, experience and style of NEPO leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a collective will to collaborate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain engagement and commitment to collaboration of the 12 Council procurement leads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address trust and confidence issues that are at the heart of failure to co-operate which has resulted in a loss of confidence in both directions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and streamline the governance arrangements to create a more focused Board to support, challenge and hold NEPO to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address changing landscape.

account	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit the Business Plan that aligns with the regional procurement strategy and ensure greater clarity about shared objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To fix it there must be a willingness and commitment to address environment, people, finance, governance, behaviours, skills – in essence it requires starting again
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the responsibilities of the Directors of Resources Group 	

Option 3: Reform it does	Option 3: Reform it doesn't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abolish the arms length arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a collective will to collaborate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain name, brand and operational capacity of NEPO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address all trust and confidence issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to the previous arrangement of hosting by a local authority – either permanently or on a three year rotation with willing hosts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give greater clarity to line management, and strategic direction - although this would depend upon additional work for an existing executive involvement e.g. Resource Directors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt all other changes covered in option 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an equal, shared view of collaboration, commanding the support and ownership of all Councils and being seen as an impartial and independent host for NEPO

Option 4: Transform it – RECOMMENDED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abolish the existing arms length arrangements and locate NEPO within the ANEC structure giving clear political and managerial links into the existing Leaders and Mayors' and Chief Executives' arrangements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a smaller governance body with regular reporting (quarterly) directly into existing Leaders and Mayors meetings. This body would provide collaborative leadership, strategic direction and accountability, and access to senior expert officer advice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain name and brand in a smaller unit focused on those areas where there is a consensus for them to do so: likely to include training and development of procurement skills, a combination of category management projects and commodity procurements, maintaining and developing the Portal and other activity to support supplier engagement, and the procurement voice outside the region. Seize the 'easy wins' to build trust and a collective ethos : for example collaborative highways procurement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify and refocus the role of local authority procurement leads, including

their part in delivering an agreed programme and looking for opportunities to reduce duplication and the aggregate cost of procurement across the region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no rationale for seeking to mandate collaboration where there is no consensus : for example social care for adults and children

Option 4 : Transform it : will create
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A revised accountability structure, strengthening Member involvement via ANEC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of the strategic lead provided by ANEC Management and a direct link to Regional Chief Executives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An end to the ‘them and us’ dynamic as NEPO is seen as shared
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credibility for the organisation and clarity about the new role of NEPO: areas of common purpose, managing delivery and harnessing collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A flexible approach to local / sub-regional / regional, using NEPO, or alternatives within / without region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity about how much of future procurement will be led by NEPO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability for NEPO, including current funding arrangements and business plans

5.3 In order to implement option 4, the consultancy team highlighted the following requirements:

A transformed NEPO would require:

- i). Re-evaluating the size and cost of NEPO, including number and grade of posts required following regional agreement on those areas where the transformed NEPO would lead
- ii). Changing the governance and hosting arrangements
- iii). Reviewing the number and level of senior posts given the changed accountability arrangements with ANEC, and the Leaders’ & Mayors’ Meeting
- iv). Re-evaluating the number of Category Managers and procurement specialists needed for the agreed categories to be led by NEPO at a regional level
- v). Reducing the administrative and management resource required to service the governance meetings, and the potential to reduce resources involved on rebates and statements of costs and benefits.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 In summary, the 12 authorities agree:

- To remain committed to the concept of collaborative procurement as a means of delivering financial savings, and better outcomes for local people, local economies, and local businesses.
- That NEPO remains an important component of collaborative procurement within the North East. Its brand and key elements of its operation such as the procurement Portal, category management for certain types of goods and services, supplier engagement and skills training, and NEPO's position as a national voice for the North East in national dialogue with Government and the rest of Local Government all remained highly regarded.
- The opportunity exists to refocus NEPO on those areas where the changed landscape for procurement within Local Government, and the proliferation of local and national sourcing options, means that the rationale for regionally-led procurement has changed. These potential areas for regional work may include energy, furniture, agency staff, office support, print, security; and the opportunity to exploit regional opportunities around highways, recruitment, construction, and professional services.
- That this refocusing of NEPO's role also offers the opportunity to reduce its current costs and structure, estimated at £1.4m in 2013/14. Linking NEPO into existing ANEC officer and Member reporting arrangements will further enhance the accountability of NEPO to all its constituent members, and also offer the opportunity to reflect on the existing Joint Committee structure, maintaining the key involvement of Members from each constituent authority, whilst seeking to reduce the cost and workload involved with current Joint Committee arrangements.

7. TRANSITION

7.1 Having agreed the principles set out in the Review, as described above, the process of transition planning is now beginning on behalf of the Leaders and Mayors, led by the 12 local authorities and ANEC; and members of the original Review Group. Initial transition planning will produce a proposed transition plan, which will include detailed consideration of relevant legal, human resources, financial, contractual, accommodation and supplier issues; and the process of defining an agreed Regional Procurement Strategy as envisaged in the Review. NEPO have begun a 'stocktake' of all the current work they have underway, to support the transition plan and identify how collectively the 12 North East Councils can best realise the benefits of on-going NEPO work. In the meantime, and until the agreement of the transitional plan by all relevant parties, NEPO will continue its existing functions.

7.2 A briefing for the Joint Committee Chair and Vice-Chair of the slide pack discussed with Leaders & Mayors is being arranged for August. The

regional procurement lead officers were briefed about the Review findings on 31st July at one of their regular meetings, with a similar briefing planned to the NEPO Stakeholder Group whose comments were a vital part of the Review process. A formal report back to the Joint Committee of the outcomes from the Review is planned for 22nd October 2013, by which time detailed transitional planning will be well progressed.

8. HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL'S POSITION

- 8.1 The evidence provided by the consultancy team describes in some areas, a significant difference in opinion between NEPO and its customers in terms of the services provided and the governance of the organisation. This evidence accords with the Council's view of the NEPO organisation and its performance.
- 8.2 The prevailing opinion in the Council is that there is a role for collaborative procurement between LA's and other public sector bodies, but any infrastructure developed to support these aims must be cost effective, focused on areas where benefits can be realised and address the LA's agendas rather than developing its own role, outside the control of its key stakeholders.
- 8.3 The recommended option has been approved by Chief Executives and Leaders of the 12 North East Local Authorities.
- 8.4 The recommended option to transform NEPO is, on the face of it, a good fit with Council's requirements, although care must be taken to ensure that the resultant organisation is complementary to our requirements, rather than developed along the lines of other party's agendas.

9. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 There are no asset management considerations.

10. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.1 The Chief Solicitor will be advising on any constitutional arrangements relating to the review.

11. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 There are no Equality and Diversity considerations.

12. SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME & DISORDER ACT 1998 CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.1 There are no Section 17 considerations.

13. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 13.1 There are no staff considerations in relation to Council staff but the staffing make-up of NEPO may be affected.

14.1 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 A more focused NEPO delivering the priorities of Local Authorities is a benefit to the Council in terms of risk finance.

15.1 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 15.1 The Council is part of the NEPO Joint Committee and therefore pays an annual sum. Any changes to NEPO may affect the sum to be paid in future.
- 15.2 NEPO currently runs a rebate system whereby the Council receives a rebate based on the amount of money spent through rebate. It is likely that this will be reviewed over time. The rebate currently contributes to our mainstream budget.

16. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 16.1 That the Committee note and provide comment that will enable the Council's NEPO Joint Committee Members to feedback with Council's views.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 17.1 No background papers.

18. CONTACT OFFICER

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FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

19 September 2013



Report of: Chief Solicitor

Subject: DISTRIBUTION OF PINK PAPERS

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

For information.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 At its meeting on 31st May, 2013, the Chair of Finance and Policy Committee requested a report be submitted to a future meeting “to enable Members to review the production and distribution of pink papers”. It was also highlighted by the Chief Solicitor that such a review of the process for the production and distribution of pink papers could have consequences for the constitutional and overall governance arrangements of the Authority. This report therefore covers the process and distribution of “pink papers” and related information and advice, for the consideration of the Committee.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985, introduced greater public access to local authority meetings, reports and documents. These public rights are covered within the Access to Information Procedure Rules as contained within Part 4 of the Council’s Constitution and relates, amongst other things, to the supply of copies of agendas and reports, together with access to minutes after a meeting and the public inspection of background papers. This legislation amended the provisions of the Local Government Act, 1972 and although it establishes the principle that meetings should ordinarily be open to the public, this is disapplied and the public must be excluded from a meeting during an item of business whenever it is likely that confidential information would otherwise be disclosed to members of public in breach of an obligation of confidence. For the purposes of the legislation “confidential information” means;
- information furnished to the Council by a Government department upon terms (however expressed) which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public, and,

- information, the disclosure of which to the public, is prohibited by or under any enactment or by the order of a Court.

3.2 A council may by resolution also exclude the public from a meeting during an item of business whenever it is likely that “exempt information” would otherwise be disclosed to the members of the public. In relation to ‘principal council’s’ in England, there are seven descriptions of exempt information, as follows;

1. *Information relating to any individual.*
2. *Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.*
3. *Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).*
4. *Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the Authority.*
5. *Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in the legal proceedings.*
6. *Information which reveals that the Authority proposes –*
 - (a) *to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or*
 - (b) *to make an order or direction under any enactment.*
7. *Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.*

3.3 In *R v Kensington and Chelsea LBC Exp. Stoop* [1982] it was held that a Planning Committee was entitled to go into closed session to hear the advice of a legal officer of the likelihood of a successful appeal by the developer and costs being awarded against the Council if planning permission were refused. Further, in *R v Wandsworth LBC Exp. Darker Enterprises Limited* (1999) it was similarly held that the Council’s Licensing Sub-Committee was entitled to sit in private when considering whether to renew a sex establishment licence, even though none of the descriptions of exempt information comfortably applied. In that case it was decided that it was not conducive to the Sub-Committee to effectively conduct its business other than being in private session.

3.4 Members will recollect that in cases whereby the Council have held third party information (falling within paragraph 3 of the “exempt information” category) there have been requests from that third party not to disclose information, which is often considered to be commercially sensitive, the disclosure of which would be a breach of confidence and therefore comparable with the principles behind the non-disclosure of confidential information. Indeed, there has been occasions where the Council has been obliged to enter into a formal confidentiality agreement (in addition officers have given individual undertakings over non-disclosure) where the agreement will recite an injunction might not be seen as an adequate remedy where a breach of confidence has occurred or is likely to occur and that the Council contractually accepts that damages would therefore be the

appropriate remedy. It is therefore, obvious, that there can be occasions where a Local Authority can be liable for damages on a punitive basis for the disclosure of commercially sensitive information.

- 3.5 Copies of reports should generally be open for public inspection, if possible. However, legislation also provides that *“if the Proper Officer thinks fit, they may be excluded from the copies of reports provided the whole of any report which, or any part which, relates only to items during which, in his opinion, the meeting is likely not to be open to the public”*. Further, where it appears to the Proper Officer that a document discloses exempt information then that does not require the document to be open to inspection to members of the public. As part of the “Proper Officer” functions, the Council’s Chief Solicitor and Monitoring Officer is assigned under the 1985 Act to determine whether information falls within the category of being “exempt” or being otherwise confidential and whether that information should be released, for the purposes of inspection, or not.
- 3.6 Members of the relevant Committee are of course privy to those items of confidential and exempt information comprising the reports presented to that particular Committee. Where a Member is not a standing Member of that Committee or attending as a named substitute, then a Member would presently need to approach the Chief Solicitor as to whether they should have access to the particular report on a “need to know” basis. This is to allow them to properly perform their constituency duties as opposed to a mere cursory enquiry, without any meaningful or constructive foundation.

4. DISTRIBUTION OF PINK PAPERS

- 4.1 The mechanics covering the disclosure of agenda and reports is largely described above and has been the subject of numerous reports to the Council’s former Constitution Working Group and Constitution Committee. The deliberations of the Working Group/Committee has led to directions being given to officers to ensure that only where necessary information of an “exempt” description is contained within “pink papers”. Officers are therefore requested to proceed with information appearing openly within reports and only where required should information be referenced to the so called “pink papers”. Appended herewith is the distribution of “pink papers” to the Committees of the Council (Appendix 1) as disseminated through the Democratic Services Team. Members will discern that primarily “pink papers” are distributed to those Members comprising the Committee, certain key officers and the Council’s external Auditors. It should be noted, that under the Audit Commission Act, 1998, the Audit Commission have a right of access to “every document relating to a body”, which the Audit Committee deems necessary for disclosure to itself for the purposes of performing its functions under this legislation. The Local Audit and Accountancy Bill, which is intended to supersede the work of the Audit Commission similarly retains this right of access to documents and information, namely “to every document” that relates to a relevant authority upon which and Auditor thinks is necessary for disclosure for the purposes of the Auditor’s functions.

- 4.2 There have been occasions when it has been deemed eminently sensible and practical for a wider distribution of “pink papers”. A case in point was circa November, 2009, wherein it was agreed that Executive reports which contained confidential/exempt information should also be forwarded to the Chairs of the relevant Scrutiny Forums as well as the Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, as to do otherwise, would prohibit investigation of the subject matter before the Executive, which also could undermine the “call-in” process, as then operating by the Council under executive arrangements. This process of “call-in” no longer applies although the Council have adopted the “Reference to Council” mechanism as contained within Rule 27 of the Council Procedure Rules. However, this is limited to a ‘Key Decision’ (as defined in Article 13.03) as taken by a Policy Committee, as opposed to those Committees undertaking regulatory functions on behalf of the Local Authority. Further, it is not intended that such a referral could apply to day to day management and operational decisions taken by Officers or any matter which in the opinion of the Chair of the relevant Policy Committee and in consultation with the Proper Officer is considered to be urgent or where any delay occasioned by a reference to Council would not serve the public interest and would cause serious prejudice to the Council. Accordingly, such a mechanism is intended to be used sparingly and only in the most exceptional circumstances. The referral must be made by not less than half of the whole number of elected Members (ie., 17 Members or more) and it is therefore open for the Committee to consider whether all Members of the Council should receive “pink papers” in relation to key decisions. It should be pointed out, that even where a Member or indeed an Officer is provided with “pink papers” out of the normal distribution of such documentation, the confidentiality of that item should necessarily be retained.

Code Of Conduct Implications

Within the Council’s Code of Conduct as adopted on the 2nd August, 2012 there is a general obligation that Members (and co-opted Members) should not disclose information given to that Member in confidence or any information as acquired, which the Member reasonably believes is of a confidential nature. The “exceptions” to this obligation are set out below;

- (i) you have the consent of the person authorised to give it;
- (ii) you are required by law to do so;
- (iii) disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
- (iv) the disclosure is:-
 - (a) reasonable and in the public interest; and
 - (b) made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the Authority; and
 - (c) you have consulted with the Authority’s Monitoring Officer prior to its release

In addition to this general obligation, Members are part of the corporate body comprising the Borough Council and should not do anything which causes

any financial and/or reputational damage to the Authority. The rules surrounding confidential information are intended to be strict in their application and the same principles apply to those categories of “exempt” information, particularly the financial and business affairs held by the Authority on behalf of a third party. As Chief Solicitor, I would be unable to countenance the distribution of confidential/exempt information outside the narrow parameters of elected Members, co-opted Members (most notably those individuals comprising the Health and Wellbeing Board as statutorily created under the provision of the Health and Social Care Act, 2012) and the present limited distribution to Council Officers. This is on the basis of having sufficient safeguards in place in order to limit the potential dissemination of such papers into the public domain and the repercussions that might arise thereafter. There is also the expectation, from third parties, that information that is provided with a view to maintaining the confidence of that item, is strictly maintained.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That Members discuss the contents of this report as to the process and distribution of confidential/exempt information.
- 5.2 That any proposed amendments (if any) to the Council’s Access to Information Procedure Rules be reported for approval of Council.

6. CONTACT OFFICER

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Chief Solicitor
Chief Executives Department
Hartlepool Borough Council
01429 523003
peter.devlin@hartlepool.gov.uk

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	1	Councillor Hall	P
	1	Councillor A Lilley	P
	1	Councillor Loynes	P
	1	Councillor Richardson (Chair)	P
	1	Councillor Shields (Vice- Chair)	P
	1	Councillor Sirs	P
	E	diane.harold@mazars.co.uk Diane Harold, External Audit, Bryan Hanson House (where there are pink papers please place these in an envelope marked Private and Confidential)	P
	E	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher)	

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	1	Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor	P
	1	Director of Child and Adult Services	P
	1	Jill Harrison, Asst Dir (C+A)	P
	1	Denise Ogden (R&N)	P
	1	Graham Frankland (R&N)	P
	1	Alastair Smith (R&N)	P
	E	Jeanette Willis	
	E	John Lovatt	
	E	Neil Harrison_1	
	E	Geraldine Martin	
	E	Alyson Carmen	
	1	John Mennear, Asst Dir (Com Services)	P
	1	Louise Wallace, Director of Pulic Health	P
	E	Edwin Jeffries	
	E	Steve Williams	
	E	Alastair Rae, Julian Heward, Steve Hilton	
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	1	Cllr S Akers-Belcher	P
	1	Cllr Brash	P
	1	Cllr Fisher	P
	1	Cllr Loynes	P
	1	Cllr Robinson	P
	1	Cllr Shields	P
	1	Cllr G Lilley	
	1	Cllr Cook	
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	1	FIRST CLASS Mr N Rollo, 1 Harestones, Wynyard Woods, Wynyard, Hartlepool. TS22 5QT	
	1	FIRST CLASS Ms Clare Wilson, 26 Stanhope Avenue, Hartlepool. TS26 9QY	
	E	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher)	
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	1	Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor	P
	1	Director of Child and Adult Services	P
	1	Sally Robinson (C&A)	P
	1	Jill Harrison (C&A)	P
	1	John Mennear (C&A)	P
	1	Dean Jackson (C&A)	P
	1	Denise Ogden (R&N)	P
	1	Graham Frankland (R&N)	P
	1	Alastair Smith (R&N)	P
	1	Damien Wilson (R&N)	P
	1	Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager	P
	E	Noel Adamson	
	E	Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health	
	E	John Morton	
	E	Laura Stones	
	5	Democratic Services	P
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	1	Councillor Fleet	P
	1	Councillor Griffin	P
	1	Councillor Hill	P
	1	Councillor James (Vice-Chair)	P
	1	Councillor Lauderdale	P
	1	Councillor Simmons (Chair)	P
	E	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher)	
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	E	Chris Little, Chief Finance Officer	P
	1	Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor	P
	1	Director of Child and Adult Services	P
	1	Denise Ogden, Director Regen & Neigh	P
	E	Alyson Carmen, Legal Services Manager	
	1	Graham Frankland, Asst Dir (R&N)	P
	1	Alastair Smith, Asst Dir (R&N)	P
	1	Sally Robinson, Asst Dir (C+A)	P
	1	Dean Jackson, Asst Dir (C+A)	P
	1	John Mennear, Asst Dir (C+A)	P
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☐

COUNCILLORS			
	1	Councillor S Akers-Belcher	P
	1	Councillor Dawkins	P
	1	Councillor Simmons	P
	1	Councillor Wells	P
	1	Vacancy	P
	1	Councillor Cook	
	E	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher)	

OFFICERS			
	1	Chief Executive	
	1	Chief Solicitor	
	1	Alyson Carman, Head of Legal Services	
	1	Amanda Whitaker, Dem. Services Manager	
	3	Democratic Services Team	
	E	Edwin Jeffries	
	E	Steve Williams	
	1	Members Library	
		Democratic Services	P
	1	Typing Tray - for PDF - To be sent with yellow distribution sheet	
	E	diane.harold@mazars.co.uk Diane Harold, External Audit, Bryan Hanson House (where there are pink papers please place these in an envelope marked Private and Confidential)	P

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	E	sandy.mckenzie@eveninggazette.co.uk
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	E	madeleine.briggs@bbc.co.uk

	Compiler	Checker
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• Check Key Decision reports include the key decision tests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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• Check NFP papers are highlighted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Ensure that reports have correctly formatted headers and footers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check Pink Papers highlighted on Distribution sheet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check Print slip filled out correctly with number of copies required, number of originals; special requests for colour printing or colour paper, stapling etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check it's clear on the print order regarding pinks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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COMMITTEE:	EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE	Date:
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P = Pinks (confidential copies)

COUNCILLORS			
	1	Councillor Marjorie James HBC	P
	1	Councillor David Rose, Stockton BC (Label)	P
	1	Councillor Steve Goldswain, Redcar & Cleveland BC (Label)	P
	1	Councillor Charles Rooney, Middlesbrough BC (Label)	P

BOROUGH COUNCILS			
	3	Middlesbrough Borough Council 1. Deposit, 2. Members Library & 3. Reference Library (Labels)	
	3	Redcar-Cleveland Borough Council 1. Deposit, 2. Members Library & 3. Reference Library (Labels)	
	3	Stockton Borough Council 1. Deposit, 2. Members Library & 3. Reference Library (Labels)	

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OFFICERS			
	1	Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive	P
	E	Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive	P
	E	Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor	P
	E	Chris Little, Chief Financial Officer	P
	3	Democratic Services	P
	1	Members Library	
	1	Stuart Marshall Chief Emergency Planning Officer - Middlesbrough Office address on attached labels	P
	E	Stuart Marshall Chief Emergency Planning Officer - by email stuart.marshall@hartlepool.gov.uk	
	1	Denise Ogden, Dir Regen & Neighbourhoods	
	E	Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health	
	1	Typing Tray - for PDF - To be sent with yellow distribution sheet	
	E	Alastair Rae, Julian Heward, Steve Hilton	
	E	Noel Adamson, Head of Audit and Governance, Level 3, Civic Centre	P
	E	Sandra Shears, Chief Accountant	P
	E	Chris Parkin, Group Accountant	P
	1	Alastair Smith, Asst Director (Neighbourhood Services)	
	E	diane.harold@mazars.co.uk Diane Harold, External Audit, Bryan Hanson House (where there are pink papers please place these in an envelope marked Private and Confidential)	P

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	E	Edwin Jeffries	
	E	Steve Williams	
	E	rebecca.dearden@mazars.co.uk	

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• Check Budget and Policy Framework and Key Decision reports are listed in the Forward Plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check Key Decision reports include the key decision tests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check for appendices electronically in reports including any NFP.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check NFP papers are highlighted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Ensure that reports have correctly formatted headers and footers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check Pink Papers highlighted on Distribution sheet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check Print slip filled out correctly with number of copies required, number of originals; special requests for colour printing or colour paper, stapling etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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COMMITTEE:	FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE	Date:
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COUNCILLORS			
	1	Councillor C Akers-Belcher, Chair (Leader of the Council) via Joan Stevens	P
	1	Councillor Richardson, Vice Chair	P
	1	Councillor Cranney	P
	1	Councillor Dawkins	P
	1	Councillor Jackson	P
	1	Councillor James	P
	1	Councillor A Lilley	P
	1	Councillor Payne	P
	1	Councillor Thompson	P
	1	Councillor Simmons	P
	1	Councillor Wells	P
	E	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher)	
	1	Councillor Hargreaves	
	1	Councillor Cook	
	E	Councillor Morris	

OFFICERS			
	1	Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive	P
	1	Andrew Atkin, Asst Chief Executive	P
	1	Chris Little, Chief Finance Officer	P
	1	Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor	P
	1	Director of Child and Adult Services	P
	1	Sally Robinson, Assistant Director C&A	P
	1	John Mennear, Assistant Director C&A	P
	1	Jill Harrison, Assistant Director C&A	P
		Dean Jackson, Assistant Director C&A	P
	1	Denise Ogden (R&N)	P
	1	Graham Frankland (R&N)	P
	1	Alastair Smith (R&N)	P
	1	Damien Wilson (R&N)	P
	1	Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager	P
	E	Alyson Carman	
	E	Wally Stagg, HR	
	E	Alison Swann (HR)	
	E	Gillian Laight (HR)	
	E	Rachel Clark (HR)	
	E	Sandra Shears	
	E	Jeanette Willis	
	E	Laura Stones	
	3	Democratic Services	P
	E	diane.harold@mazars.co.uk Diane Harold, External Audit, Bryan Hanson House (where there are pink papers please place these in an envelope marked Private and Confidential)	P

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	E	madeleine.briggs@bbc.co.uk

	Compiler	Checker	By e-mail
• Check Date/Date/Day/Time/Membership are correct.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	David Hart (R&N)
• Check Budget and Policy Framework and Key Decision reports are listed in the Forward Plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stuart Langston (HR)
• Check Key Decision reports include the key decision tests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sylvia Pinkney (R&N)
• Check for appendices electronically in reports including any NFP.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark Patton
• Check NFP papers are highlighted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zoe Westley
• Ensure that reports have correctly formatted headers and footers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tom Argument
• Check Pink Papers highlighted on Distribution sheet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacqui Braithwaite
• Check Print slip filled out correctly with number of copies required, number of originals; special requests for colour printing or colour paper, stapling etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jane Young
• Check it's clear on the print order regarding pinks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wendy Rudd
• Initial distribution sheet when satisfied that any appropriate amendments have been made	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark Smith
• NB ALL SCRUTINY AGENDAS to go to appropriate Scrutiny Officer for checking prior to sending to Print Room.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	John Robinson
			Ian Merritt
			Maureen McEnaney
			Danielle Swainston
			Elisa Arnold
			Ann Turner
			John Lovatt
			Neil Harrison_1
			Geraldine Martin
			David Worthington
			Pat Usher
			Robin Daniels
			Maggie Heaps
			Final Check on return from print room
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COMMITTEE:	LICENSING COMMITTEE	Date:
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COUNCILLORS			
	1	Councillor Ainslie	P
	1	Councillor Beck	P
	1	Councillor Cook	P
	1	Councillor Dawkins	P
	1	Councillor Fleet	P
	1	Councillor Gibbon	P
	1	Councillor Griffin	P
	1	Councillor Hall	P
	1	Councillor Jackson	P
	1	Councillor Morris (Vice-Chair)	P
	1	Councillor Tempest	P
	1	Councillor Wells (Chair)	P
	E	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher)	

OFFICERS			
	1	Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive	P
	1	Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor	P
	1	Denise Ogden (R&N)	P
	1	Graham Frankland (R&N)	P
	1	Alastair Smith (R&N)	P
	1	Damien Wilson (R&N)	P
	E	Sylvia Pinkney (R&N)	P
	E	Ian Harrison (R&N)	P
	1	Tony Macnab, Legal	P
	E	Edwin Jeffries	
	E	Steve Williams	
		Democratic Services	P
	1	Typing Tray - for PDF - To be sent with yellow distribution sheet	
	1	Members Library	
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COUNCILLORS			
	1	Councillor Ged Hall (Chair)	P
	1	Councillor Keith Dawkins	P
	1	Councillor Mary Fleet	P
	E	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher)	P

OFFICERS			
	1	Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive	P
	1	Director of Child and Adult Services	P
	1	Sylvia Pinkney	P
	1	Ian Harrison	P
	1	Tony Macnab, Legal	P
	5	Democratic Services	P
	1	Members Library	
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COUNCILLORS			
	1	Councillor Rob Cook (Chair)	P
	1	Councillor Sheila Griffin	P
	1	Councillor Steve Gibbon	P
	E	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher)	

OFFICERS			
	1	Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive	P
	1	Director of Child and Adult Services	P
	1	Sylvia Pinkney	P
	1	Ian Harrison	P
	1	Tony Macnab, Legal	P
	E	Edwin Jeffries	
	E	Steve Williams	
	5	Democratic Services	P
	1	Members Library	
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COUNCILLORS			
	1	Councillor Ray Wells (Chair)	P
	1	Councillor Paul Beck	P
	1	Councillor Peter Jackson	P
	E	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher)	

OFFICERS			
	1	Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive	P
	1	Director of Child and Adult Services	P
	1	Sylvia Pinkney	P
	1	Ian Harrison	P
	1	Tony Macnab, Legal	P
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	E	gavin.ledwith@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	editor@bdaily.co.uk
	E	joanna.morris@nne.co.uk
	E	graeme.hetherington@nne.co.uk
	E	dani.webb@nne.co.uk
	E	lucy.richardson@nne.co.uk
	E	chris.webber@nne.co.uk
	E	news@eveninggazette.co.uk
	E	sandy.mckenzie@eveninggazette.co.uk
	E	tees.news@bbc.co.uk
	E	lee.johnson@bbc.co.uk
	E	madeleine.briggs@bbc.co.uk

	Compiler	Checker
• Check Date/Date/Day/Time/Membership are correct.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check Budget and Policy Framework and Key Decision reports are listed in the Forward Plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check Key Decision reports include the key decision tests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check for appendices electronically in reports including any NFP.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check NFP papers are highlighted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Ensure that reports have correctly formatted headers and footers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check Pink Papers highlighted on Distribution sheet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check Print slip filled out correctly with number of copies required, number of originals; special requests for colour printing or colour paper, stapling etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check it's clear on the print order regarding pinks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Initial distribution sheet when satisfied that any appropriate amendments have been made	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• NB ALL SCRUTINY AGENDAS to go to appropriate Scrutiny Officer for checking prior to sending to Print Room.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Final Check on return from print room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before releasing an agenda for distribution, check that the printing has been completed as ordered, that all pages are readable, confidential reports etc are on pink paper and that the correct number of open and closed agendas have been returned.

Checker

☐

	Open & Closed	Returned printing checked	
	Open	by	
	Sent to print by	Sent out by	
	Checked by	Date sent out	

COUNCILLORS		
	1	Cllr Ainslie
	1	Cllr C Akers-Belcher, Leader of the Council
	1	Cllr Cook
	1	Cllr James
	1	Cllr G Lilley
	1	Cllr Loynes
	1	Cllr Richardson
	1	Cllr Simmons
	E	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher)

OFFICERS		
	E	Rachel Clark, HR Business Partner
	E	Alison Swann, HR Business Partner
	E	Gillian Laight, HR Business Partner
	1	Edwin Jeffries, HJTUC Secretary
	E	Mr E Jeffries, HJTUC Secretary, UNISON Hartlepool LG, Union Suite, Edgar Philips Building, c/o 1 Church Street TS24 7DS. (Edwin to email to other Trade Union Representatives)
	1	Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive
	E	diane.harold@mazars.co.uk Diane Harold, External Audit, Bryan Hanson House (where there are pink papers please place these in an envelope marked Private and Confidential) P
	1	Malcolm Sullivan, Plant Technician (C&A)
	1	Andrew Atkin, Asst Chief Executive
	1	Tony Davison, Regen & Neighbourhoods
	1	Debbie Kenny, Commissioning Officer (C&A)
	1	Lesley Hamilton, Social Worker, Youth Off
	1	Matthew Pearce, Env EnOfficer (R&N)
	1	Derek Wardle, Arboricultural Officer (R&N)
	2	Democratic Services

[illegible]

	Compiler	Checker
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Checker

COUNCILLORS			
	1	Councillor Ainslie (Vice-Chair)	P
	1	Councillor Cook	P
	1	Councillor Dawkins	P
	1	Councillor Gibbon	P
	1	Councillor Jackson (Chair)	P
	1	Councillor Loynes	P
	1	Councillor Tempest	P
	E	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher)	

OFFICERS			
	1	Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive	P
	E	Andrew Atkin, Asst Chief Executive	P
	E	Chris Little, Chief Finance Officer	P
	1	Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor	P
	1	Director of Child and Adult Services	P
	1	John Mennear, Asst Dir (C+A)	P
	1	Denise Ogden (R&N)	P
	1	Graham Frankland (R&N)	P
	1	Alastair Smith (R&N)	P
	1	Damien Wilson (R&N)	P
	E	Garry Jones (R&N)	
	E	Craig Thelwell, Waste & Env Serv Manager	
	1	Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager	P
	E	Alyson Carr	
	E	Edwin Jeffries	
	E	Steve Williams	
	3	Democratic Services	P
	1	Members Library	
	1	Typing Tray - for PDF - To be sent with yellow distribution sheet	
	E	diane.harold@mazars.co.uk Diane Harold, External Audit, Bryan Hanson House (where there are pink papers please place these in an envelope marked Private and Confidential)	P

	Open & Closed	Returned printing checked	
	Open	by	
	Sent to print by	Sent out by	
	Checked by	Date sentout	

	E	Alastair Rae, Julian Heward, Steve Hilton
	E	rebecca.dearden@mazars.co.uk
	1	S&G Johnson 22 Tarnston Road, Hartlepool TS26 0PQ

	1	Reference Library, Central Library, York Road
	E	mail.news@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	ian.willis@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	peter.tennick@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	richard.mennear@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	gavin.ledwith@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	editor@bdaily.co.uk
	E	joanna.morris@nne.co.uk
	E	graeme.hetherington@nne.co.uk
	E	dani.webb@nne.co.uk
	E	lucy.richardson@nne.co.uk
	E	chris.webber@nne.co.uk
	E	news@eveninggazette.co.uk
	E	sandy.mckenzie@eveninggazette.co.uk
	E	tees.news@bbc.co.uk
	E	lee.johnson@bbc.co.uk
	E	madeleine.briggs@bbc.co.uk

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Checker

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COMMITTEE:	PLANNING COMMITTEE	Date:
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P = PINK (confidential copies) *confidential papers must be circulated in hard copy format

COUNCILLORS			
	1	Councillor Jim Ainslie	P
	1	Councillor Paul Beck	[P
	1	Councillor Rob Cook	P
	1	Councillor Kevin Cranney	P
	1	Councillor Keith Fisher	P
	1	Councillor Mary Fleet	P
	1	Councillor Sheila Griffin	P
	1	Councillor Marjorie James	P
	1	Councillor Alison Lilley	P
	1	Councillor Geoff Lilley	P
	1	Councillor Brenda Loynes	P
	1	Councillor George Morris	P
	1	Councillor Jean Robinson	P
	1	Councillor Linda Shields	P
	1	Councillor Kaylee Sirs	P
	1	Councillor Ray Wells	P
	E	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher)	

OFFICERS			
	1	Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive	P
	1	Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor	P
	E	Director of Child and Adult Services	P
	1	Director of Regen and Neigh Denise Ogden	P
	E	Graham Frankland (R&N)	P
	E	Alastair Smith (R&N)	P
	1	Damien Wilson (R&N)	P
	E	Mike Blair (R&N)	P
	1	Adrian Hurst (R&N), Env Health, Civic	P
	E	Garry Jones (R&N)	P
	1	Chris Pipe (R&N), Planning, BHH	P
	E	Jim Ferguson (R&N), Planning, BHH	P
	1	Tony Macnab, Legal	P
	E	Clare Clark	
	E	Dave Frame	
	E	Edwin Jeffries	
	E	Steve Williams	
	15	Democratic Services (5x P)	P
	1	Members Library	
	1	Typing Tray - for PDF - To be sent with yellow distribution sheet	
	E	diane.harold@mazars.co.uk Diane Harold, External Audit, Bryan Hanson House (where there are pink papers please place these in an envelope marked Private and Confidential)	P

e-Publication Date
Initials
e-mail link sent by
Date and Time
Published by:
Date and Time

Appendix 1

	Open & Closed	Returned printing checked by	
	Open		
	Sent to print by	Sent out by	
	Checked by	Date sent out	

ADDITIONAL COPIES			
	E	Alastair Rae, Julian Heward, Steve Hilton	
	E	rebecca.dearden@mazars.co.uk	
OPEN REPORTS (PRESS ETC)			
	1	Reference Library, Central Library, York Road	
	E	mail.news@northeast-press.co.uk	
	E	ian.willis@northeast-press.co.uk	
	E	peter.tennick@northeast-press.co.uk	
	E	richard.mennear@northeast-press.co.uk	
	E	gavin.ledwith@northeast-press.co.uk	
	E	editor@bdaily.co.uk	
	E	joanna.morris@nne.co.uk	
	E	graeme.hetherington@nne.co.uk	
	E	dani.webb@nne.co.uk	
	E	lucy.richardson@nne.co.uk	
	E	chris.webber@nne.co.uk	
	E	news@eveninggazette.co.uk	
	E	sandy.mckenzie@eveninggazette.co.uk	
	E	tees.news@bbc.co.uk	
	E	lee.johnson@bbc.co.uk	
	E	madeleine.briggs@bbc.co.uk	

	Compiler	Checker
• Check Date/Date/Day/Time/Membership are correct.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check Budget and Policy Framework and Key Decision reports are listed in the Forward Plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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• Check NFP papers are highlighted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Ensure that reports have correctly formatted headers and footers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check Pink Papers highlighted on Distribution sheet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check Print slip filled out correctly with number of copies required, number of originals; special requests for colour printing or colour paper, stapling etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check it's clear on the print order regarding pinks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Initial distribution sheet when satisfied that any appropriate amendments have been made	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• NB ALL SCRUTINY AGENDAS to go to appropriate Scrutiny Officer for checking prior to sending to Print Room.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Checker

COMMITTEE:	REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE	Date:
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P = PINK (confidential copies) *confidential papers must be circulated in hard copy format

COUNCILLORS			
	1	Councillor C Akers-Belcher	P
	1	Councillor S Akers-Belcher	P
	1	Councillor Cranney (Vice-Chair)	P
	1	Councillor Dawkins	P
	1	Councillor Fisher	P
	1	Councillor Morris	P
	1	Councillor Payne (Chair)	P
	1	Councillor Hargreaves	
	1	Councillor Cook	
	E	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher)	
	1	Typing Tray - for PDF - To be sent with yellow distribution sheet	
	E	diane.harold@mazars.co.uk Diane Harold, External Audit, Bryan Hanson House (where there are pink papers please place these in an envelope marked Private and	P

OFFICERS			
	1	Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive	P
	E	Andrew Atkin, Asst Chief Executive	P
	E	Chris Little, Chief Finance Officer	P
	1	Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor	P
	1	Director of Child and Adult Services	P
	1	John Mennear, Asst Dir (C+A)	P
	1	Denise Ogden (R&N)	P
	1	Graham Frankland (R&N)	P
	1	Alastair Smith (R&N)	P
	1	Damien Wilson (R&N)	P
	E	Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager	P
		Democratic Services	P
	E	Garry Jones (R&N)	
	E	Nigel Johnson (R&N)	
	E	Antony Steinberg (R&N)	
	E	Patrick Wilson (R&N)	
	E	Mick Emerson (R&N)	
	E	Jo Cole (R&N)	
	E	Israr Hussain (R&N)	
	E	Caron Auckland (R&N)	
	E	Karen Kelly, Housing Services (R&N)	
	E	Amy Waller, Housing Services (R&N)	
	E	David Worthington, Head of Culture & Info	
	E	Pat Usher, Head of Sport and Recreation	
	E	Robin Daniels, Archaeology Officer (C+A)	
	E	Alastair Rae, Julian Heward, Steve Hilton	
	E	rebecca.dearden@mazars.co.uk	

e-Publication Date Initials e-mail link sent by Date and Time Published by: Date and Time
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Appendix 1

	Open & Closed	Returned printing checked by	
	Open		
	Sent to print by	Sent out by	
	Checked by	Date sent out	

ADDITIONAL COPIES		
	E	Andrew Golightly (R&N)
	E	Gemma Day (R&N)
	E	Rob Smith (R&N)
	E	Craig Thelwell, Waste & Env Serv Manager
	E	Alyson Carr
	E	Maggie Heaps, Adult Educ (C+A)
	E	Edwin Jeffries
	E	Steve Williams
	1	Members Library
OPEN REPORTS (PRESS ETC)		
	1	Reference Library, Central Library, York Road
	E	mail.news@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	ian.willis@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	peter.tennick@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	richard.mennear@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	gavin.ledwith@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	editor@bdaily.co.uk
	E	joanna.morris@nne.co.uk
	E	graeme.hetherington@nne.co.uk
	E	dani.webb@nne.co.uk
	E	lucy.richardson@nne.co.uk
	E	chris.webber@nne.co.uk
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	E	sandy.mckenzie@eveninggazette.co.uk
	E	tees.news@bbc.co.uk
	E	lee.johnson@bbc.co.uk
	E	madeleine.briggs@bbc.co.uk

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Checker

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COUNCILLORS			
	1	Cllr Griffin (as sub for Cllr C Akers-Belcher)	P
	1	Councillor Hill	P
	1	Councillor James (Vice Chair)	P
	1	Councillor Simmons	P
	1	Councillor A Lilley	P
	1	Cllr Fleet (as sub for Cllr Richardson)	P
	1	Cllr Lauderdale	P
	1	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher) via Joan Stevens	P
	E	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher)	

e-Publication Date.....

Initials.....

e-mail link sent by.....

Date and Time.....

Published by:.....

Date and Time.....

OFFICERS			
	E	Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive	P
	4	Director of Child and Adult Services	P
	E	Peter Devlin	P
	1	Sally Robinson, Asst Dir (C+A)	P
	1	Jane Young, Business Unit Manager (C+A)	P
	E	Denise Ogden, Director of Regen & Neigh	P
	E	Dean Jackson, Asst Dir (C&A)	P
	E	John Mennear, Asst Dir (C&A)	P
	3	Democratic Services	P
	E	2 Foster Carers c/o Christine Croft	P
	2	Young People's representatives c/o Rebecca Hunter and Kim Bell (Windsor Offices)	P
	1	Typing Tray - for PDF - To be sent with yellow distribution sheet	
	E	diane.harold@mazars.co.uk Diane Harold, External Audit, Bryan Hanson House (where there are pink papers please place these in an envelope marked Private and Confidential)	P

[illegible]

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	COUNCIL
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P = Pinks (confidential copies)

	Books	COUNCILLORS	Exempt Items (Pink)
	1	Ainslie	P
	1	C Akers-Belcher	P
	1	S Akers-Belcher	P
	1	Atkinson	P
	1	Beck	P
	1	Brash	P
	1	Cook	P
	1	Cranney	P
	1	Dawkins	P
	1	Fisher	P
	1	Fleet	P
	1	Gibbon	P
	1	Griffin	P
	1	Hall	P
	1	Hargreaves	P
	1	Hill	P

	Books	COUNCILLORS	Exempt Items (Pink)
	1	Jackson	P
	1	James	P
	1	Lauderdale	P
	1	A E Lilley	P
	1	G Lilley	P
	1	Loynes (size 16 font required)	P
	1	Dr Morris	P
	1	Payne	P
	1	Richardson	P
	1	Robinson	P
	1	Shields	P
	1	Simmons	P
	1	Sirs	P
	1	Tempest	P
	1	Thompson	P
	1	Wells	P

COUNCIL
Date:

Pink = Pinks (confidential Papers)

	Books	Officers	Exempt Items (Pink)
	1	Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive	P
	1	Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive	P
	1	Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor	P
	1	Graham Frankland, Asst Dir (Regen & Neigh)	P
	1	Chris Little, Chief Finance Officer	P
	1	Director of Child & Adult Services	P
	1	Denise Ogden, Dir Regen & Neighbourhoods	P
	1	Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager	P
	1	Diane Harold, External Audit, Bryan Hanson House (where there are pink papers please place these in an envelope marked Private and Confidential)	P
	20	Democratic Services	P
	1	Jill Harrison, Asst Dir (C&A)	P
	1	Sally Robinson, Asst Dir (C&A)	P
	1	Dean Jackson, Asst Dir (C&A)	P
	1	John Mennear, Asst Dir (C&A)	P
	1	Alastair Rae, Public Relations Manager	
	1	Members Library (c)	
e-Publication Date Initials e-mail link sent by Date and Time Published by: Date and Time			

Printing Order		Open & Closed	Returned printing checked by	
		Open		
		Sent to print by	Sent out by	
		Checked by	Date sent out	

	Books	OPEN COPIES
	7	Members' Services (Labour Group)
	1	Central Library (c)
	E	Edwin Jeffries
	E	Steve Williams
	E	Julian Heward, Steve Hilton
	1	Typing Tray - for PDF - To be sent with yellow distribution sheet
	E	mail.news@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	ian.willis@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	peter.tennick@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	richard.mennear@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	gavin.ledwith@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	graeme.hetherington@nne.co.uk
	E	dani.webb@nne.co.uk
	E	lucy.richardson@nne.co.uk
	E	chris.webber@nne.co.uk
	E	news@eveninggazette.co.uk
	E	sandy.mckenzie@eveninggazette.co.uk
	E	tees.news@bbc.co.uk
	E	lee.johnson@bbc.co.uk
	E	madeleine.briggs@bbc.co.uk
		(c) - Colour copies of any reports

	Compiler	Checker
• Check Date/Date/Day/Time/Membership are correct.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check Budget and Policy Framework and Key Decision reports are listed in the Forward Plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check Key Decision reports include the key decision tests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check for appendices electronically in reports including any NFP.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check NFP papers are highlighted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Ensure that reports have correctly formatted headers and footers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check Pink Papers highlighted on Distribution sheet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check Print slip filled out correctly with number of copies required, number of originals; special requests for colour printing or colour paper, stapling etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Check it's clear on the print order regarding pinks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Initial distribution sheet when satisfied that any appropriate amendments have been made	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• NB ALL SCRUTINY AGENDAS to go to appropriate Scrutiny Officer for checking prior to sending to Print Room.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<p>Final Check on return from print room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before releasing an agenda for distribution, check that the printing has been completed as ordered, that all pages are readable, confidential reports etc are on pink paper and that the correct number of open and closed agendas have been returned.

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COMMITTEE:	SOUTH & CENTRAL NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM	Date:
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COUNCILLORS		
	1	Councillor C Akers-Belcher
	1	Councillor S Akers-Belcher
	1	Councillor Barclay
	1	Councillor Brash
	1	Councillor Cranney
	1	Councillor Gibbon
	1	Councillor Hall
	1	Councillor Hargreaves
	1	Councillor James
	1	Councillor Lauderdale
	1	Councillor A Lilley
	1	Councillor G Lilley
	1	Councillor Loynes
	1	Councillor Morris
	1	Councillor Richardson
	1	Councillor Simmons
	1	Councillor Sirs
	1	Councillor Wells
	E	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher)
e-Publication Date..... Initials..... e-mail link sent by..... Date and Time..... Published by: Date and Time.....		

OFFICERS		
1	Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive	
1	John Mennear, Asst Dir (C+A)	
1	Denise Ogden (R&N)	P
1	Peter Devlin	P
1	Graham Frankland (R&N)	P
1	Alastair Smith (R&N)	P
1	Damien Wilson (R&N)	
E	Craig Thelwell, Waste & Env Services Manager	
E	Clare Clark, Neighbourhood Manager	P
E	Adele Wilson, Neighbourhood Management	P
E	Irene Cross, Neighbourhood Development Officer	
E	Jon Wright, Neighbourhood Co-ordinating Manager	
1	Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager	P
E	Edwin Jeffries	
E	Steve Williams	
1	Councillor Jackson	
1	Councillor Payne	
	Democratic Services	
E	diane.harold@mazars.co.uk Diane Harold, External Audit, Bryan Hanson House (where there are pink papers please place these in an envelope marked Private and Confidential)	P
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E	Evening Gazette
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	Checked by	Date sentout	

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	E	Edwin Jeffries
	E	Steve Williams

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	E	ian.willis@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	peter.tennick@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	richard.mennear@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	gavin.ledwith@northeast-press.co.uk
	E	editor@bdaily.co.uk
	E	joanna.morris@nne.co.uk
	E	graeme.hetherington@nne.co.uk
	E	dani.webb@nne.co.uk
	E	lucy.richardson@nne.co.uk
	E	chris.webber@nne.co.uk
	E	news@eveninggazette.co.uk
	E	sandy.mckenzie@eveninggazette.co.uk
	E	tees.news@bbc.co.uk
	E	lee.johnson@bbc.co.uk
	E	madeleine.briggs@bbc.co.uk

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COMMITTEE:	CHILDREN'S STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP	Date:
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PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS				OTHER OFFICERS			
	E	Councillor Chris Simmons (Chair)	P		1	Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive	P
	E	Director of Child & Adults Services	P		1	Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor	P
	E	Sally Robinson, Asst Dir C&A	P		1	Denise Ogden, Dir Regen & Neigh	P
	E	Dean Jackson, Asst Dir Educ	P		E	Kerry Trenchard	P
	E	Louise Wallace, Dir PH	P		E	Richard Starrs	
	E	Damien Wilson, Asst Dir, Regen	P		E	Edwin Jeffries	
	E	gordon.lang@cleveland.pnn.police.uk	P		E	Steve Williams	
	E	lucia.saiger-burns@dtv.probaton.gsi.gov.uk	P		3	Democratic Services	
	E	alison.wilson@tees.nhs.uk	P		1	Members Library	
	E	paul.pagni@nhs.net	P		1	Typing Tray - for PDF - To be sent with yellow distribution sheet	
	E	linda.watson@tees.nhs.uk	P				
	E	chris.davis4@nhs.net	P				
	E	Ian Merritt, C&A Services	P		E	diane.harold@mazars.co.uk (or External Audit, Bryan Hanson House where there are pink papers, please place these in an envelope marked Private and Confidential)	P
	E	Danielle Swainston, C&A Services	P				
	E	Helen White, C&A Services	P		E	rebecca.dearden@mazars.co.uk	
	E	westviewproject@btinternet.com	P		E	Katy Larkin	
	E	headteacher.stjohnvianney@school.hartlepool.gov.uk	P		2	Young People (c/o Katy Larkin, Windsor Offices)	
	E	reid.c@st-hilds.hartlepool.sch.uk	P		2	Parent Represenatives (c/o Sally Robinson)	
	E	headteacher@springwellschool.co.uk	P				
	E	dhankey@hartlepoolfe.ac.uk	P				
	E	anne.smith5@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk	P				
	E	karen.gibson@hartlepoolcarers.org.uk					
	E	andy.powell@housinghartlepool.co.uk					
	E	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher)					
	1	Leader of the Council (Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher) (via Joan Stevens)	P				

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Date and Time.....

Appendix 1

	Open & Closed	Returned printing checked by	
	Open		
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	Checked by	Date sentout	
ADDITIONAL COPIES			
	E	jayne.hardwick@cleveland.pnn.police.uk	
	E	ian.coates@cleveland.pnn.police.uk	
	E	susan.sweeney@nhs.net	
	E	Councillor Rob Cook	
	E	Councillor Marjorie James (Vice Chair)	
	E	Councillor Sylvia Tempest	
	E	Councillor Kevin Cranney	
OPEN REPORTS (PRESS ETC)			
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	E	peter.tennick@northeast-press.co.uk	
	E	richard.mennear@northeast-press.co.uk	
	E	gavin.ledwith@northeast-press.co.uk	
	E	editor@bdaily.co.uk	
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	E	graeme.hetherington@nne.co.uk	
	E	dani.webb@nne.co.uk	
	E	lucy.richardson@nne.co.uk	
	E	chris.webber@nne.co.uk	
	E	news@eveninggazette.co.uk	
	E	sandy.mckenzie@eveninggazette.co.uk	
	E	tees.news@bbc.co.uk	
	E	lee.johnson@bbc.co.uk	
	E	madeleine.briggs@bbc.co.uk	

	Compiler	Checker
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COMMITTEE:	HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD	Date:
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MEMBERSHIP			
	1	Councillor C Akers-Belcher (Chair)	P
	1	Councillor Hall	P
	1	Councillor G Lilley	P
	1	Councillor Simmons	P
	1	Councillor Richardson	P
	1	Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive	P
	1	Louise Wallace, Director Public Health	P
	1	Denise Ogden, Director R&N	P
	E	carolinethurlbeck@nhs.net	P
	E	davidbrown@nhs.net	P
	1	Councillor Fisher, Chair A&G Cttee	P
	E	imchugh@clevelandfire.gov.uk	P
	E	paul.pagni@nhs.net	P
	E	alan.foster@nth.nhs.uk	P
	E	s.thomas@hvda.co.uk	P
	E	martinbarkley@nhs.net	P
	E	nichola.fairless@neas.nhs.uk	P
	E	joanne.dobson@tees.nhs.uk	P
	E	k.bayley@hvda.co.uk	P
	E	margaret.wrenn@ntlworld.com	P
	E	alison.wilson@tees.nhs.uk	P
e-Publication Date..... Initials..... e-mail link sent by..... Date and Time..... Published by: Date and Time.....			

OFFICERS			
	E	Andrew Atkin, Asst Chief Executive	P
	E	Chris Little, Chief Finance Officer	P
	1	Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor	P
	1	Director of Child and Adult Services	P
	E	Graham Frankland (R&N)	P
	E	Alastair Smith (R&N)	P
	E	Damien Wilson (R&N)	P
	1	Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager	P
	1	Jill Harrison (C&A)	P
	E	Andrewgraham1@nhs.net	
	E	Kerry Trenchard	
	E	Sally Robinson (C&A)	
	E	sharon.brennan@hartlepool.gov.uk	
	E	Andrea.hawdon@neas.nhs.uk	
	E	twoodall@hartlepoolhospice.co.uk	
	E	Ian.Wolstenholme@cleveland.pnn.police.uk	
	E	htolputt@hartlepoolhospice.co.uk	
	E	jackie.bliss@tees.nhs.uk (S Childs PA)	P
	5	Democratic Services	P
	1	Diane Harold, External Audit, Bryan Hanson House (where there are pink papers please place these in an envelope marked Private and Confidential)	P
	E	Neil Harrison	
	E	Sahdia.Hassen@neas.nhs.uk	

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	Open		
	Sent to print by	Sent out by	
	Checked by	Date sentout	

ADDITIONAL COPIES/PRESS ETC			
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	1	Members Library	
	1	Typing Tray - for PDF - To be sent with yellow distribution sheet	
	E	Putting Hartlepool First (Cllr G Lilley)	
	1	Conservative Group Leader (Cllr Wells)	
	E	Cllr Ainslie (A&G Cttee)	
	E	Cllr S Akers-Belcher (A&G Cttee)	
	E	Cllr Brash (A&G Cttee)	
	1	Cllr Loynes (A&G Cttee)	
	E	Cllr Robinson (A&G Cttee)	
	E	Cllr Shields (A&G Cttee)	
	E	rosemary.granger@nhs.net	
	E	heidi.holliday@nth.nhs.uk	
	E	Hartlepool Mail	
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	E	Evening Gazette	
	E	BBC Tees	
	E	wendy.newall@darlington.gov.uk	
	E	susan.sweeney@nhs.net	
	E	Richard.harrety@tees.nhs.uk	
	E	Edwin Jeffries	
	E	Steve Williams	
	E	Alastair Rae, Steve Hilton, Julian Heward	

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COMMITTEE:	SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP	Date:
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MEMBERSHIP			
	1	Councillor C Akers-Belcher (Chair) (via Joan Stevens)	P
	1	Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive	P
	1	Denise Ogden, Dir Regen & Neigh	P
	1	Clare Clark, Neighbourhood Manager	P
	1	Mark Smith	P
	1	Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health	P
	E	stephen.jermy@cleveland.pnn.police.uk	P
	E	barry.coppinger@cleveland.pnn.police.uk	P
	E	sarah.wilson@cleveland.pnn.police.uk	P
	E	Lucia.Saiger-burns@dtv.probaton.gsi.gov.uk	P
	1	imchugh@clevelandfire.gov.uk - for collect	P
	1	john.bentley@safeinteesvalle for collection	P
	E	paul.pagni@nhs.net	P
	E	andy.powell@housinghartlepool.org.uk	P

OFFICERS			
	1	Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor	P
	1	Catherine Grimwood - agenda only	
	E	Sally Robinson - agenda only	
	E	Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager - agenda only	
	E	Richard Starrs - agenda only	
	E	Edwin Jeffries - agenda only	
	E	Steve Williams - agenda only	
	E	susan.sweeney@nhs.net	P
	E	anya.camidge@dtv.probaton.gsi.gov.uk	P
	E	laura-leigh.lindridge@cleveland.pnn.police.uk	P
	2	Democratic Services - agenda only	
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	1	Diane Harold, External Audit, Bryan Hanson House (where there are pink papers please place these in an envelope marked Private and Confidential)	P

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ADDITIONAL COPIES			
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OPEN REPORTS (PRESS ETC)			
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	E	richard.mennear@northeast-press.co.uk	
	E	gavin.ledwith@northeast-press.co.uk	
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	E	joanna.morris@nne.co.uk	
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	E	sandy.mckenzie@eveninggazette.co.uk	
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	E	lee.johnson@bbc.co.uk	
	E	madeleine.briggs@bbc.co.uk	

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FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

19th September 2013



Report of: Director of Public Health

Subject: Healthy Weight Healthy Lives including report on National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP)

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Non-key / for information.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To inform members of the approaches being taken by Hartlepool Borough Council and partners to address rising levels of overweight and obese adults (18+) within the town.
- 2.2 To assure members that the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) is being undertaken. This has been a mandated responsibility of the Local Authority since 1st April 2013.
- 2.3 To seek member views on the approaches being taken and gain support for the overall Healthy Weight Healthy Lives strategy moving forward.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Obesity is a key factor in rising levels of premature deaths and can lead to a number of long-term illnesses and health conditions. Around 44% of the incidence of diabetes, 23% of heart disease and between 7% and 41% of certain cancers (for example, breast, colon and endometrial) are attributable to excess body fat. It is therefore a key public health priority to address rising levels of overweight and obesity within the town.
- 3.2 27.5% of adults in Hartlepool are currently classed as obese, which is significantly higher than the England average of 24.2% (Modelled obesity prevalence 2006-2008, National Obesity Observatory). Levels of healthy eating (19.3%) and physically active adults (49.7 %) are also below the national average.
- 3.3 The NCMP was established in 2005, and involves the annual weighing and measuring of all eligible children in reception class (aged 4 to 5 years) and

year 6 (aged 10 to 11 years) on an annual basis to assess trends in overweight and obesity levels in within primary school children. A briefing for elected members on the NCMP has been published by Public Health England and the Local Government Association. The briefing poses frequently asked questions for elected members which address a number of transitional issues relating to the transfer of responsibility for the delivery of the National Child Measurement Programme.

- 3.4 NCMP participation rates in Hartlepool remain consistently high with 99% (more than 2,000) of eligible children measured during the 2011/12 school year. The high participation rates demonstrate the high quality of the data and the continued local commitment to the programme. The most recent data from the NCMP demonstrates that 9.9% of children in the Reception year are classified as obese and this rises to 24.3% of children in Year 6. This compares to the national average of 9.5% in reception year and 19.2% in Year 6 (Health and Social Care Information Centre, 2011-12).
- 3.5 Hartlepool Borough Council currently operates a multi-partnership Healthy Weight Healthy Lives (HWHL) Steering Group which aims to address rising levels of overweight and obesity among adults and children within the town. The group includes representation from Public Health, Social Care, Sport & Recreation, Dietetics, School Meals Service, NHS, Transport and the CVS among others, and has a strong emphasis on joint working.
- 3.6 The steering group has an annual scheme of work or strategy, the HWHL Action Plan, which captures the range of work and current progress by all partners in relation to the objectives of the national HWHL strategy and the priorities within relevant Hartlepool JSNA documents (obesity, diet and nutrition and physical activity).

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Children and young people are a priority within the HWHL action plan; children who are obese or overweight are more likely to become obese adults. Early intervention is critical in tackling the obesity problem and interventions start in the antenatal period by promoting and establishing good nutrition in pregnancy.
- 4.2 Actions include increasing breastfeeding rates, as low breastfeeding rates are closely linked to an increased risk of obesity for both mother and child. Hartlepool's Breastfeeding Welcome Award for family settings, shops and workplaces aims to reduce stigma and make breastfeeding more socially acceptable across the town in key settings.
- 4.3 Work has been established in the Early Year's settings to ensure the Voluntary Food and Drinks guidelines are implemented, and the British Heart Foundation (BHF) Younger and Wiser project is embedded in 37 out of 38 schools and focuses on heart health including; smoking, nutrition and

physical activity (a report on the project is due for the Committee in November).

- 4.4 The lack of a children's weight management programme has been acknowledged and addressed through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the HWHL Strategy. Plans are underway to provide a service to children and their families as evidence suggests a family-based approach is the most effective way to tackle the issue. This programme, Families in it Together Hartlepool (FiiT Hart) has been developed by the Sport & Recreation and Public Health teams and a pilot phase will commence in September.
- 4.5 In relation to Adults, support is available via the NHS Health Trainer Team which provides one-to-one and group-based support for weight management in the community and in workplaces, and specialist dietetic support is provided to anyone referred by their GP. A Tier 4 bariatric service is provided via North Tees & Hartlepool Foundation Trust at the University Hospital of North Tees. The Council's Sport and Recreation Team also provide a range of physical activity programmes within leisure facilities and in the community including exercise on prescription – the Hartlepool Exercise for Life Programme (HELP).
- 4.6 The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published a Local Authority briefing in May 2013, 'Preventing obesity and helping people to manage their weight', which highlights other ways for Authorities and elected members to take action, including promoting active travel, working with local retailers around healthier food options, creating affordable and accessible leisure facilities and developing local policies around healthy eating and alcohol consumption.
- 4.7 It is proposed that members acknowledge and approve the approaches highlighted above, and provide any feedback or input into the HWHL action plan.

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Levels of overweight and obesity continue to rise nationally, with increasingly sedentary lifestyles, reliance on cars and other less active forms of transport and fast food consumption being key factors. The risk of not implementing a healthy weight strategy and its associated projects in the town may be that obesity levels in Hartlepool continue to rise in line with the national statistics. It is a key priority to narrow this gap and reduce health inequalities to bring obesity levels in Hartlepool in line with and ultimately below the national average.
- 5.2 The NCMP is a surveillance programme and as such is not responsible for commissioning obesity services for children. Its role is to inform obesity planning and commissioning and underpin the Public Health Outcomes

Framework indicator. Without the NCMP, we would be unable to provide robust public health surveillance data on child weight status.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 An estimated 16 million days of sickness absence a year are attributable to obesity. Obese people are less likely to be in employment than people of a healthy weight. The associated welfare costs are estimated to be between £1 billion and £6 billion nationally. The cost of providing social care services for people who are housebound or have limited mobility as a consequence of obesity-related illness is also likely to rise if the issue is not addressed.
- 6.2 A number of the key projects within the action plan are externally funded via non-recurring NHS funding and BHF grants. These programmes all seek to build capacity and sustainability within the targeted settings. This will ensure a reduction in cost for the Council moving forward as schools and teams will have the skills and resource to continue work in the future.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Members are asked to note the content of the report and the actions being taken to support people in Hartlepool to achieve and/or maintain a healthy weight.
- 7.2 Members to note that the mandatory NCMP is being undertaken in all HBC schools.

8. FURTHER READING

National Child Measurement Programme briefing for elected members (Local Government Association, April 2013)

http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/publications/-/journal_content/56/10171/3974583/PUBLICATION-TEMPLATE

Healthy Weight Healthy Lives Action Plan 2013/14, Hartlepool Borough Council (available from Steven Carter)

Local government public health briefings – Preventing obesity and helping people manage their weight (NICE, May 2013)

<http://publications.nice.org.uk/preventing-obesity-and-helping-people-to-manage-their-weight-phb9>

Hartlepool JSNA documents: Obesity, Diet & Nutrition, Physical Activity (<http://www.teesjsna.org.uk/hartlepool/>)

9. CONTACT OFFICERS

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FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

19th September 2013



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services and Chief Finance Officer

Subject: PRIORITY SCHOOLS BUILDING PROGRAMME –
NURSERY PROVISION AT HOLY TRINITY CE
PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Key Decision Test (i) applies.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To agree to the funding of potential future nursery provision at Holy Trinity CE Primary School.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 24 May 2012, the Secretary of State announced the names of the schools to be taken forward into the Priority School Building Programme (PSBP). The Council was informed that three out of four expressions of interest made by Hartlepool Borough Council had been successful. The three successful schools are:
- Manor College of Technology
 - Barnard Grove Primary School
 - Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School
- 3.2 The Education Funding Agency (EFA) carried out feasibility studies on each of the three successful schools during Summer 2013, and has developed control options for each scheme. The EFA is planning to appoint the contractor on 9th October 2013.
- 3.3 On 30th July 2013, Children's Services Committee agreed to a review of nursery provision in the Seaton Carew area. The proposal is to close Seaton Carew Nursery School and extend the age-range of Holy Trinity CE Voluntary

Aided primary school from 5-11 year olds to 4-11 year olds. Consultation on this proposal begins on 23rd September and ends on 1st November. The final decision on whether to publish statutory notices will be made by the Children's Services Committee in December 2013.

- 3.4 The original application to the EFA for a new build of Holy Trinity CE Primary School did not include nursery provision and was therefore not included in the funding allocation, as it was not envisaged at that stage that the nursery provision would be relocated.

4. Education Funding Agency Requirements

- 4.1 The EFA has been informed of the decision to consult on the nursery provision in Seaton Carew and the impact that this may have on the future development of the Holy Trinity CE Primary School scheme.
- 4.2 It has been agreed that the control options developed by the EFA for Holy Trinity CE Primary School will include a 26 FTE place nursery and will be shared with the successful contractor in October 2013. Following the nursery consultation, if the decision is made to implement the closure of Seaton Carew Nursery and to extend the age-range of Holy Trinity CE Voluntary Aided Primary School, the selected contractor will manage the development of a nursery as part of the new build at Holy Trinity CE Primary School.
- 4.3A requirement of the EFA to proceed with this project is a commitment from the Council to fund the additional 26FTE place nursery in the form of a Section 151 letter (See Appendix 1). If the decision is made by Children's Services Committee not to proceed with the publication of statutory notices following consultation, the EFA has requested that the Council agrees to reimburse any costs properly incurred by the EFA in relation to any abortive design and project management costs associated with the proposal. At this stage these potential costs are unknown, although they are not expected to be significant.
- 4.4 The EFA has carried out an exercise to establish an approximate cost for the additional 26 FTE nursery at Holy Trinity. This amounts to a maximum £211,000 and it is hoped the actual cost will be lower.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The Governing Body of Holy Trinity CE Primary School has agreed to pay a 10% contribution (£21,100) of the overall cost of the 26 place nursery.
- 5.2 On the basis of the estimated total scheme costs this leave a residual cost unfunded costs of £189,900. It is envisaged that an additional capital receipt can be achieved from the sale of the existing Nursery site (net of costs). If this additional net capital receipt is allocated towards the new

nursery provision the Council would still need to provide further funding of between £70,000 and £90,000. It is recommended that this amount is funded from the forecast 2013/14 revenue outturn. Members should note that this will reduce the value of the 2013/14 revenue underspend available to temporarily offset the anticipated higher grant cuts in 2015/16 proposed by the Government in current 'Local Government Finance Settlement 2014/15 and 2015/16 Technical Consultation'.

- 5.3 As the recommended use of the additional forecast capital receipt and the provision of funding from the 2013/14 revenue outturn is outside the approved Budget and Policy this proposal will need to be referred to full Council for a decision.
- 5.4 In the meantime the Committee is requested to authorise the Chief Finance Officer to sign the Section 151 letter required by the EFA, as without this letter the potential to provide the nursery provision will be removed from the scheme at this stage. This letter does not commit the Council to provide funding for a nursery if it is determined after the consultation exercise not to provide a new nursery facility. However, the Council will be committed to reimburse any costs properly incurred by the EFA in relation to any abortive design and project management costs associated with the proposal, which would need to be funded from the 2013/14 in the event these costs arise.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 To agree to seek Council approval of funding of £189,900 for a 26FTE nursery provision at Holy Trinity CE Primary School if the decision is made to proceed with the closure of Seaton Carew Nursery School and extend the age-range of Holy Trinity CE Voluntary Aided Primary School.
- 6.2 Subject to the approval of 6.1 to also seek Council approval that if this scheme progresses the cost of £189,900 will be funded from a combination of the net additional Capital Receipt generated from the sale of the existing nursery site and a contribution from the 2013/14 forecast revenue outturn of between £70,000 and £90,000.
- 6.3 To note that in the event that a decision is made not to progress with this scheme the Council will be required to reimburse any costs incurred by the EFA in relation to any abortive design and project management costs associated with the proposal, and to note these costs will need to be funded from the 2013/14 forecast revenue outturn.
- 6.4 To authorise the signing and issuing of the Section 151 letter to the EFA.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet report – 24 October 2011

Children's and Community Services Portfolio report – 4 December 2012

Cabinet report – 4 February 2013

Children's Services Committee Report – 30th July 2013

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