

REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

5 DECEMBER 2013

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

Present:

Councillor Robbie Payne (In the Chair)

Councillors: Christopher Akers-Belcher, Kevin Cranney and Keith Fisher.

Also Present: In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2: -
Councillor Allan Barclay as substitute for Councillor
Stephen Akers-Belcher;
Councillor Brenda Loynes as substitute for Councillor
Dr George Morris.

Councillor Geoff Lilley.

Officers: Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration
John Mennear, Assistant Director, Community Services
Chris Pipe, Planning Services Manager
Antony Steinberg, Economic Regeneration Manager
Sylvia Pinkney, Public Protection Manager
Nigel Johnson, Housing Services Manager
Andrew Golightly, Principal Regeneration Officer
Gemma Day, Principal Regeneration Officer
Julian Heward, Public Relations Officer
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

70. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Stephen Akers-Belcher and Dr George Morris.

71. Declarations of Interest

None.

72. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2013

Received.

73. Planning Policy Framework Justification (*Assistant Director, Regeneration*)

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework.

Purpose of report

The report sought agreement to a Planning Policy Framework Justification document in light of the Council decision to withdraw the emerging Local Plan 2012 (deposit).

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Planning Services Manager reported that the former emerging Local Plan 2012 had been withdrawn by a Council decision on the 17th October 2013. A timetable was being formulated for the production of a new local plan however during the development of the plan a planning policy position needed to be clarified.

In the absence of an up to date development plan the Council could rely on policies in the adopted Local Plan 2006 only where they are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In accordance with paragraph 14 of the NPPF where the 2006 plan was absent, silent or relevant policies were out-of-date permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF or specific policies in the NPPF indicated development should be restricted. The Planning Services Team had produced a document entitled 'Planning Policy Framework Justification', submitted as an appendix to the report, which highlighted policies in the adopted local plan and whether they complied with the NPPF.

It was envisaged that the document would be used to support the determination of planning applications as it highlighted which policies could be relied upon and also provided information on evidence bases which would be used to request affordable housing and the provision of onsite energy supply from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources.

The Planning Services Manager highlighted as part of the evidence base to underpin the affordable housing provision a threshold of a development comprising a minimum of 15 dwelling would be used to request affordable housing contributions, which is in line with viability work which has been carried out by the Planning Services Team to ensure residential developments are viable. It was also highlighted that an internal officer protocol note for requesting affordable housing has been agreed by senior management.

The document also highlighted that the Council could not demonstrate a five year housing land supply and therefore all policies relating to the supply of housing were considered to be out of date. This in effect meant that the

NPPF ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ potentially allowed housing to be progressed in areas which otherwise may not have been deemed as acceptable.

Members questioned the timetable for delivery of the new development plan. The Planning Services Manager indicated that she was unable at present to give a clear timetable to Members as work was still under way on tendering for external experts to provide some of the evidence/individual sections of the plan that could not be developed in-house. It was hoped that a timetable could be established before the end of the year and Members informed of that and the appropriate consultation stages.

Members indicated that while consultation was underway with developers in relation to potential development sites, had work commenced for the Council to identify land in its ownership that could be put forward for development and what involvement was there for Councillors in that process. The Assistant Director, Regeneration indicated that the Council’s sites would be put forward through the same process and a report could be brought to Members outlining that process. Members requested the report also include those sites not being put forward.

Decision

1. That the Planning Policy Justification Document and evidence base be approved.
2. That a report be submitted to the Committee setting out the land identified for potential development in the Council’s ownership with reference to those sites not proposed.

74. European Regional Development Fund – Hartlepool Enterprise Growth Hub *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

Key Decision (test (i) and (ii) apply) Forward Plan Reference No. 30/13.

Purpose of report

To inform members of the successful completion of the “Enterprising Hartlepool” project and to seek approval to accept further European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) monies to continue the successful activities.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Economic Regeneration Manager reported that in June 2009 the Economic Development Team of the Council had been successful in securing £450,000 of ERDF to support work with individuals considering self employment as an option, business start ups and developing businesses. The project was part of the Tees Valley Integrated Business Support Activity, which was a joint project with Stockton on Tees Borough Council, Middlesbrough Council and Teesside University with Hartlepool as the lead accountable body.

The project was funded through the 2007 – 2013 ERDF programme which totalled approximately £300m of EU funding against a series of measures including increased business creation, improvement in business performance and as a consequence job creation and safeguarding.

The project benefited from retrospection, starting on 1st August 2008 and due for completion on 31st March 2012, although a short 3 month extension was subsequently agreed to allow for final payments to clear.

The evaluation of this project was currently being completed, highlights to date show that the project has been successful across all measures including the creation of over 40 new businesses, 80 new jobs and the safeguarding of in excess of 40 jobs. In addition, in excess of 300 Hartlepool residents were coached towards becoming self employed. Many of these went on to set up service type businesses including shops and services to individuals which are not eligible for support in the current ERDF programme and could not therefore be counted as new businesses supported. During the project, it was subject to two audits by DCLG, both of which were satisfactorily concluded. The evaluation would be made available to members once fully completed.

Following the successful conclusion of the above mentioned project, further funding was sought to continue to support the business support elements of Economic Regeneration, with an initial proposal submitted in February 2013.

Following discussions with the ERDF Secretariat additional funding of £403,165 had been offered (subject to contract) to cover the period 1st March 2013 – June 2015. In order to maximise the amount of ERDF and minimise the level of Borough Council match funding, it has been agreed that private sector match funding be incorporated in the bid. This gives the following breakdown for the project:

| | | |
|----------------|---|----------|
| HBC Salaries | - | £188,652 |
| HBC Grants | - | £ 46,569 |
| Private Sector | - | £167,644 |
| ERDF | - | £403,165 |
| Total | | £806,330 |

The Officer outlined the proposed outputs for the project and highlighted that there would be a focus on young people (18-24 years) starting up their own business. This was welcomed by Members.

The Economic Regeneration Manager highlighted that the project would be subject to quarterly claims which would be prepared by the Economic Regeneration Team for sign off by the Council's Finance Section. These claims would now be subject to a desktop evaluation by DCLG, including a full audit of 10% of the claim. This would further ensure that, going forward, claims would be eligible as they were presented, minimising the risk of

items being identified at later audit stages.

Members questioned the HBC contributions to the project, particularly the Grants fund. The Finance and Policy Committee had been informed that the current grants fund would be exhausted by the end of the financial year and no funds had been identified for the following year. The Assistant Director, Regeneration indicated that there would be a further report on the grants in January outlining proposed revisions and suggestions on how they could be taken forward. The money outlined in the grant bid was this year's funding.

The Leader of the Council indicated that the Finance and Policy Committee would be making recommendations later in the month on next year's budget and an indication of what level of funding remained in the grants budget should be reported to that meeting. The Chair made it clear that the decision being made by the Committee today would only relate to the acceptance of the grant money from the European Regional Development Fund. The Chair requested that the information on the grant budget be forwarded to the Leader immediately following the meeting.

Members welcomed the focus on engaging with young people to start their own businesses and suggested that some publicity should be focussed on this to highlight the scheme and the advice and support available to young people who may not have previously considered starting their own business.

Decision

1. That the acceptance of the European Regional Development Fund as reported be approved, subject to confirmation by the Legal and Corporate Finance Sections that the contract, when received is acceptable.
2. That details of the Business Grants Fund be reported to the Finance and Policy Committee.

75. Hartlepool Regeneration Masterplan (*Assistant Director, Regeneration*)

Type of decision

Key Decision. Key test ii applies. An appropriate General Exception Notice had been issued in relation to this item in advance of the meeting.

Purpose of report

To seek committee endorsement for a brief that will allow the development of a masterplan for key areas of Hartlepool including the town centre area and the Marina.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Principal Regeneration Officer reported that the Council had recently completed the purchase of Jacksons Landing and was pursuing a range of

regeneration aspirations in the Marina area, Mill House, Church Street and the wider town centre. These areas had the potential to be the key drivers that would help to deliver future economic growth and job creation and allow the step change required to ensure that the economy in Hartlepool responded to current and future challenges.

Given the range and number of regeneration opportunities currently being considered it was important that these were dealt with in a comprehensive way that ensured the benefits of each development opportunity were maximized and delivered in the most appropriate way in the short, medium and long term.

This comprehensive approach could be achieved through a Master planning process that would allow the various regeneration opportunities to be looked at together to allow the clear articulation of what could be delivered, when it could be delivered and how the most appropriate development opportunities could be delivered, in a concise way.

Submitted as an appendix to the report was a draft Regeneration Masterplan Brief which sets out the Council requirements for the masterplanning exercise. This would be used to secure the services of Masterplanning professionals to deliver the final document.

The document outlined the area to be covered within the work focused on a primary area and a broader secondary area. The primary area contained the majority of development opportunities so this approach would allow work to be focused in these areas but still ensured that proposals suggested here related to and benefitted the wider town centre area. The brief explained that the Council had a number of regeneration priorities and opportunities and the key sites and policy areas that it would like to address.

Members welcomed the masterplan document and commented that it showed the ambition of the Council. Members questioned of the masterplan would link into the work already done around the Mill House Leisure facilities and Football Club. The Assistant Director, Regeneration indicated that the Mill House did link into the masterplan but the focus of this work would be around the marina area. The main opportunities for bringing the private sector along with the council's ambitions focussed on the offer around the marina and particularly the Jackson's Landing area.

In response to questions about the town's retail plan, the Assistant Director indicated that such plans did have a shelf life and the retail plan had been drawn up prior to the current recession so it was timely that it be reviewed. Members commented that the links between the town centre and the marina needed to be stronger to ensure as many visitors as possible moved between the two areas to ensure that the greatest income could be generated.

Members requested that once the timescales within the draft were

populated the document should be re-circulated to all Members of the Council. Members also sought assurance that as much cross-party positive publicity as possible was engendered from the masterplan and its proposals. The Assistant Director indicated that a communication strategy would be developed for the launch of the document with the Public Relations Team.

The Chair welcomed the document and hoped that its fulfilment would lead to an exciting and positive future for the town.

Decision

1. That the brief attached at Appendix 1 to the report be endorsed; and
2. That officers be authorised to seek the services of appropriately qualified professionals to prepare the Masterplan document

76. Library Service Review – Future Service Delivery Options (*Assistant Director, Community Services*)

Type of decision

Non Key Decision.

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Regeneration Committee of the findings of the Library Service review and seek approval to restructure the delivery of the following service areas;

- Community Outreach Services
- Library services to Children and Young People.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Assistant Director, Community Services submitted a detailed report on the findings of the Library Service review and seek approval to restructure the delivery of the Community Outreach Services and Library services to Children and Young People. These were linked to the ongoing need for savings and efficiencies from Council services as part of the financial budget for 2014/15 and sought to future-proof the Library Service from ongoing and future budget reductions which may impact further on the Library Service network. It was fully appreciated that the relentless pressure for efficiencies would continue into 2015/16 and this review aimed to put the Library Service in a position where it was able to continue to meet its statutory obligations.

The library service review primarily focused on the communities who already received or it was anticipated would need Community Outreach Services. The proposals continued to rely on vehicle based delivery; however, what those vehicles should be and what they could offer to the community were explored in the detailed review.

The Mobile Library vehicle was easily recognised and highly regarded by the public; however, it's suitability for purpose had diminished in recent

years and rather than continuing services with a not-fit-for purpose vehicle the review considered alternative provision models based on a vehicle with more flexibility.

The Assistant Director indicated that four main options had been examined for the future of the services and these were dealt with in turn in the report and the supporting appendices. They were: -

Option 1 – Cease the delivery of Community Outreach Services through the Mobile Library vehicle and introduce a new delivery model to better service the community.

Option 2 – Cease Community Outreach Services provided by the Mobile Library vehicle without any alternative provision.

Option 3 – Close a branch library or libraries.

Option 4 – Do nothing.

The Assistant Director indicated that following detailed review it was recommended that Option 1 should be taken forward with the services operating from smaller vehicles that would provide a greater accessibility for some use groups. Members supported the proposal commenting that while budgets were under severe pressure, there was no appetite to end a service that was so important to vulnerable people. It was suggested that much smaller vehicles would allow access to some of the elderly residential areas that the large mobile library vehicle could not safely access thereby providing improvement in service. Members did recognise the impact on staffing and reluctantly accepted the savings proposals set out in option 1.

Decision

1. That the committee approves the implementation of Option 1 as set out in the report, namely: -
 - (a) The cessation of the Community Outreach Service element delivered by the Mobile Library vehicle from April 2014 and the disposal of current vehicle.
 - (b) The implementation of alternative service delivery model, including the purchase of a much smaller vehicle and an associated staff restructure to provide improved Community Outreach Services.

77. Fees and Charges Review 2014/15 (*Assistant Director, Community Services*)

Type of decision

Non Key decision.

Purpose of report

To provide the Committee with the annual review of fees and charges proposed for 2014/15 and provide commentary upon those pricing categories which are demonstrating any significant change.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Assistant Director, Community Services reported on the proposed fees and charges for 2014/15 across the range of leisure services within Community Services and Parks and Countryside. It was highlighted that the Borough Hall was to be reviewed separately and this would be reported along with the linked price schedules for the Town Hall Theatre at the January meeting.

The Assistant Director, Community Services stressed that most of the services included within the report relied heavily on 'earned income' which had led to many prices being frozen. The emphasis had been on increasing footfall at as many facilities as possible.

Decision

The revised schedule of fee and charges for 2014/15, as reported, be approved.

78. Selective Licensing: Preferred Option for Exploration *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

The report was for the Committee's information only.

Purpose of report

To feedback the initial outcome to the discussions of the Selective Licensing Working Group, following the report considered by the Regeneration Services Committee on 29th August 2013., to ensure the Committee is kept up to date with regards to the strategic direction and focus of the Working Group.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Principal Regeneration Officer reported that the Working Group had been established to explore the options in terms of proceeding with Selective Licensing in the town. The Working Group consisted of key local authority officers (from Housing Services, Legal, Neighbourhood Management, Community Safety and Regeneration), Police representation and the Vice Chair of the Regeneration Services Committee.

It was proposed to extend the membership of the Working Group for future meetings to include additional frontline staff from the Neighbourhood Policing Team, key Registered Social Landlords and a representative from both the Health and Wellbeing Board and the National Landlords Association. The Selective Licensing Steering Group will also be utilised as a consultation sounding board, as part of the process to working up a justifiable proposal.

It was noted that the findings of the review, the initial borough wide analytical work, the broad options analysis, included as part of the previous

report to Committee, and learning from recent seminars attended by officers from the Local Authority has been presented Working Group and formed the basis of the discussions of the Working Group to date.

From the initial discussions, the preferred and most obvious option for exploration by the Working Group was 'Licensing priority wards' in Hartlepool. Going forward, the focus of the work would therefore be around the preparation of the business case for this option, which would be presented to the full Regeneration Services Committee for consideration and approval to begin the consultation process.

Decision

That the report be noted.

79. Quarterly Housing Report July – September 2013/14
(Assistant Director, Regeneration)

Type of decision

The report was for the Committee's information only.

Purpose of report

To update the Regeneration Services Committee about progress across key areas of the Housing Service relating to empty homes, enforcement activity, Selective Licensing, Disabled Facilities Grants, housing allocations, the impacts of Welfare Reform and housing advice and homelessness prevention during the second quarter of 2013/14.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Housing Services Manager updated the Committee in reporting that the bid to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for funding for disabled facility grants had been unsuccessful. The service was therefore building a waiting list of applications for the next financial year. Members expressed their dismay at the refusal of the application as they considered that maintaining people within their own homes to be a preventative measure keeping many from needing greater medical services intervention. The Chair indicated that he would write to the CCG seeking some explanation for the failure of the bid. Members also suggested that the issue be referred to the Health and Wellbeing Board for discussion with partner organisations.

Members asked if there was any recycling of adaptations through re-use of the equipment or the property. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that where possible equipment was reused but many adaptations were person and property specific making their reuse extremely difficult.

In relation to the quarterly update report, the Chair wished to express his thanks to the Housing Services team for their work particularly in relation to housing aid.

Decision

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Chair write to the Hartlepool and Stockton Clinical Commissioning Group seeking the reasons why the authorities bid for funding for disabled facilities grants had been refused.
3. That the refusal of the disabled facilities grant application by the Hartlepool and Stockton Clinical Commissioning Group be referred to the Health and Wellbeing Board for further discussion around the impact of the refusal on the service provided by the authority.

80. Quarterly Update Report for Public Protection (*Director of Public Health*)

Type of decision

The report was for the Committee's information only.

Purpose of report

To update the Regeneration Services Committee on performance and progress across key areas of the Public Protection service.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Public Protection Manager updated the Committee on performance and progress across key areas of the Commercial Services, Environmental Protection and Trading Standards and Licensing teams that formed the Public Protection service for the last quarter.

Members commented on the excellent service given by the Out of Hours service and considered that more publicity of the service should be undertaken. In relation to the high number of visits that were required to hot food take-aways in the town, Members indicated that they understood that there were plans to restrict the numbers of such facilities. The Public Protection Manager indicated that there was potential for inclusion in the new Development Plan for the town to restrict the numbers of such facilities and work would commence on this in the new year.

Members raised concerns with the numbers of bogus telephone sales calls that many people received and highlighted the targeting of elderly people with calls about unnecessary software for Windows PCs. The Public Protection Manager indicated that the team was to undertake some work on cold calls in the new year. Members were reminded that there was the facility for people to have their telephone number removed from receiving sales calls, however, Members indicated that that only worked for cold calls originating within the EU, when many of these scams originated in Africa.

The Chair in noting the update report indicated his support and thanks for the work undertaken by the service in protecting the people of the town.

Decision

That the report be noted.

81. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

The Chair extended season's greetings to all staff and thanked them for another year of excellent service to Members and the people of Hartlepool.

The meeting concluded at 10.35 am

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 12 DECEMBER 2013