

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE AGENDA



Friday 4th August 2006

at 2.00 p.m.

in Committee Room "B"

MEMBERS: SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE:

Councillors S Allison, Barker, Clouth, R Cook, Coward, Fleet, Gibbon, Hall, James, A Marshall, J Marshall, Preece, Shaw, Wallace, Wistow and Wright.

Resident Representatives:

Evelyn Leck, Joan Smith and Linda Shields

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**
3. **MINUTES**
 - 3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 30th June 2006.
4. **RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO REPORTS OF THE SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE**
 - 4.1 Portfolio Holder Response to the Overspend on the Headland Town Square Development Scrutiny Referral – *Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Transportation and Head of Procurement and Property Services*
 - 4.2 Portfolio Holders Response to the HMS Trincomalee Trust Scrutiny Referral – *Portfolio Holders for Regeneration, Liveability and Housing and Culture, Leisure and Transportation, Assistant Director Planning and Economic Development and Assistant Director, Community Services*
5. **CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS FROM COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND NON EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

No items.

6. FORWARD PLAN

6.1 The Executive's Forward Plan – *Scrutiny Manager*

7. CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS / BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS

No items.

8. CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL MONITORING/CORPORATE REPORTS

8.1 Review of Internal Audit Inspection Report - *Chief Financial Officer / Audit Commission Representative in attendance*

9. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

9.1 Strengthening Communities Best Value Review – Draft Improvement Plan – *Head of Regeneration*

9.2 Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CORWM) Scrutiny Referral – Progress Report – *Joint Report of the Assistant Director, Planning and Economic Development and the Scrutiny Manager*

9.3 Scrutiny Forums – Progress Reports:-

- (a) Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee – *Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee;*
- (b) Children's Services Scrutiny Forum – *Chair of Children's Services Scrutiny Forum;*
- (c) Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum - *Chair of Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum;*
- (d) Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum – *Chair of Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum;* and
- (e) Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum – *Chair of Regeneration.*

9.4 Scoping Report – Rossmere Learner Pool (Council and Portfolio Holder Referral) – *Scrutiny Manager*

10. CALL-IN REQUESTS

11. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

FOR INFORMATION

i) Date of Next Meeting Friday 15th September 2006, commencing at 2.00 pm in Committee Room B at the Civic Centre

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

30 June 2006

Present:

Councillor: Marjorie James (In the Chair)

Councillors: Caroline Barker, Mary Fleet, Gerard Hall, Ann Marshall, Arthur Preece, Jane Shaw, Steve Wallace, Gerald Wistow and Edna Wright.

Resident Representatives:
Evelyn Leck, Linda Shields and Joan Smith.

Officers: Charlotte Burnham, Scrutiny Manager
David Cosgrove, Principal Democratic Services Officer

15. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Stephen Allison, Rob Cook, John Coward and Steve Gibbon.

16. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

17. Minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2006

Confirmed.

The Chair referred to the recommendation of the Committee to request quarterly meetings with the Executive Cabinet at its meeting on 19 June 2006 took into account the request but considered that a meeting every six months would suffice. The Chair reported that she had written to the Mayor indicating that Scrutiny Coordinating Committee considered that quarterly meetings would be more appropriate initially. If set dates were not needed, it was easier to cancel a meeting than set one up. The Chair stated that she had had an informal response from the Mayor that he would reconsider the Committee's request but as yet there had been no formal response.

Councillor Wistow reported that at the Joint Health Scrutiny meeting (minute 14 refers) the Hartlepool representatives had maintained the Council's support for full implementation of the Darzi recommendations. The meeting had, however, supported an amended set of proposals and Councillor

Wistow indicated that a dissenting note to the Department of Health would be submitted by the appropriate date outlining Hartlepool's position.

In relation to Members seminars, the Scrutiny Manager reported that a response from the Chief Personnel Services Officer had been agreed and the concerns of the Committee were being further explored.

18. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Reports of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

No items.

19. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews from Council, Executive Members and Non Executive Members

The Scrutiny Manager tabled a report at the meeting outlining a referral request made by the Performance Management Portfolio Holder at his meeting held on 26 June 2006. The referral request was that this Committee examine whether the costs of Parish Council elections should be recovered from Headland Parish Council, with particular reference to: -

- (a) How much the Borough Council charges?
- (b) If the Borough Council doesn't charge, where the funding comes from?
- (c) What would be an acceptable number of Parish Council elections in a year? and
- (d) If the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee considers charges should go to Parish Councils, how those costs are staggered?

The Chair commented that she had seen the report and considered that in her opinion it contained sufficient information for the Portfolio Holder to make a decision and therefore queried what scrutiny could add to the decision. It was also commented that it was unfair to those areas without a parish council to ask them to underwrite the costs of the Headland Parish Council. Members agreed that the matter should be referred back to the Portfolio Holder with an indication that this Committee did not see what value it could add to the issue as it believed all the facts were already in the possession of the Portfolio Holder.

Decision

That the Performance Management Portfolio Holder be informed that the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee had noted the referral made at his meeting on 26 June 2006 but considered that scrutiny of this issue could add little to this matter as the Committee believed all the relevant information was included in the original report to the Portfolio Holder.

20. Forward Plan (*Scrutiny Manager*)

The most recent Forward Plan (July-October 2006) was submitted for the Committee to consider whether any item within the plan should be considered by this Committee or referred to one of the Scrutiny Forums.

Members reviewed the forward plan but decided that no items needed to be referred into the scrutiny process at this time.

Members referred to the seminar arranged for 10.00am on 4 July 2006 as part of the consultation for the new Community Strategy. Members considered that this was an important issue that many Members would be unable to attend due to the timing of the seminar. Members requested that officers be requested to hold an additional seminar at a time more convenient to those Councillors who had work commitments.

While discussing the issue of consultation Members raised the recent consultation at two of the Neighbourhood Forums on public conveniences, which was to be investigated by the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum. Members questioned why only two of the three forums had received the presentation and indicated that the presentation to the Central and South Forums had been of little benefit as no financial data was available to indicate what total budget was available and what was and potentially could be provided. The Chair of the Neighbourhood Scrutiny Forum indicated that all the relevant budgetary information together with any relevant cost options was to be made available to the forum to inform the investigation.

The Committee considered that during the investigation it would be appropriate for the Chair of the Neighbourhood Scrutiny Forum to present the appropriate budgetary implications and any initial views to the next round of Neighbourhood Forums.

Recommended

1. That at this time, no items from the July – October 2006 Forward Plan be referred for further investigation.
2. That the improvements to the contents of the Forward Plan be noted and that the Committee looks forward to further improvements.
3. That the seminar on the Community Strategy be repeated at a time more convenient to those Councillors who work.
4. That the Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum be requested to carry out another round of consultation at the three Neighbourhood Consultative Forums on the investigation into public conveniences in line with the scrutiny inquiry recommendations/outcomes.

21. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents

No items.

22. Consideration of Financial Monitoring / Corporate Reports

No items.

23. Role of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee (*Scrutiny Manager*)

The Scrutiny Manager submitted a report outlining the role of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee. The report set out the Committee's functions and detailed the schedule of meetings for 2006/07.

Recommended

That the report be noted.

23. Scrutiny Forums – Draft Work Programmes 2006/07 – Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum (*Chair of Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum*)

Councillor Gerald Wistow, Chair of Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum, reported that the Forum at its meeting on 23 June 2006 agreed two topics for investigation during 2006/07; Social Prescribing and Development in PCT Services. As the scrutiny forum responsible for Health Scrutiny, the forum was also required to produce a rolling three-year health scrutiny programme following consultation with relevant stakeholders and these were; Primary care/Urgent Care, Eligibility Criteria, Adult Learning and Smoking.

Councillor Wistow also highlighted that the forum would also be inviting the Chief Executives' of all the major local health bodies to a meeting to share information.

Recommended

That the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee approves the content of the Draft Work Programme of the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum for the 2006/07 Municipal Year, as reported.

24. Scrutiny Forums – Draft Work Programmes 2006/07 – Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum *(Chair of Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum)*

Councillor Ged Hall, Chair of Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum, reported that the Forum at its meeting on 13 June 2006 agreed two topics for investigation during 2006/07; Public Conveniences (Council Referral of 12 April 2006) and Registered Social Landlords.

The Scrutiny Manager acknowledged the oversight of the notification of the Public Conveniences Scrutiny Referral and assured the Committee that the appropriate route for consideration of referrals would be adhered to. Members referred to the involvement of the Neighbourhood Forums in this investigation as discussed earlier in the meeting.

Recommended

That the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee approves the content of the Draft Work Programme of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum for the 2006/07 Municipal Year, as reported.

25. Scrutiny Forums – Draft Work Programmes 2006/07 – Children’s Services Scrutiny Forum *(Chair of Children’s Services Scrutiny Forum)*

The Chair of the Children’s Services Scrutiny Forum, Councillor Jane Shaw, reported that the two issues to be investigated by the Children’s Services Scrutiny Forum were both significant local and national issues; bridging the gap in boys achievement and the provision of sex and health education. Both issues would be addressed from the perspective of providing the best opportunity and provision for local young people.

Recommended

That the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee approves the content of the Draft Work Programme of the Children’s Services Scrutiny Forum for the 2006/07 Municipal Year, as reported.

26. Scrutiny Forums – Draft Work Programmes 2006/07 – Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum *(Chair of Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum)*

The Chair of Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum, Councillor Steve Wallace, indicated that in determining the Forum’s workload, those Members present at the meeting on 13 June 2006 were asked to select two issues each for consideration. After consideration of all the issue put forward the Forum agreed that the Railway Approaches into the town and Youth Unemployment should be investigated.

Councillor Wallace acknowledged that there was strong support within the Forum for the investigations into Neighbourhood Element Funding and CCTV in Hartlepool. Councillor Wallace commented that should the work programme permit the potential for the investigation of these two issues would be reviewed.

Recommended

That the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee approves the content of the Draft Work Programme of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum for the 2006/07 Municipal Year, as reported.

27. Determining the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee Work Programme – Draft 2006/07 (*Scrutiny Manager*)

Following the consideration of the work programmes of the four Scrutiny Forums, the Coordinating Committee considered its own work programme for 2006/07. The Scrutiny Manager reported that there were four issues carried forward from the 2005/06 work programme via the Referral process, these were; -

- Rossmere Pool – this inquiry was still open and needed to be finalised.
- Human Resources Strategy – work on this inquiry was still on-going through the HR Strategy Working Group appointed by this Committee.
- Committee on Radioactive Waste Management – this item had been referred to Scrutiny by Council, though it was noted that the government intended to disband CORWM towards the end of the year.
- Withdrawal of European Regional Development Funding to Voluntary Sector

Two further issues had been raised at the meeting with Chief Officers, the Mayor and Cabinet. These were the Community Strategy Review and the Corporate Performance Assessment 2006.

The Scrutiny Manager indicated that the Community Strategy Review which was being lead by the Hartlepool Partnership, would be programmed into the Committee's meeting schedules at the appropriate points in the process. The Chair suggested that in light of the significant cross-cutting nature of the CPA, a working group comprising of nine members be established. This would include the five Chairs together with four other Councillor members in accordance with the appropriate political balance and one Resident Representative. The Liberal Democrat member nominations were Councillors Preece and Wright. Members requested details on the Performance Award Grant from last years Local Performance Services Award programme and how Hartlepool compared in it's success with other local authorities. The Scrutiny Manager indicated that those statistics were

available and would be circulated to Members under separate cover.

There were four other issues listed in the report as potential areas of investigation. The Committee agreed to programme investigations into The Use of Agency Staff within The Council and Council Service Improvements. Members agreed that there was little value in pursuing investigations into Hartbeat and Hartlepool Borough Council as an Employer. Members considered that the latter would be adequately covered by the Human Resources Strategy investigation.

The Scrutiny Manager also reminded Members that the Coordinating Committee would have a significant role to play in the development of the Council's Budget for 2007/08 together with the consideration of corporate and financial issues such as quarterly budget monitoring and performance management reports.

Recommended

That in addition to consideration of the corporate/financial related issues, the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee's Work Programme for 2006/07 includes the following: -

For Completion from the 2005/06 programme;

- (i) Rossmere Pool (Council and Portfolio Holder Referral)
- (ii) Human Resources Strategy (Portfolio Holder Referral)
- (iii) Withdrawal of European Regional Development Funding to Voluntary Sector (Grants Committee Referral)

For commencement as the 2006/07 programme;

- (iv) Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (Council Referral)
- (v) Community Strategy Review
- (vi) Corporate Performance Assessment 2006 (Working Group)
- (vi) The Use of Agency Staff within the Council
- (vii) Council Service Improvements

28. Procedure for Decision Making Route for Final Reports (*Scrutiny Manager*)

The Scrutiny manager sought endorsement from the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee for the implementation of a procedure to be used for co-ordinating the Cabinet and other Committees' responses to Scrutiny Final Reports and recommendations. The proposed process contained a number of stages: -

- (a) Where a Scrutiny Forum has completed and produced a Final Report on an issue it has been examining and it has been approved by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, it would then be forwarded to the

Authority's Cabinet or other Committees for consideration;

- (b) Should the Final Report not be approved, the relevant Cabinet Member and Director/Chief Officer would formally report this back to the relevant Scrutiny Forum;
- (c) Should the Final Report be approved, the service area produces an 'action plan' which identifies all relevant actions recommended by the Scrutiny Forum along with relevant timescales for the implementation of recommendations. An appropriate officer is then assigned to each recommendation to ensure the action is carried out;
- (d) The service area in conjunction with the relevant Cabinet Member would formally feedback to the relevant Scrutiny Forum on the recommendations contained within the Scrutiny Final Report together with service area response known as the 'action plan' (displayed in a table format) within 12 weeks of the Authority's Cabinet/other Committees initially considering the report;
- (e) The Final part of the process would be to monitoring the approved recommendations. Hence an appropriate IT system would then be developed by the Scrutiny Support Team which would track the progress of scrutiny reports and recommendations to ensure that all timescales are met. However, in the short-term, a progress report would be required, as part of one of the recommendations i.e. in 6 months time from considering the Final Report; and
- (f) The whole process would be co-ordinated by the Scrutiny Support Team.

The process which would provide a more vigorous reporting back system was endorsed by the Committee. Councillor Wistow, Chair of the Adults and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum requested that the process also incorporate the Health Bodies duty to report back to the Council within 28 days of a final report being published.

Recommended

That the refined decision making route procedure for responses to Scrutiny Final Reports, to strengthen the current provision outlined in Authority's Constitution be endorsed and include reference to the Health Bodies duty to respond within 28 days.

29. Proposed Selection Criteria Dealing with Non-mandatory Scrutiny Referrals from the Authority's Regulatory Panels and Other Committees *(Scrutiny Manager)*

The Scrutiny Manager sought the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's

approval for the implementation of a selection criteria to be used when considering the appropriateness of undertaking a scrutiny investigation following receipt of a non-mandatory referral from the Authority's regulatory panels and other committees. As outlined within the Authority's Constitution, the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee has the discretion to consider the appropriateness of undertaking a scrutiny investigation following a referral from the Authority's regulatory panels and other committees, in addition to those referrals, which this Committee have a mandatory obligation to further examine. The Constitution clearly states that should the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee decide not to examine a particular 'referral', the decision must be justified and reported to Council and the referring body.

At present non-mandatory referrals are currently considered by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on a case by case basis without any selection criteria. It was proposed that this Committee could assess the suggested non-mandatory scrutiny topic referral against the proposed selection criteria outlined below :-

- (a) Affects a group of people living within the Hartlepool area;
- (b) Relates to a service, event or issue in which the Council has direct responsibility for or significant influence over;
- (c) Not be an issue which overview and scrutiny has considered during the last 12 months;
- (d) Not relate to a service complaint; and
- (e) Not relate to matters dealt with by another Council committee, unless the issue deals with procedure and policy related issues.

Members discussed the proposed selection criteria and commented that the Council had a role as a 'Champion' for Hartlepool. Whilst some areas may not be specifically within the remit of the authority, it should, on occasions, act as a champion for the people of Hartlepool. As such Members requested that the Scrutiny Manager amend the proposed selection criteria to reflect the champion role.

The Scrutiny Manager indicated that these points would be incorporated into the selection criteria and also reminded the Members that on each occasion a referral was submitted, a referral report would be brought to this Committee.

Recommended

1. That following the insertion of the text 'has the capacity to act as public champion' at the end of point (b), the proposed selection criteria, be approved to assess the appropriateness of undertaking future

non-mandatory scrutiny topic 'referrals' received from the Authority's regulatory panels, other committees, elected members or the public.

2. That it be noted that proposed selection criteria, as amended, by this Committee, would be subject to endorsement from Cabinet and the Constitution Committee, prior to its implementation.

30. Call-In Requests

None.

MARJORIE JAMES

CHAIR

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

4 August 2006



Report of: Joint Report of Head of Procurement and Property Services and the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Transportation

Subject PORTFOLIO HOLDER RESPONSE TO THE OVERSPEND ON THE HEADLAND TOWN SQUARE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY REFERRAL

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee with feedback on the recommendations from the investigation into the Overspend on the Headland Town Square Development, which was reported to Council on 13 April 2006.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 The investigation into the Overspend on the Headland Town Square Development conducted by this Committee falls under the remit of the Neighbourhood Services Department and is, under the Executive Delegation Scheme, within the service area covered by the Culture, Leisure and Transportation Portfolio Holder.

2.2 On 13 April 2006, Council considered the Final Report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee into the Overspend on the Headland Town Square Development as referred by Council on 27 October 2005 to the Overview and Scrutiny Function. This report provides feedback from the Portfolio Holder following the Council's consideration of, and decisions in relation to this Committee's recommendations.

2.3 In addition to this report a further progress report will be produced for Member's consideration six months after the Final Report was considered by Council to enable Members to monitor the implementation of their recommendations.

3. SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS AND EXECUTIVE DECISION

- 3.1 Following consideration of the Final Report, Council approved the recommendations in their entirety. Details of each recommendation and proposed actions to be taken following approval by Council are provided in the Action Plan attached at **Appendix A**.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That Members note the proposed actions detailed within the Action Plan, appended to this report (**Appendix A**).

Contact Officer:- Graham Frankland, Head of Procurement and Property Services
Neighbourhood Services Department
Hartlepool Borough Council
Telephone Number 01429 523211
E-mail – graham.frankland@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's Final Report 'Overspend on the Headland Town Square Development Scrutiny Referral' considered by Council on 13 April 2006.
- (ii) Decision Record of Council held on 13 April 2006.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

APPENDIX A

NAME OF FORUM: Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (SCC)

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Overspend on the Headland Town Square Development Scrutiny Referral

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: Council on 13 April 2006

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE	
(a)	That SCC can find no evidence of mismanagement or lack of control in the management of the Headland Town Square Development	No response/action required as this was the conclusion of the SCC	Not applicable	Not applicable
(b)	That the following issues should be approved for inclusion in future project and contract management:- (i) When considering the type of contract to award and the appointment of a preferred contractor all interested stakeholders should be given the opportunity to be included in this process;	The Corporate Procurement guidance includes a section relating to the requirement to consult stakeholders at key stages of a project. This includes considering the type of contract to be used, - which should be approved by the Executive. There will also be opportunities for relevant stakeholders to be included in the appointment of a contractor, this has previously taken place in projects such as Carnegie Building and Childrens Services	Graham Frankland and Departmental project leaders	July 2006

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN**APPENDIX A**

NAME OF FORUM: Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (SCC)

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Overspend on the Headland Town Square Development Scrutiny Referral

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: Council on 13 April 2006

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE	
(b)	<p>(ii) That an inclusive approach should be taken to consultation around the design of a scheme, including involving appropriate age groups; and</p> <p>(iii) That robust cost estimates and funding are established before a final consultation on any design or scheme proposal.</p>	<p>projects</p> <p>Guidance will be emphasised in respect of consultation in design and could involve for example groups of school children. Recognition of design expertise, complexity of project and timescales will contribute.</p> <p>Final consultation should be carried out on fully costed and budgeted schemes. There are occasions where proposals may change subsequent to receipt of a tender and further consultation would be necessary within financial and operational parameters.</p> <p>The proposed actions have been presented to the Corporate</p>	<p>Graham Frankland and Departmental project leaders</p> <p>Graham Frankland and Departmental project leaders</p> <p>Graham Frankland</p>	<p>July 2006</p> <p>July / August 2006</p>

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

APPENDIX A

NAME OF FORUM: Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (SCC)

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Overspend on the Headland Town Square Development
Scrutiny Referral

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: Council on 13 April 2006

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
	Management Team and the Corporate Procurement Group and will be presented to the Performance Management Portfolio Holder at his meeting on 21 st August 2006.		

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

4 August 2006



Report of: Joint Report of Directors of Regeneration and Planning Services / Adult and Community Services and the Portfolio Holders for Regeneration, Liveability and Housing / Culture, Leisure and Transportation.

Subject PORTFOLIO HOLDERS RESPONSE TO THE HMS TRINCOMALEE TRUST SCRUTINY REFERRAL

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee with feedback on the recommendations from the investigation into the HMS Trincomalee Trust, which was reported to Council on 13 April 2006.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 The investigation into HMS Trincomalee Trust conducted by this Committee falls under the joint remit of the Regeneration and Planning Services Department and the Adult and Community Services Department and is, under the Executive Delegation Scheme, within the service area covered jointly by the Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder and the Culture, Leisure and Transportation Portfolio Holder.

2.2 On 13 April 2006, Council considered the Final Report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee into the representation on the HMS Trincomalee Trust's Board together with its financial stability as referred by Council on 15 September 2005 to the Overview and Scrutiny Function. This report provides feedback from the Portfolio Holder following the Council's consideration of, and decisions in relation to this Committee's recommendations.

2.3 In addition to this report a further progress report will be produced for Member's consideration six months after the Final Report was considered by Council to enable Members to monitor the implementation of their recommendations.

3. SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS AND EXECUTIVE DECISION

- 3.1 Following consideration of the Final Report, Council approved the recommendations in their entirety. Details of each recommendation and proposed actions to be taken following approval by Council are provided in the Action Plan attached at **Appendix A**.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That Members note the proposed actions detailed within the Action Plan, appended to this report (**Appendix A**).

Contact Officer:- Stuart Green – Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development)
Regeneration and Planning Services Department
Hartlepool Borough Council
Telephone Number: 01429 523401
E-mail – stuart.green@hartlepool.gov.uk

John Mennear – Assistant Director (Community Services)
Adult and Community Services Department
Hartlepool Borough Council
Telephone Number: 01429 523417
E-mail – john.mennear@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's Final Report 'HMS Trincomalee Trust Scrutiny Referral' considered by Council on 13 April 2006.
- (ii) Decision Record of Council held on 13 April 2006.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

NAME OF FORUM: Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (SCC)

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: HMS Trincomalee Trust Scrutiny Referral

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: Council on 13 April 2006

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE	
(a)	That the Authority assists the HMS Trincomalee Trust in the identification of nominations for the two additional Trustees' vacancies to the Board, which are reflective of the town's make-up within a prescribed timescale (taking into account the recent appointments of two local business women, hence the efforts of the Authority should concentrate on securing Trustees from the remaining under-represented diversity groups)	Trust liaising with the Community Network and the Council's Diversity team to seek nominations.	Stuart Green/Liz Crookston	Not applicable
(b)	That the relationship between the Trust and the Authority, branded as the Hartlepool's Maritime Experience, be formally recognised by a Service Level Agreement, that clarifies the relationship and sets out clearly the rights and responsibilities of both parties including	Memorandum of Understanding* Covering remits, responsibilities and performance monitoring approved by Cabinet. * Advice from Legal Division that document should be regarded as MoU rather than	Stuart Green/John Menear	19 June 2006

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

NAME OF FORUM: Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (SCC)

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: HMS Trincomalee Trust Scrutiny Referral

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: Council on 13 April 2006

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
	the public accident liability.	SLA	
(c)	<p>That the Authority discontinues the unrestricted grant funding with immediate effect, subject to:-</p> <p>(i) The current ratio (70/30) of the admissions income at the Hartlepool Maritime Experience being revised to a 50/50 split (via the single ticketing arrangement) thus providing additional benefit to the Trust, as the Trust as a registered charity is able to further its income by Gift Aid via the Inland Revenue;</p> <p>(ii) That the revised admissions income split of the single ticketing arrangements being reviewed on an annual basis and additionally six</p>	In the light of the approval of the Memorandum of Understanding, Cabinet authorised officers to make the necessary revisions to the financial arrangements as referred to in this recommendation.	J Mennear July 2006 (back-dated to April 2006)

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

NAME OF FORUM: Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (SCC)

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: HMS Trincomalee Trust Scrutiny Referral

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: Council on 13 April 2006

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
<p>months after the proposed sale of the Trincomalee Wharf;</p> <p>(iii) If the Authority agrees to the 50/50 ratio on the admissions income (recommendation 10.1 (c) (i) refers above) the corresponding decrease in income generated by the Historic Quay is estimated to be £49,000+ and will require the re-direction of the proposed annual £50,000 grant allocation to the Trust to the Authority's relevant service area budget; and</p> <p>(iv) Any surplus monies from the ring fenced grant allocation for 2006/07, once re-allocated to the Authority's service area budget for the 2006/07</p>			

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

NAME OF FORUM: Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (SCC)

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: HMS Trincomalee Trust Scrutiny Referral

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: Council on 13 April 2006

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
	financial year, be awarded to the Community Pool.		
(d)	That a Working Group (including Elected Members within its membership) be established to discuss in partnership with the Trust any future planned developments on the site including their potential impact and opportunities for maximising revenue generation.	Proposals for a Development Group approved by Cabinet.	Stuart Green/John Menear 19 June 2006
(e)	That work be undertaken by the Authority to explore the possibility of establishing a reduced ticket pricing arrangement for the Hartlepool Maritime Experience solely for the residents of Hartlepool.	To be discussed with the Trust in the context of broader Council policy on charging for access to community facilities and the HME budget position; to be the subject of a future report to the Culture,	John Menear October 2006

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

NAME OF FORUM: Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (SCC)

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: HMS Trincomalee Trust Scrutiny Referral

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: Council on 13 April 2006

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE	
(f)	That whilst the Council has been asked to approve in principle the recommendations shown above, they are subject to the satisfactory outcome of the service level agreement negotiations being finalised as soon as possible through the Executive in light of the Trust's current financial situation.	Leisure and Transportation Portfolio Holder. Memorandum of Understanding approved by Cabinet (see {b} above)	Stuart Green/John Menear	19 June 2006

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

4 August 2006



Report of: Scrutiny Manager

Subject: THE EXECUTIVE'S FORWARD PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the opportunity for the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (SCC) to consider whether any item within the attached Executive's Forward Plan should be considered by this Committee or referred to a particular Scrutiny Forum.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 As you are aware, the SCC has delegated powers to manage the work of Scrutiny, as it thinks fit, and if appropriate can exercise or delegate to individual Scrutiny Forums.
- 2.2. One of the main duties of the SCC is to hold the Executive to account by considering the forthcoming decisions of the Executive and to decide whether value can be added to the decision by the Scrutiny process in advance of the decision being made.
- 2.3 This would not negate Non-Executive Members ability to call-in a decision after it has been made.
- 2.4 As such, the most recent copy of the Executive's Forward Plan is attached as **Appendix 1** for the SCC's information.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee considers the content of the Executive's Forward Plan.

Contact Officer:- Charlotte Burnham – Scrutiny Manager
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523 087
Email: charlotte.burnham@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.



HARTLEPOOL
BOROUGH COUNCIL

FORWARD PLAN

AUGUST 2006 – NOVEMBER 2006

CONTENTS

PAGE

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION 3

SECTION 2 - SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

Part 1	CE Department	6
Part 2	ACS Department	9
Part 3	CS Department	10
Part 4	NS Department	12
Part 5	R&P Department	24

APPENDICES

1	Details of Decision Makers	34
2	Cabinet Timetable of Decision	35

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The law requires the executive of the local authority to publish in advance, a programme of its work in the coming four months including information about key decisions that it expects to make. It is updated monthly.
- 1.2 The executive means the Mayor and those Councillors the Mayor has appointed to the Cabinet.
- 1.3 Key decisions are those which significantly modify the agreed annual budget of the Council or its main framework of policies, those which initiate new spending proposals in excess of £100,000 and those which can be judged to have a significant impact on communities within the town. A full definition is contained in Article 13 of the Council's Constitution.
- 1.4 Key decisions may be made by the Mayor, the Cabinet as a whole, individual Cabinet members or nominated officers. The approach to decision making is set out in the scheme of delegation which is agreed by the Mayor and set out in full in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

2. FORMAT OF THE FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 The plan is arranged in sections according to the Department of the Council which has the responsibility for advising the executive on the relevant topic:

Part 1	Chief Executive's Department	CE
Part 2	Adult & Community Services Department	ACS
Part 3	Children's Services Department	CS
Part 4	Neighbourhood Services Department	NS
Part 5	Regeneration and Planning Department	RP

- 2.2 Each section includes information on the development of the main policy framework and the budget of the Council where any of this work is expected to be undertaken during the period in question.
- 2.3 It sets out in as much detail as is known at the time of its preparation, the programme of key decisions. This includes information about the nature of the decision, who will make the decisions, who will be consulted and by what means and the way in which any interested party can make representations to the decision-maker.

3. DECISIONS MADE IN PRIVATE

- 3.1 Most key decisions will be made in public at a specified date and time.
- 3.2 A small number of key decisions, for reasons of commercial or personal confidentiality, will be made in private and the public will be excluded from any sessions while such decisions are made. Notice will still be given about the intention to make such decisions, but wherever possible the Forward Plan will show that the decision will be made in private session.
- 3.3 Some sessions will include decisions made in public and decisions made in private. In such cases the public decisions will be made at the beginning of the meeting to minimise inconvenience to members of the public and the press.

4. URGENT DECISIONS

- 4.1 Although every effort will be made to include all key decisions in the Forward Programme, it is inevitable for a range of reasons that some decisions will need to be taken at short notice so as to prevent their inclusion in the Forward Plan. In such cases a minimum of 5 days public notice will be given before the decision is taken.
- 4.2 In rare cases it may be necessary to take a key decision without being able to give 5 days notice. The Executive is only able to do this with the agreement of the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee or the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the local authority. (Scrutiny committees have the role of overseeing the work of the Executive.)

5. PUBLICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

- 5.1 All decisions which have been notified in the Forward Plan and any other key decisions made by the Executive, will be recorded and published as soon as reasonably practicable after the decision is taken.
- 5.2 The Council's constitution provides that key decisions will not be implemented until a period of 3 days has elapsed after the decision has been published. This allows for the exceptional cases when a scrutiny committee may 'call in' a decision of the Executive to consider whether it should be reviewed before it is implemented. 'Call in' may arise exceptionally when a Scrutiny Committee believes that the Executive has failed to make a decision in accordance with the principles set out in the Council's constitution (Article 13); or that the decision falls outside the Council's Policy Framework; or is not wholly in accordance within the Council's budget.

6. **DETAILS OF DECISION MAKERS**

- 6.1 Names and titles of those people who make key decisions either individually or collectively will be set out in Appendix 1 once they are determined.

7. **TIMETABLE OF KEY DECISIONS**

- 7.1 The timetable as expected at the time of preparation of the forward plan is set out in Appendix 2. Confirmation of the timing in respect of individual decisions can be obtained from the relevant contact officer closer to the time of the relevant meeting. Agenda papers are available for inspection at the Civic Centre 5 days before the relevant meeting.

PART ONE – CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S DEPARTMENT

A. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

NONE

B SCHEDULE OF KEY DECISIONS

DECISION REFERENCE: CE20/06 MEMBERS ICT/CIVIC SUITE

Nature of the decision

Improving the provision of ICT infrastructure within the civic suite to enable electronic access to information for members and officers and the provision of ICT equipment to enable members to access information remotely.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by the Cabinet.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made at a Cabinet meeting in August 2006.

Who will be consulted and how?

- Members through formal and informal means.
- Northgate Information Systems for technical advice.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

A report will be produced giving details of the proposed solution including costs.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Joan Chapman, Principal Strategy Development Officer (e-government), Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY. Telephone: 01429 – 284145

e-mail: joan.chapman@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information on this matter may be sought from Joan Chapman, as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: CE21/06 – REVISED PAY AND GRADING STRUCTURE

Nature of the decision

Revised Pay and Grading Structure and resolution of Single Status issues.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet

Timing of the decision

The decision will be made in October 2006

Who will be consulted and how?

Hartlepool Joint Trade Union Committee through Bridging the Gap meetings.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

A report will be produced outlining the preferred model of the revised Pay and Grading Structure and proposed changes to conditions of service in accordance with the Single Status Agreement.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Martyn Ingram, Principal HR Officer (Policy and Information), Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY. Telephone 01429 523547, e-mail: martyn.ingram@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be sought by contacting Martyn Ingram, as above.

PART TWO – ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
DEPARTMENT

A. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

None

B. SCHEDULE OF KEY DECISIONS

None

PART THREE – CHILDREN’S SERVICES DEPARTMENT

A. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Children and Young People’s Plan

Following a launch event on 7th September 2005, work began on Hartlepool’s first Children and Young People’s Plan. Producing a draft Children and Young People’s Plan, for consideration by elected members, involved co-operation between the Borough Council, in its capacity as Children’s Services Authority, and a number of strategic partners. These partners are identified by the Children Act 2004. Subsequent Regulations identify a number of bodies with whom the Authority must consult before the plan is agreed by Council.

A first draft of the Plan was produced in November 2005 and was subject to public consultation between mid-November and mid-December. This consultation involved meetings of reference groups, Neighbourhood Forum meetings, parent focus groups and a drop-in event. One particular feature was the involvement of young people.

A second draft of the Plan was produced in January 2006. Cabinet met on 24th January and approved the second draft for scrutiny and consultation. Children’s Services Scrutiny Forum considered the draft initially on 7th February and again on 7th March, following a second round of consultation.

A third draft was produced in March 2006 and was approved by Cabinet before being submitted to and approved by full Council on 13th April 2006.

Copies of the plan and a summary version are available from Ann Breward (tel. 01429 284337). A group of young people have been commissioned to produce a child-friendly version of the plan.

B. SCHEDULE OF KEY DECISIONS

DECISION REFERENCE: ED27/06 RCCO CAPITAL WORK PROGRAMME 2006/2007

Nature of the decision

To approve the Capital Work Programme 2006/2007 for projects funded via the department's Revenue Contribution towards Capital Outlay (RCCO).

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made on 25th August 2006.

Who will be consulted and how ?

- a) Headteacher and Diocesan representatives on the Asset Management Plan Working Group;
- b) Individual schools on specific proposals for building work.

Information to be considered by the decision-makers

RCCO Capital Work Programme 2006/2007 including background report and provisional list of schemes.

How to make representations

Representations should be made to Alan Kell, Asset Manager, Children's Services Department, Level 4, Civic Centre, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY. Telephone (01429) 523051, e-mail alan.kell@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information on this matter can be sought from Alan Kell as above.

PART FOUR - NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENT

A. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

1. FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN

Work has commenced on the draft 2006/07 Plan, which will be considered by Cabinet in August 2006, prior to referring to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

B. SCHEDULE OF KEY DECISIONS

DECISION REFERENCE: NS88/06 SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY

Nature of the decision

The approval of the Supporting People Strategy.

Who will make the decision?

The Cabinet will make the decision.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in August 2006.

Who will be consulted and how?

- Housing Partnership and Health & Social Care Strategy Planning Groups have considered draft
- Consultation 'event' with users of the SP service was held in June 2006
- The SP Commissioning Body to consider draft Strategy on 11 July 2006.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

One of the key aims of the Supporting People programme is to develop a strategic approach to providing for the needs of those requiring support. Guidance from ODPM makes it clear that this strategy must be set within a strategic framework, including housing strategies. The Five Year Supporting People Strategy for Hartlepool builds and develops the themes identified in the Shadow Strategy produced in 2002. This plan is the first opportunity to fully look at the longer term direction of Supporting People. It is a working document that reflects the continuing development of support services and it will be reviewed and updated throughout the five years.

The strategic priorities over the next five years will be:

- Reshape and retarget existing accommodation based services to ensure the most effective use of scarce resources.
- Commission a number of carefully targeted new accommodation based services.
- Considerable expand the amount of floating support available.
- Review and strategically reconfigure young people's services.
- Review and strategically reconfigure older people's services to meet the objectives of older people's services and identified need of SP services.
- Introduce services for people with complex needs, including people with substance misuse and mental health problems.
- Improvements in access to move-on accommodation.

Key tasks identified in the Supporting People Improvement Plan includes developing arrangements for joint commissioning with Adult & Community Services and developing existing or new services so that support is available to potential users across all tenures.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Penny Garner-Carpenter, Strategic Housing Manager, Civic Centre, Hartlepool TS24 8AY. Tel: 01429 284117. Email: penny.garner-carpenter@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Penny Garner-Carpenter, as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: NS89/06 SUB-REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY

Nature of the decision

The approval of the sub-Regional Housing Strategy.

Who will make the decision?

The Cabinet will make the decision.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in October 2006.

Who will be consulted and how?

Consultation 'events' have been held with a range of 'stakeholders' and the draft Strategy has been forwarded to all interested parties for comments.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

The Council, together with its partners, has to produce a 'fit for purpose' Housing Strategy to cover its area. Government Office North East assess whether or not a strategy is 'fit for purpose'. Additionally, with the setting up of Regional Housing Boards (RHB) a regional housing strategy is also required. Government guidance considers it 'essential' that RHBs identify sub-regional housing markets and work with local authorities and other stakeholders in each sub-region to develop sub-regional strategies. These should complement each other and together form the Regional Housing Strategy. Individual authority strategies should influence, and be influenced by, the wider strategies.

The Tees Valley authorities and partners have an established working relationship, and together with other stakeholders they formed Tees Valley Living and produced a sub-regional regeneration strategy. This forms part of the sub-regional housing strategy.

It is anticipated that guidance from DCLG will place increasing emphasis on regional and sub-regional working. Sub-regional housing strategies are likely to become a duty rather than the current 'good practice' and emphasis is very much on funding authorities who work together on projects to achieve value for money. This was reflected in SHIP capital funding being given to partnerships rather than individual authorities.

The Tees Valley sub-strategy will reflect local, sub-regional and regional issues and it is anticipated that it will be reviewed regularly.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Penny Garner-Carpenter, Strategic Housing Manager, Civic Centre, Hartlepool TS24 8AY. Tel: 01429 284117. Email: penny.garner-carpenter@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Penny Garner-Carpenter, as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: NS90/06 HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY UPDATE

Nature of the decision

The approval of the Homelessness Strategy Update.

Who will make the decision?

The Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder will make the decision.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in August 2006.

Who will be consulted and how?

- Housing Partnership
- Homelessness Strategy Group

Information to be considered by the decision makers

The Homelessness Act 2002 required all Local Housing Authorities to produce and publish a five year Homelessness Strategy in 2003. They aimed to create a step change in the way many Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) approach the issue of homelessness and for LHAs to take a more comprehensive approach, promoting prevention over traditional responses, and taking an overview of future needs. Recent Government guidance recommends that 'plans for a comprehensive review of the Strategy should be brought forward to ensure that any identified weaknesses are addressed before 2008'. To comply with this, our strategy is currently being updated. Additionally, a summary of the scale and nature of homelessness in Hartlepool will be produced on an annual basis. The whole strategy will then be reviewed in 3-4 years time. An integral part of Hartlepool's Homelessness Strategy is the Action Plan which is continually updated and developed to achieve the aims of the Strategy, which are to:

- Prevent homelessness – by ensuring that people have access to good quality advice and assistance.
- Reduce the potential for homelessness – through inter-agency working and complimentary strategies.
- Alleviate the effects of homelessness – by providing good quality services for those people who do become homeless.

One of the key tasks currently identified within our Action Plan is to develop a 'Spend to Save' budget, following Government guidance, to assist in the work of homeless prevention and avoid the significant costs associated with responding to homelessness once it has happened.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Penny Garner-Carpenter, Strategic Housing Manager, Civic Centre, Hartlepool TS24 8AY. Tel: 01429 284117. Email: penny.garner-carpenter@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Penny Garner-Carpenter, as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: NS91/06 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY UPDATE

Nature of the decision

The approval of the Housing Renewal Strategy Update.

Who will make the decision?

The Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder will make the decision.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in August 2006.

Who will be consulted and how?

- Housing Partnership
- Regeneration Partners

Information to be considered by the decision makers

This is a planned update to the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2004 which covered the period up to 2006 in line with the two-year SHIP funding process. This Strategy will apply for the 2006-8 period.

Priorities for private sector housing renewal remain the same and these are contained in the main 2006 Housing Strategy .

The Strategy will include changes made to the Housing Strategy to take account of legislative changes and alignment with specific government priorities in the Regional Housing Strategy to attract funding.

In particular, the Strategy will update provisions relating to the replacement of the fitness standard with the Health and Safety Hazard Rating System, emphasis on the Decent Homes Standard, empty houses, energy efficiency, and the private rented sector.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Penny Garner-Carpenter, Strategic Housing Manager, Civic Centre, Hartlepool TS24 8AY. Tel: 01429 284117. Email: penny.garner-carpenter@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Penny Garner-Carpenter, as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: NS 95/06 TEES VALLEY AND SOUTH DURHAM NHS LIFT.

Nature of the decision

To consider the relevant land transactions on the Town Centre NHS LIFT site.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in August 2006.

Who will be consulted and how?

NHS LIFT Company and Hartlepool PCT.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

Background will be provided on the Town Centre NHS LIFT development, including the provision of services on the site by the PCT. Potential options for the land transactions between the Council and the PCT and/or LIFT company and the relevant timescales.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Graham Frankland, Head of Property Services, Neighbourhood Services Department, Leadbitter Buildings, Stockton Street, Hartlepool. Tel 01429 523211. E Mail graham.frankland@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Graham Frankland, as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: NS98/06 LICENSING POLICY UNDER GAMBLING ACT 2005

Nature of the decision

To approve a Licensing Policy detailing the principles proposed in exercising new functions under the Gambling Act 2005.

Who will make the decision?

The Council will make the decision, following considerations by both Cabinet and members of the Licensing Committee.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in October 2006.

Who will be consulted and how?

- Members of the public and trade via public events, workshops, HBC website and 'Hartbeat'.
- Licensing Committee will also consider the matter prior to Council.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

The Licensing Act 2005 becomes law in April 2005 and is expected to take full effect in January 2007. The Act consolidates outdated legislation that controls gambling such as bingo, lotteries, slot machines, sports betting and casinos. Licences will be required for gambling operators, premises and certain personnel responsible for overseeing gambling activities. However, unlike the Licensing Act 2003, requirements for alcohol sales, local authorities will only be responsible for issuing premises licences. Licence applications may be made to the Council after February 2007. Implementation of the Act will have training and resource implications. Local Authorities are required to publish a licensing policy detailing the principles it proposes to apply when exercising its functions under the Act. The policy, which must be reviewed every three years, must be approved by full Council. Guidance on policy statements has not yet been issued by the Government, but authorities will be obliged to draft their policy, undertake consultation and publish by 31 January 2007. The Licensing Committee considered a report on this matter in April 2006 and a further report will be considered following publication of any guidance.

How to make representation

Representation should be made to Ralph Harrison, Head of Public Protection & Housing, Level 3, Civic Centre, Hartlepool TS24 8AY. Telephone: (01429) 523312. Email: ralph.harrison@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Sylvia Pinkney, Consumer Services Manager, Level 3, Civic Centre, Hartlepool TS24 8AY. Telephone: (01429) 523315. Email: sylvia.pinkney@hartlepool.gov.uk

DECISION REFERENCE: NS99/06 HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE STRATEGY

Nature of the decision

To consider proposals for a medium term strategy for highway maintenance.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet, with possible referral to Council.

Timing of the decision

The decision will be made in August 2006.

Who will be consulted and how?

There will be no direct consultation at this stage in the actual preparation of the strategy.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

Details of how various levels of investment and funding in highway maintenance can be used to form a medium term maintenance strategy that will enable significant inroads into the maintenance backlog and contribute to the long-term investment programme. Cabinet will need to consider proposals as part of the development of the Highways Asset Management Plan and the 2007/08 budget and policy framework proposals.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Mike Blair, Acting Transportation and Traffic Manager, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. Telephone: 01429 523252. Email: mike.blair@hartlepool.gov.uk.

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Mike Blair as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: NS100/06 MIDDLETON GRANGE SHOPPING CENTRE MULTI STOREY CAR PARK

Nature of the decision

To consider further phases of maintenance requirements of the Multi Storey Car Park.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet, with possible referral to Council.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in August 2006.

Who will be consulted and how?

Full Council
Shopping Centre Owners

Information to be considered by the decision makers

Background will be provided on essential maintenance works and funding requirements together with an option appraisal in relation to further phases of work.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Graham Frankland, Head of Property Services, Neighbourhood Services Department, Leadbitter Buildings, Stockton Street, Hartlepool. Tel 01429 523211. E Mail graham.frankland@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Graham Frankland, as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: NS 101/06 SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN II

Nature of the decision

To examine the complete SMP II document and consider whether to adopt the outcomes of the strategy document as they affect the Hartlepool coastline. Under Defra guidelines, SMP plans are updated and amended every five years.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in October 2006.

Who will be consulted and how?

Consultation will be extensive:

- All Members
- Public Town wide
- All Statutory Consultees
- All interested Organisations and parties

Information to be considered by the decision makers

Background will be provided in respect of the SMP II and how it would affect Hartlepool. The SMP II will be a large document that looks at the overall strategic management of the coastal processes over the next hundred years and covers the area from the river Tyne in the north to the Humber estuary in the south. There will be a need to focus in on those parts of the document that only affects the Hartlepool coastline.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Alastair Smith, Head of Technical Services, Neighbourhood Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool. Tel: 01429 523802. Email: alastair.smith@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Alan Coulson, Engineering Manager, Neighbourhood Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool. Tel: 01429 523242. Email: alan.coulson@hartlepool.gov.uk or Dave Thompson, Principal Engineer, Neighbourhood Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool. Tel: 01429 523245. Email: dave.thompson@hartlepool.gov.uk

PART FIVE - REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES

DEPARTMENT

A. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

1. THE PLANS AND STRATEGIES WHICH TOGETHER COMPRISE THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North East is currently under preparation. A Public Examination was held between 7th March and 7th April, 2006, and the Examination Panel's report is expected to be published by August 2006. Any proposed modifications which the Secretary of State wishes to make will subsequently be published, and there will be with a 12 week further period of consultation on these changes during Autumn/Winter 2006. It is anticipated that the RSS will be formally adopted in the spring of 2007.

The Hartlepool Local Plan review has now been completed, the new plan being adopted by Council on the 13th April 2006

With the enactment of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, a new development plan system has come into force. There are still two tiers of development plan, but in due course the Regional Spatial Strategy will replace the structure plan and development plan documents contained within a local development framework will replace the local plan. However, the new local plan will be saved for a period of at least three years after adoption.

The local development framework will comprise a 'portfolio' of local development documents which will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the borough. Local development documents will comprise:

- Development plan documents – (part of the development plan) which must include
 - A core strategy setting out the long term spatial vision for the area and the strategic policies and proposals to deliver the vision
 - Site specific allocations and policies
 - Generic development control policies relating to the vision and strategy set out in the core strategy, and
 - Proposals Map
- Supplementary planning documents

The other documents within the local development framework which must be prepared but which do not form part of the development plan are:

- Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) setting out how and when the Council will consult on planning policies and planning applications;
- Local Development Scheme (LDS) setting out a rolling programme for the preparation of local development documents, and
- Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) assessing the implementation of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which current planning policies are being implemented.

A draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was agreed by Cabinet in July 2005 and a period of public consultation held between July and October 2005. Consideration of comments received and suggested amendments to the draft were reported to Cabinet on 9th December and Council on 15th December with the final SCI document being submitted to the Secretary of State in January 2006. This has been followed by a further period of public participation ending on 17th March 2006. An independent planning inspector will consider any representations received in the context of his/her assessment of the soundness of the SCI. The inspector's recommendations are binding on the Council. The Council will then be asked to adopt the SCI currently programmed for December 2006.

The first Local Development Scheme was approved by Cabinet on 21st February 2005 and came into effect on 15th April 2005. The Scheme is being updated to take the following into account:

- deletion of references to the Local Plan, given that it has now been adopted;
- the need to amend the timetable for the preparation of the Planning Obligations supplementary planning document;
- the need to set out a timetable for the preparation of joint minerals and waste development plan documents.

Cabinet on the 12th April endorsed the principle of the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Committee taking responsibility for the initial preparation of Joint Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents on behalf of the Borough Council and the other four Tees Valley authorities.

Cabinet on 15th May approved revisions to the Local Development Scheme, for consultation with the Planning Inspectorate and, subject to their acceptance, submission to the Secretary of State.

The first Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), as submitted by Government Office for the North East in December 2005, was endorsed by Cabinet in January 2006.

Cabinet agreement to the second AMR relating to the period 2005-2006 will be sought in November 2006.

The Community Strategy

Background

Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2000 places on principal Local Authorities a duty to prepare “Community Strategies” for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas, and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK.

Government guidance issued in December 2000 stated that Community Strategies should meet four objectives. They must:

- Allow local communities (based upon geography and/or interest to articulate their aspirations, needs and priorities;
- Co-ordinate the actions of the Council, and of the public, private, voluntary and community organisations that operate locally;
- Focus and shape existing and future activity of those organisations so that they effectively meet community needs and aspirations; and
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development both locally and more widely, with local goals and priorities relating, where appropriate, to regional, national and even global aims.

It also stated that a Community Strategy must have four key components:

- A long-term vision for the area focusing on the outcomes that are to be achieved;
- An action plan identifying shorter-term priorities and activities that will contribute to the achievement of long-term outcomes;
- A shared commitment to implement the action plan and proposals for doing so;
- Arrangements for monitoring the implementation plan, for periodically reviewing the Community Strategy and for reporting progress to local communities.

The Hartlepool Partnership, the town’s Local Strategic Partnership, and the Council agreed a draft Community Strategy in April 2001 and adopted a final version in April 2002.

Hartlepool’s Community Strategy set out a timetable for review in five years. In line with this agreement, the Community Strategy Review 2006 was launched on 5th May 2006 and a new Community Strategy will be in place in April 2007.

Government consultation on revised guidance 2005

In December 2005 Government launched a consultation paper on the role of Local Strategic Partnerships and Sustainable Community Strategies. In it the Government set out its commitment to reshaping Community Strategies as Sustainable Community Strategies. This builds on recommendations from the Egan Review – Skills for Sustainable Communities, ODPM, 2004 to re-emphasise the need for local leaders to take a more cross-disciplinary and integrated approach to social, economic and environmental issues. The paper establishes the components of a Sustainable Community Strategy as:

- Active, Inclusive and safe
- Well-run
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well designed and built
- Well connected
- Thriving,
- Well served and
- Fair for everyone

Following the central government reorganisation in May 2006 and the creation of the Department for Communities and Local Government the timetable for publication of the response to the consultation exercise is unclear. It is unlikely that further policy guidance on Community Strategies will be published in advance of the Local Government white paper scheduled for Autumn 2006.

Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy Review 2006

Although the current Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy is part of the Community Strategy it is published as a separate 70 page document. The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy sets out the intention to prepare Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs) in the Borough's priority Neighbourhoods and provides a policy framework for this development.

As these NAPs are now in place they provide a more detailed policy framework for improvements in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods than was available in 2002. As a result it is proposed to include Neighbourhood Renewal objectives alongside Community Strategy objectives in one document.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy also sets out the boundaries of the disadvantaged neighbourhoods – and these will be reconsidered as part of the review. Neighbourhood Renewal is about narrowing the gap between conditions in the disadvantaged communities and the rest of the town. It is therefore important that the Neighbourhood Renewal Area is kept as tightly defined as possible, does not include more than half the town's population and is based upon the statistical level of disadvantage.

It is unlikely that there will be wholesale changes to the current boundaries of the seven disadvantaged neighbourhoods given the findings of the most recent Index of Deprivation (2004). There is however the opportunity for Members to highlight any areas that they think may warrant inclusion within the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy to the Head of Community Strategy by Friday 28 July 2006. Any additional areas forwarded will be assessed by the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit (TVJSU) and recommendations made back to the Hartlepool Partnership and the Councils Cabinet.

Review 2006

The timetable and structure for the Community Strategy Review 2006 was agreed by the Regeneration & Liveability Portfolio Holder and the Hartlepool Partnership in April 2006:

	Timetable	Task
Phase 1	5 th May 06 – July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current Strategy and prepare a new Strategy • Members' Seminar
Phase 2	Sept – December 2006	Consultation on the 1 st draft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet 11th September • Hartlepool Partnership 5th September • Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee
Phase 3	Jan-March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement of final Strategy • Hartlepool Partnership 19th January • Cabinet 22nd January • Scrutiny Co-ordinating Cttee • Cabinet 19th March • Hartlepool Partnership 23rd March • Council 19th April

THE ANNUAL YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

The Annual Youth Justice Plan must be submitted to the Youth Justice Board by 30th April 2007. A draft plan will be prepared in early 2007 and reported to Cabinet. Consultation with statutory and other partner organisations, as well as referral to Scrutiny will be carried out during February and March 2007. Cabinet will consider the finalised Plan, which will have incorporated consultation comments. Final approval of the Plan will be sought from Council during April 2007.

B SCHEDULE OF KEY DECISIONS

DECISION REFERENCE: RP88/05 STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES BEST VALUE REVIEW

Nature of the decision

To consider the conclusions arising from a Best Value Review of Strengthening Communities which is being undertaken as part of the Council's Best Value Review Program. The review has considered the arrangements within the Council aimed at delivering the parts of this theme within the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan (Best Value Performance Plan) that the authority is responsible for. It focuses specifically upon what the council needs to do to improve and makes high level recommendations in areas such as the Compact between the Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector and support for the VCS. Other priorities include empowering communities and community planning within the context of the emerging "neighbourhood agenda".

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet, with input from the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in August 2006.

Who will be consulted and how?

Members, officers, residents and partners have been invited to participate in the review. Primary engagement in the process has been through a network of sounding boards that have met at key stages throughout the review, including representation from the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums.

Information to be considered by the decision makers:

- Hartlepool Community Strategy
- Corporate Plan (Best Value Performance Plan)
- Hartlepool Partnership Performance Management Framework

Reference copies are available in the members' room; further copies are available from the Community Strategy Division.

How to make representation

Geoff Thompson, Head of Regeneration, Regeneration and Planning Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. Telephone 01429 523597, email geoff.thompson@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Geoff Thompson as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: RP89/05 DEVELOPMENT AT HARTLEPOOL COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION

Nature of the decision

Cabinet are requested to consider further details of the HCFE expansion and development plans, including the potential proposed land take at the Council owned, Albert Street Car Park, design issues, funding sources and project timetable. The report will also provide details of the most recent HCFE Property Strategy, due to be completed June 2006, which will shape the College's future development options.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in August 2006, or following the completion of the HCFE Property Strategy.

Who will be consulted and how?

Officers have been working closely with Hartlepool College of Further Education (HCFE) and other partner organisations including University of Teesside and the Learning and Skills Council.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

The report will expand on information presented in two previous reports to Cabinet on the 04/04/05 and 22/07/05, and also extracts from the Town Centre Strategy, in order to progress the development of the College scheme.

How to make representation

Representations can be made in writing to Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning Services, Regeneration and Planning Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. Telephone 01429 523401, email peter.scott@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Peter Scott as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: RP104/06 HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL PROGRAMME 2006-8

Nature of the decision

To confirm the scope of the housing market renewal programme 2006-8.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in August 2006.

Who will be consulted and how?

Housing Market Renewal interventions currently being progressed in central Hartlepool have been developed through successive rounds of community consultations, and this engagement process remains ongoing.

Members will be aware of several previous reports relating to the various aspects of the programme as it has developed so far, including reports relating to the development of these schemes to date, planning applications relating to new housing proposals and the use of compulsory powers to progress redevelopment,

In summary, proposed housing clearance and redevelopment activity is currently being progressed in 3 blocks within west and north central Hartlepool where housing market failure was identified to have been most acute, ie in the Mildred/Slater Street area, the Mayfair/Gordon Street area (with NDC, Hartlepool Revival, and Yuill Homes), and in the Moore Street/Marston Gardens area (with Housing Hartlepool and George Wimpey). Ultimately this activity will see the clearance of around 600 primarily older terraced dwellings, and their replacement with a mix of around 330 modern family homes for sale, rent and shared ownership built to high standards of construction and environmental sustainability.

Additional consultation has recently been undertaken in other parts of central Hartlepool (the primary focus for housing market renewal interventions), including Belle Vue and other parts of North Central Hartlepool (predominantly Dyke House ward).

Information to be considered by the decision makers

Cabinet will consider future phases of housing market renewal work in view of funding resource availability, the outcome of recent community consultations activity, programme development issues, and financial and risk management considerations.

How to make representation

Representations can be made in writing to Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning Services, Regeneration and Planning Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. Telephone 01429 523401, email peter.scott@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Mark Dutton, Housing & Regeneration Coordinator, Regeneration and Planning Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. tel 01429 284308, mark.dutton@hartlepool.gov.uk.

DECISION REFERENCE: RP107/06 STRATEGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN HARTLEPOOL 2006 - 2008

Nature of the decision

To agree a strategy for the implementation of Anti-social Behaviour in Hartlepool to cover the period 2006- 2008.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in November 2006.

Who will be consulted and how?

There is to be a half-day clinic of the Safer Hartlepool Executive on 3rd August 2006. Following this a draft strategy will be taken to the Anti-social Behaviour Task group on 4th September 2006, followed by the North, Central and South Community Safety Forum meetings in September 2006.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

The strategy will set out how Anti-social Behaviour is to be tackled over the period until the current Community Safety Strategy is reviewed in 2008. The strategy will incorporate the policy that is under development on dealing with racially motivated incidents in Hartlepool.

How to make representation

Representations should be made in writing to Sally Forth, Anti-social Behaviour Co-ordinator, Regeneration and Planning Services Department, 65 Jutland Road, Hartlepool, TS25 1LP. Telephone 01429 296582, e-mail: sally.forth@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Sally Forth as above.

APPENDIX 1

DETAILS OF DECISION MAKERS

THE CABINET

Many decisions will be taken collectively by the Cabinet.

- The Mayor, Stuart Drummond
- Councillor Cath Hill
- Councillor Ray Waller
- Councillor Pamela Hargreaves
- Councillor Vic Tumilty
- Councillor Robbie Payne
- Councillor Peter Jackson

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Members of the Cabinet have individual decision making powers according to their identified responsibilities.

Regeneration, Liveability and Housing	-	The Mayor, Stuart Drummond
Without Portfolio	-	Councillor Cath Hill, Deputy Mayor
Adult and Public Health Portfolio	-	Councillor Ray Waller
Children's Services Portfolio	-	Councillor Pamela Hargreaves
Culture, Leisure and Transportation Portfolio	-	Councillor Vic Tumilty
Finance Portfolio	-	Councillor Robbie Payne
Performance Management Portfolio	-	Councillor Peter Jackson

APPENDIX 2**TIMETABLE OF KEY DECISIONS**

Decisions are shown on the timetable at the earliest date at which they may be expected to be made.

1. DECISIONS EXPECTED TO BE MADE IN AUGUST 2006**1.1 25 AUGUST 2006**

ED27/06 (pg11)	RCCO CAPITAL WORK PROGRAMME 2006/2007	PORTFOLIO HOLDER
-----------------	---------------------------------------	------------------

1.2 DATE NOT YET DETERMINED

CE20/06 (pg7)	MEMBERS ICT/CIVIC SUITE	CABINET
NS88/06 (pg13)	SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY	CABINET
NS90/06 (pg16)	HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY UPDATE	PORTFOLIO HOLDER
NS91/06 (pg18)	HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY UPDATE	PORTFOLIO HOLDER
NS95/06 (pg19)	TEES VALLEY AND SOUTH DURHAM NHS LIFT	CABINET
NS99/06 (pg21)	HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE STRATEGY	CABINET
NS100/06 (pg22)	MIDDLETON GRANGE SHOPPING CENTRE MULTI STOREY CAR PARK	CABINET
RP88/05 (pg29)	STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES BEST VALUE REVIEW	CABINET
RP89/05 (pg30)	DEVELOPMENT AT HARTLEPOOL COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION	CABINET
RP104/06 (pg31)	HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL PROGRAMME 2006-08	CABINET

2. DECISIONS EXPECTED TO BE MADE IN SEPTEMBER 2006**2.1 NONE****3. DECISIONS EXPECTED TO BE MADE IN OCTOBER 2006****3.1 DATE NOT YET DETERMINED**

CE21/06 (pg8)	REVISED PAY AND GRADING STRUCTURE	CABINET
NS89/06 (pg15)	SUB REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY	CABINET
NS98/06 (pg20)	LICENSING POLICY UNDER THE GAMBLING ACT 2005	CABINET
NS101/06 (pg23)	SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN II	CABINET

4. DECISIONS EXPECTED TO BE MADE IN NOVEMBER 2006**4.1 DATE NOT YET DETERMINED**

RP107/06 (pg33)	STRATEGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN HARTLEPOOL 2006 - 2008	CABINET
-----------------	---	---------

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

4 August 2006



Report of: Chief Financial Officer

Subject: Audit Commission Review of Internal Audit

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee that arrangements have been made for a representative from the Audit Commission to be in attendance at this meeting, to present the Audit Commission Review of Internal Audit Report.
- 1.2 It was agreed that part of the remit of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee would be to receive and review all Audit Commission reports. To meet this requirement the most recently agreed Audit Commission report is attached.

2. DETAILED AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT

- 2.1 A copy of the Audit Commission report is attached as Appendix A.

3 Audit Commission report “Review of Internal Audit”

- 3.1 In order to place reliance on the work of Internal Audit and to ensure the Audit Commission meet its requirements under the Audit Code of Practice and the Council meets its requirements under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, the Audit Commission carry out an annual assessment of the activities of Internal Audit.
- 3.2 The review carried out by the Audit Commission concentrates on the following ten areas of operation:
 - Scope of Internal Audit,
 - Independence,
 - Audit Committee,
 - Relationships with management, other auditors and other review bodies,

- Staff training and development,
 - Audit strategy,
 - Management of audit assignments,
 - Due professional care,
 - Reporting,
 - Quality assurance.
- 3.3 More detailed coverage of the above areas is carried out every three years. This includes carrying out a more detailed review of Internal Audit plans and working paper files and was undertaken this year.
- 3.4 The main conclusion of the report is as follows:
- That the Audit Commission is satisfied that the Council has appropriate constitutional and management arrangements in place for its Internal Audit Service,
 - That the Audit Commission has been able to place reliance upon the quality and content of the work of Internal Audit.
- 3.5 The following issues were raised as part of the Audit Commission review:
- It is ensured that the improved audit risk assessment procedures that are in the process of being implemented are done so as soon as possible,
 - Managers should formally state why they will not implement recommendations,
 - The new staff training and appraisal records that are currently being implemented are used as the basis for the provision of future training.
- 3.6 All of the points mentioned points above are currently being addressed.
- 3.7 Due to the timing of the Audit Commission report, it was reviewed by the Audit Committee at its meeting of the 18th April 2006. This was to allow the Audit Committee to be able to take independent assurance that it could replace reliance upon the work of Internal Audit when reviewing Internal Audits opinion on the control environment in operation at the Council, and the Statement on Internal Control.
- 3.8 As part of their review the Audit Committee Members made the following comments on the Audit Commission report and requested that they were brought to the attention of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee:
- (i) Para 3 on page 4 – The second sentence should read, “The SIC has to be certified by the Chief Executive, the Mayor and the General Purposes Committee of the Council”.
 - (ii) In the Main conclusions, first bullet point – The second sentence should commence “The situation at present is in transition.....” not “transient”.
 - (iii) In the Main conclusions, the second bullet point – with reference to the recommendation – Members felt that any such issue included in a report should be accompanied by an explicit transparent report on the issues/examples.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 It is recommended that Members of this Committee: -

- (a) Note the content of this report; and
- (b) Consider the content of the Report to be presented by the Audit Commission.

Contact Officers: - Noel Adamson, Head of Audit and Governance
Chief Executive's Department – Finance Division
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523173
Email: noel.adamson@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no background papers used in preparation of this report.

Audit Detailed Report

March 2006



Review of Internal Audit

Hartlepool Borough Council

Audit 2006-2007

External audit is an essential element in the process of accountability for public money and makes an important contribution to the stewardship of public resources and the corporate governance of public services.

Audit in the public sector is underpinned by three fundamental principles:

- auditors are appointed independently from the bodies being audited;
- the scope of auditors' work is extended to cover not only the audit of financial statements but also value for money and the conduct of public business; and
- auditors may report aspects of their work widely to the public and other key stakeholders.

The duties and powers of auditors appointed by the Audit Commission are set out in the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Local Government Act 1999 and the Commission's statutory Code of Audit Practice. Under the Code of Audit Practice, appointed auditors are also required to comply with the current professional standards issued by the independent Auditing Practices Board.

Appointed auditors act quite separately from the Commission and in meeting their statutory responsibilities are required to exercise their professional judgement independently of both the Commission and the audited body.

Status of our reports to the Council

The Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission explains the respective responsibilities of auditors and of the audited body. Reports prepared by appointed auditors are addressed to members or officers. They are prepared for the sole use of the audited body. Auditors accept no responsibility to:

- any member or officer in their individual capacity; or
- any third party.

Copies of this report

If you require further copies of this report, or a copy in large print, in Braille, on tape, or in a language other than English, please call 0845 056 0566.

© Audit Commission 2006

For further information on the work of the Commission please contact:

Audit Commission, 1st Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4HQ

Tel: 020 7828 1212 Fax: 020 7976 6187 Textphone (minicom): 020 7630 0421

www.audit-commission.gov.uk

Contents

Summary report	4
Introduction	4
Background	4
Audit approach	4
Main conclusions	5
Appendix 1 - Detailed report	6

Summary report

Introduction

- 1 The Internal Audit service provides assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's entire internal control framework. It is well-placed to alert management and members to any risks and problems with the control framework and is consequently a crucial component of the Council's performance and improvement system.

Background

- 2 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, include a specific requirement that a relevant body must maintain an adequate and effective system of Internal Audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with the proper internal audit practices (ie those contained in the Cipfa code). The section 151 officer also has specific responsibilities to maintain adequate internal control arrangements to ensure economic, efficient and effective use of resources.
- 3 The Authority has to carry out an annual review of the effectiveness of its systems of internal control and prepare a Statement of Internal Control (SIC). The SIC has to be certified by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council. Internal Audit has a significant role in helping to discharge this task.

Audit approach

- 4 Our approach under the Code of Audit Practice is to maximise the reliance we can place on the audited body's own arrangements, including Internal Audit. In order to place reliance on the work of Internal Audit, it is necessary to carry out an annual assessment of their activities. Such an assessment will update our understanding of the nature and quality of the work being carried out by Internal Audit and its effect on the control environment.
- 5 In order to satisfy ourselves that the Council has an effective Internal Audit service, we carry out a detailed review of a number of areas against standards of professional practice defined by Cipfa's Code of Practice for Internal Audit in local government:
 - scope of Internal Audit;
 - independence;
 - Audit Committee;
 - relationship with management, other auditors and other review bodies;
 - staff training and development;

- audit strategy;
- management of audit assignments;
- due professional care;
- reporting;
- quality assurance; and
- every third year, we extend the work done by carrying out more detailed coverage of the above criteria including reviewing Internal Audit's plans and working files.

Main conclusions

- 6 Overall, we are satisfied that the Council has appropriate constitutional and management arrangements in place for its internal audit service. There were a number of issues however and these findings are highlighted in Appendix 1 with the main points being as follows.
 - An improved risk assessment process is being introduced that will ask for direct input from all members of Internal Audit. The situation at present is transient with a lack of direct evidence for the scored assessments. The Authority needs to ensure this process is operational as soon as possible.
 - There should be a requirement for service managers to formally state why they will not implement recommendations. This requirement should be included in the financial regulations.
 - Staff appraisals and training records are now in the process of being carried out. They should be used as the main basis for the provision of training.
- 7 In addition, we have also been able to place reliance this year on the quality and content of Internal Audit's fundamental systems work to discharge elements of our statutory duties.

Appendix 1 - Detailed report

Issue	Findings	Conclusion and recommendations
Internal Audit Manual	There are no formal guidelines on working relationships with management apart from the Chief Financial Officer. This is not perceived as a problem as the Chief Internal Auditor does have unrestricted access to senior management as required. Internal Audit's role in procurement and risk management working groups is not formally recorded in the Internal Audit Manual.	Formal working relationships and roles should be recorded in the Internal Audit Manual. It should also cover their roles in any other working groups.
Internal Audit Manual	Internal Audit's own staffing structure is not included in the Internal Audit Manual.	The staffing structure should be included in the Internal Audit Manual.
Code of Ethics	Chapter 2.1 of the Internal Audit Manual contains a code of ethics. The Manual is available to all auditors. There is however, no requirement on auditors to evidence that they have seen, read and understood the ethical standards within the Manual.	Auditors should read the code of ethics and confirm in writing that they will abide by it whilst employed by the Authority.

Issue	Findings	Conclusion and recommendations
Planning Process	The Internal Audit Manual does not have clear guiding principles for the contact arrangements between Internal Audit and service management in terms of completing the final version of the annual plan.	The process to ensure all views are caught prior to the finalisation stage should be included in the Internal Audit Manual.
Risk Assessment	<p>Internal Audit is currently introducing an updated electronic version of the risk assessment process. This will require input from all Internal Audit officers and action should be taken to ensure they are all aware of what is required. The new system will provide more timely and accurate information.</p> <p>The position for 2006/07 is that the supporting evidence for assessments will be based on a combination of prior year files allied to auditor judgement.</p> <p>Consequently, we were unable to reconcile the risk assessments for a sample of systems to those recorded in the IA Plan.</p> <p>This is not a major problem in this transitional period as in most cases there is little change from one year to the next.</p>	<p>Internal Audit is going through a transitional stage in terms of their risk assessment process. All Internal Audit staff should receive guidance on how the new process will operate.</p> <p>Efforts should be made to ensure the new electronic system is operational as soon as possible.</p> <p>We will continue to track progress.</p>

8 Review of Internal Audit | Appendix 1 – Detailed report

Issue	Findings	Conclusion and recommendations
<p>Compliance with agreed standards</p>	<p>The Annual Report should make reference to Internal Audit's terms of reference (ie the IA Manual), compliance with professional standards and the Cipfa Code of Practice. The last report (2004/05) did not make reference to a quality assurance programme.</p> <p>The requirement to include a standard paragraph on compliance with agreed standards could also be applied to all reports.</p> <p>Internal Audit has not sought an accreditation such as ISO9001.</p>	<p>The Internal Audit report should make direct reference to compliance with agreed standards and their quality assurance programme.</p> <p>Internal Audit could seek to obtain an accreditation such as ISO9001 as this could be referred to in their reports and add further credibility.</p>
<p>Agreement of Internal Audit recommendations</p>	<p>The process is that recommendations are discussed and agreed with appropriate service management. Internal Audit would subsequently follow up and check that action had been taken.</p> <p>There is no laid down process in the case of managers not accepting/agreeing to implement recommendations - apart from the fact that ultimately, it would be reported to the Audit Committee.</p>	<p>Service management should take full responsibility for the action taken on their applicable recommendations. The Authority should introduce a formal requirement for managers to confirm in writing that they have implemented recommendations. Also, there should be an agreed process whereby management have to formally state why they will not implement recommendations. This requirement should be included in the financial regulations.</p>

Issue	Findings	Conclusion and recommendations
Training	The allocation of training resources does not appear to have a firm basis. The corporate requirement for staff appraisals does not appear to be being applied (although anecdotal evidence is that this is far more wide spread than Internal Audit). Training records are not being used and therefore any training provision is based on management judgement.	A formal training programme supported by individual training records should be established. The acting Chief Internal Auditor has recognised this issue and confirmed the intention to apply the Cipfa training programme, as being the most relevant for internal auditors.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

4th August 2006



Report of: Head of Regeneration

Subject: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES BEST VALUE
REVIEW – DRAFT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To enable the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee to consider and comment on the Draft Improvement Plan for the Strengthening Communities Best Value Review prior to its submission to Cabinet.
- 1.2 The Head of Regeneration will be in attendance at the meeting to explain the approach to the review and its draft findings in more detail and to answer any questions the committee may have.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Government introduced the Best Value regime as part of its programme to modernise local government. Within this context the Council's Best Value Performance Plan 2006/07 identifies the need to undertake a Best value Review of the theme Strengthening Communities with a target date for completion by the end of May 2006.
- 2.2 Following consideration by CMT, the decision was taken to extend the date for consideration of the report until August, to allow further dialogue amongst Council officers on the detailed recommendations of the review, prior to consideration by Scrutiny and then Cabinet.
- 2.3 The findings of the Best Value Review have now been completed in Draft form for consideration by Members and these are as set out in the Strengthening Communities Improvement Plan **Appendix A** attached to this report.
- 2.4 Assessing, monitoring and advising on the Council's progress towards the Strengthening Communities theme falls within the remit of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.
- 2.5 A specific request was made by Councillor James at the culmination of the Sounding Board meetings undertaken as part of the review that the review findings be reported to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee prior to eventual consideration by Cabinet.

3 STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES THEME

- 3.1 The theme Strengthening Communities is a cross-cutting one across the other six priority themes contained within the Community Strategy. The aims and objectives of the theme are as set out below :-

Strengthening Communities Aim:

Empower individuals, groups and communities, and increase the involvement of citizens in all decisions that affect their lives.

Strengthening Communities Objectives:

1. To enhance the democratic process by introducing new democratic structures that reflects the wishes of the community and increase involvement in the democratic process.
 1. To fully value and support the voluntary and community sectors and the communities in the Borough.
 2. To empower communities, develop community capacity and opportunities for residents to take a greater role in determining, planning and delivering services.
 4. To increase opportunities for everyone to participate in consultation, especially "hard to reach" groups.
 5. To develop the community planning approach at a town wide and neighbourhood level, so that residents themselves consider issues and contribute to determining the way forward.
 6. To improve the accessibility of services and information to residents and businesses.
 7. To promote the development, access to and use of information communications technology (ICT) in the public, private and voluntary sectors to benefit everyone in the community.
 8. To increase understanding and collaboration between communities of interest and generations.
- 3.2 Under each of these objectives the review has focussed specifically upon what the Council needs to do to improve in terms of the contribution it makes to the theme Strengthening Communities. Amongst other things, its conclusions are based upon the main outcomes of a series of "sounding board" meetings with elected members, Council officers and key partners and stakeholders from the community sector.

4 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

- 4.1 The sounding boards in particular have highlighted certain perceived weaknesses relating to the arrangements the Council has in place aimed at developing those aspects of the Strengthening Communities theme it is responsible for.
- 4.2 Failure to deliver the Compact between the Council and the voluntary sector for example is a particularly strong concern, as is the perceived lack of support given to the VCS. Greater priority towards empowering communities and community planning - with a stronger emphasis upon Neighbourhood Action Planning – is also deemed necessary.
- 4.3 A variety of sounding board scoring exercise were carried out as part of the review and in general these indicated that it is thought that the Council is performing averagely or below average in all areas of the Strengthening Communities theme. In fact only one objective, that of empowering communities, scored slightly higher than 50%, with the other 7 theme objectives in the 30% - 40% range, producing a 43 % overall rating.
- 4.4 This places a considerable degree of importance upon the need to identify the most appropriate set of indicators and mechanisms for measuring future Council performance and (hopefully) improvement. This work is still in progress in discussion with Council officers for incorporation into the Improvement Plan Schedule.
- 4.5 The Improvement Plan Schedule needs to be considered in context with Annexe A to the Best Value Review report which explains how the joint sounding board suggestions have been dealt with in the review. Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee is therefore asked to give these two aspects of the report particular attention.
- 4.6 The theme Strengthening Communities also encompasses many of the Government's recent and ongoing initiatives aimed at empowering local communities including for example the emerging neighbourhood agenda in context with the Local Government White Paper. The review has therefore taken considerations such as these into account in producing the list of potential action points for inclusion in the Improvement Plan Schedule.
- 4.7 Similarly the findings of the review are inextricably linked to the investigation into Partnership working which has recently been conducted by the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum and the relevant findings of that particular scrutiny work will therefore be reflected within the Strengthening Communities Improvement Plan Schedule.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee is requested to consider and comment on the Strengthening Communities Draft Improvement Plan, and in particular the proposed actions contained within the Improvement Plan Schedule – and associated Annexe 1 – prior to submission to Cabinet.

Contact Officer

Geoff Thompson, Head of Regeneration, ext 3579 Bryan Hanson House

Background Papers

Copies of the various references contained at the back of the Strengthening Communities Draft Improvement Plan are being made available within a set of box files placed in the Members Library should any members of the Committee wish to view these.

Strengthening Communities Strategic Improvement Plan

DRAFT Report for Consideration by Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

1. Position Statement

The theme 'Strengthening Communities' encompasses many of the Government's recent initiatives aimed at empowering local communities. Hartlepool Borough Council undertook a Best Value Review to ensure that all relevant Council Services, Policies and Strategies are meeting the aims and objectives of the Strengthening Communities theme and represent value for money.

1.2 Strategic Context

The Hartlepool Partnership (our Local Strategic Partnership) agreed the Community Strategy (1) in 2002/03. It sets out the overall aims and ambitions for the Borough and provides a planning framework that has been adopted by the Council. The Community Strategy framework is reflected in the Council's Corporate Performance Plan which identifies improvement priorities and contributions for each priority theme, and sets the strategic direction for all departmental / service plans. The theme Strengthening Communities is cross cutting across the other six Community Strategy priority themes.

The theme covers a range of Borough-wide services, policies and strategies, but from the outset of the Best Value Review it was agreed by Cabinet that the approach would concentrate upon arrangements that the Council itself is responsible for. This was done to enable the Improvement Plan to be focussed specifically upon what the Council needed to do to improve, and to avoid the scope of the Review from becoming too wide and unmanageable.

1.3 Reasons for Review

In some parts of the Council there are certain perceived weaknesses as to the arrangements in place aimed at delivering those aspects of the Strengthening Communities theme that the Local Authority are responsible for. The Review has been used to clarify the Council's responsibilities and what actions are needed to improve performance in this area, including the range of performance indicators to be used in future.

It has not fallen within the scope of the Review to address the actual contents and specific wording of the Strengthening Communities theme and objectives, despite a number of comments made by partners participating in the review in this regard. The Community Strategy review that is currently being undertaken throughout 2006 provides a more appropriate opportunity to evaluate the wording and content of the Strengthening Communities theme – and the comments received as part of this BV review will be fed into this process. Consequently the Improvement Strategy and Improvement Plan are

structured to reflect current arrangements as embodied within the existing Community Strategy.

1.4 Methodology

The Review Team consisted of the Director of Regeneration & Planning Services, Head of Regeneration and Head of Community Strategy within the Regeneration and Planning Services Department, and the Head of Environmental Management from the Neighbourhood Services Department. Support to the Review Team was provided from the Council's Corporate Strategy section through the Principal Strategy Development Officer and the National Management Trainee.

To ensure that the Review was properly scoped and allowed for the effective involvement of other Council Officers and external stakeholders / partners of the Council, a wider "sounding board" mechanism was established to work alongside the Review Team. This helped identify the issues and overall direction of the Review, was influential in developing the proposed Improvement Plan and will help support subsequent monitoring.

The Review Team first of all outlined what is actually meant by the 'Strengthening Communities' objectives (2).

The Review Team then organised separate Sounding Board meetings (3) with Officers, representatives from the Voluntary and Community Sector, representatives from the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums and Elected Members. A final Joint-Sounding Board was organised for all participants to attend.

The Sounding Boards were used to consult upon what the Council currently does and challenge areas that need improving. The results from the Sounding Boards were used to establish current performance and identify actions that could be included in the Improvement Plan (4). Annex 1 to the Improvement Plan Schedule indicates how the suggestions prioritised at the final Sounding Board meeting have been dealt with by the Review Team.

The initial Sounding Boards were used to score how well the Council is currently performing against each objective (5), list current Council service provision (6) and decide which objectives will be priorities over the next 2-3 years (7).

The Review Team also produced an initial set of targets arising from the CPA 2005 Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) for corporate assessment; this formed the basis of identifying national targets and standards that Hartlepool will need to strive towards and updated to reflect KLOE for 2006.

After evaluating current performance, setting priorities for the next 2-3 years and agreeing performance targets the Review Team identified local authorities

that Hartlepool Strengthening Communities services, policies and strategies could be compared to.

The Review Team visited Blyth Valley District Council (Beacon Council for Getting Closer to Communities) and has used evidence in particular from other Beacon Councils under the Getting Closer to Communities theme, together with other evidence gleaned from the Audit Commission web-site..

During the course of undertaking this research ever increasing levels of guidance have been, and continue to be, issued from Central Government of relevance to the Best Value Review .

An especially strong degree of emphasis is being placed upon the “neighbourhood agenda” in particular, including the emerging concept of “double devolution”. This promotes the idea of a transfer of responsibilities from Central to Local Government with the intention of then achieving greater subsidiarity by the devolvement of power downwards to the lowest appropriate neighbourhood level.

The “neighbourhood agenda” must also be seen within the even wider context and still ongoing debate about potential future local government reforms. The Lyons Review – an independent inquiry into the role, function and funding of local government - has recently produced its interim findings and a final report including the functions and funding elements of the Lyon’s remit is expected in December 2006. (Ref 8)

The Lyons Review is intended to contribute to the debate about what the next local government White Paper should contain, which is expected to be published in the autumn of 2006. Early indications suggest many of the Lyons recommendations could be taken on board and included within the White Paper, but potentially on an optional rather than prescriptive basis.

Local government reform and the abolition of two-tier authorities, together with the rationalisation of unitaries is now no longer expected to feature so strongly. Similarly the concept of city regions and their future governance arrangements will also be diluted and less prescriptive. The main emphasis of the White Paper will therefore fall mainly upon the “neighbourhood agenda”.

The analysis of all of the above information (Ref 9) has led to the overall conclusion that Hartlepool would be best served by the best value review concentrating specifically upon how the Council needs to progress the neighbourhood agenda in terms of those services provided under the strengthening communities theme.

Such a conclusion has similarly been arrived at in consultation with the Chief Executive as part of the ongoing project development work being undertaken by officers through the Leadership & Management Development Programme. As part of this work a project team has been considering under the guidance of the Chief Executive “the future of local government” and the implications for

Hartlepool – where the focus of attention is now upon the neighbourhood agenda.

The Best Value Review has stopped short of using the information obtained from all of this research to propose specific direct actions for adoption within Hartlepool within the BVR Improvement Plan. But it does recognise the strong link between such considerations and the theme of Strengthening Communities.

Accommodated therefore within the BVR Improvement Plan is the need to monitor developments arising from reports such as Lyons and the Local Government White Paper as and when appropriate but in the meantime consider in greater detail the implications and potential of the emerging neighbourhood agenda for adoption in Hartlepool.

Consequently a draft Issues Paper (Neighbourhood Issues in Hartlepool (Ref 10) has been produced alongside the best value review looking at three inter-linked aspects of this agenda ie Governance, Services and Planning, and considers these in terms of emerging government expectations.

This work is still ongoing but the need to take forward this analysis in consultation with Members, officers and other Council partners features especially strongly within the overall improvement plan for the review.

Also accommodated within the BVR Improvement Plan is the need to reflect the outcome of Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum inquiry into Partnership Working.

From September 2005 – May 2006 Hartlepool Borough Council's Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum conducted an investigation into Partnership working in the Local Authority. The inquiry covered a number of key areas:

- The extent of partnership working in the Authority;
- Partnership working – sub-regional level;
- Hartlepool Partnership (The Local Strategic Partnership);
- Community involvement in partnerships;
- Local Area Agreements; and
- Hartlepool and best practice.

The overall aim of investigation was:

To assess the governance arrangements surrounding sub-regional and local partnerships on which Hartlepool Borough Council is represented.

Over the course of the investigation the Forum set out key recommendations, a number of which relate to the Strengthening Communities Best Value Review:

- That increased levels of community and voluntary sector representation be examined on the Lifelong Learning Partnership and the Children and young people Partnership, including the executive;
- That the levels of voluntary sector representation be increased on the Tees Valley Partnership (TVP);
- That the town's MP and Mayor should be invited to support the strengthening of the representation on the TVP;
- That an appropriate measure be put in place for the election of voluntary representatives on the Tees Valley Partnership through the Voluntary Sector Forum;
- That the need for infrastructure organisations offering support to the wider VCS be recognised by the council and be appropriately funded;
- That discussions are held with the Mayor, the MP and Council to support the issues of voluntary sector representation on thematic partnerships;
- That an annual review of both the levels of community representation and the compact be reviewed as part of the Best Value Review of Strengthening Communities.

These recommendations were presented to the Council's executive, Cabinet, in May 2006. Cabinet will set out its response to the report in August 2006. Key actions emerging from the inquiry will be addressed alongside those established in the Best Value Review.

1.5 Aims of Theme

The aims and objectives of the Strengthening Communities theme are contained within the Hartlepool Community Strategy and set out below :-

Strengthening Communities Aim:

Empower individuals, groups and communities, and increase the involvement of citizens in all decisions that affect their lives.

Strengthening Communities Objectives:

1. To enhance the democratic process by introducing new democratic structures that reflects the wishes of the community and increase involvement in the democratic process.
2. To fully value and support the voluntary and community sectors and the communities in the Borough.
3. To empower communities, develop community capacity and opportunities for residents to take a greater role in determining, planning and delivering services.
4. To increase opportunities for everyone to participate in consultation, especially "hard to reach" groups.

5. To develop the community planning approach at a town wide and neighbourhood level, so that residents themselves consider issues and contribute to determining the way forward.
6. To improve the accessibility of services and information to residents and businesses.
7. To promote the development, access to and use of information communications technology (ICT) in the public, private and voluntary sectors to benefit everyone in the community.
8. To increase understanding and collaboration between communities of interest and generations.

1.6 Current Performance

The Council restructure occurred part way through the Best Value Review (11) taking effect from July 2005 and enabled the Council to establish five instead of six departments. The Review conducted initial paper-based research to establish the responsibilities and performance of the departments prior to restructure, of which the results are outlined below. The Review then used the Sounding Board mechanism to ensure that under the new structure all officers responsible for delivering services that meet the Strengthening Communities theme were able to contribute to the assessment of current performance.

Principally, the then Community Services Department, Neighbourhood Services Department and Regeneration and Planning Department were responsible for delivering on the Strengthening Communities theme.

The main lead department historically was the Community Services Department. Community Services activity focused on community development work, community centres and sports clubs, the youth service including detached youth workers, financial support to the community and voluntary sector through a grants pool. It also included the development of the Community Compact between the Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector and support to the ethnic minority communities through the Racial Harmony Forum and special events. However, over time the capacity for this activity within Community Services has been reduced. So much so that the need to address the issue of the Council failing to take forward the Compact in particular was a main concern of partners participating in the review and consequently this features very strongly in the BVR Improvement Plan.

The Compact was agreed by the Cabinet in January 2003 and built upon the existing links between the Council and the community and voluntary sector in Hartlepool. It is a memorandum concerning relations and an expression of commitments, following on from the very first draft document produced in 2000. The Compact was developed through a working group including Members and elected representatives from the voluntary and community sector. The finalised agreement (12) formed a three-year development

programme including a three-year action plan, applying to all departments of the Council and a wide range of organisations in the VCS in Hartlepool.

Progress against the three – year action plan has been varied at best, although achievements were made in a number of important areas including : Production and distribution of the HVDA telephone contact list : Provision to front line staff within the Council of the HVDA Directory of Voluntary Organisations : Mapping exercise of the range and activity of community groups and voluntary organisations operating in Hartlepool : Changes to the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums to include resident representatives with voting rights : A rolling programme of neighbourhood action plans.

Nevertheless, there are many actions that have fallen behind schedule and which still remain outstanding and the responsibility for delivering the vast majority of these rested with the Council, including : merging of the voluntary and HBC directories into one document for staff and public : annual meetings between Members, key officers and the voluntary sector : nomination of specific contact officers in each department to assist voluntary sector liaison : a Compact training programme to increase participation from minority communities in partnership working. Even more significantly the absence of any working group meetings and / or annual reviews has in part been responsible for the lack of progress in certain areas of the Compact.

Because of the significance attached by the Sounding Boards to the importance of the Compact, those main outstanding items have also been reflected in Annexe 1 to the Improvement Plan Schedule at the end of this report. Strengthening Communities BVR represents in effect the first real opportunity since production of the original Compact to assess progress – symptomatic of the lack of capacity rather than commitment necessarily within Council departments to move the Compact forward.

There are a number of reasons for the reduction in capacity including budget pressures and changing priorities reflecting the shift of resources to education and social services and overall budget cutbacks to other services. Within Community Services there has been a reduction in community development worker capacity and the then lead on key areas of work such as the Community Compact has since been re-deployed to other duties. There was also a strategic decision to support the voluntary and community sector directly through the community fund on the basis that this was likely to be more effective in developing sustainable capacity within the sector and this approach would also attract match funding not directly available to the local authority.

In the Neighbourhood Services Department, the main emphasis has been on supporting tenant and resident associations, the operation of Neighbourhood Consultative Forums, estate management of the former council estates and some elements of neighbourhood management within the recognized north, central and south neighbourhoods - including involvement of the then Town Care Managers in the delivery phase of Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs).

The recent decision to re-designate the Town Care Managers as Neighbourhood Managers and to appoint three Neighbourhood Development Workers to operate alongside them will now provide an additional valuable resource to help increase capacity building within the community in future.

The transfer of housing to Housing Hartlepool an independent Registered Social Landlord (RSL) led to much of the tenant association support and community development work capacity and the estate management activities transferring out from the Council. Although this is perhaps off-set by the good working relationship that does exist between both organisations.

In the Regeneration and Planning Services Department there is a long history of community development activity. Activity has been in a range of areas. This has included the coordination of the preparation of the statutory Community Strategy and support to the establishment and operation of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). And the development and evolution of associated partnerships including discussions with community groups, extensive consultations and surveys to establish community views using a range of methods and liaison with the Community (Empowerment) Network (CEN). This included the establishment of a protocol with the CEN and the framework of arrangements and organization of the partnerships making up the LSP (Hartlepool Partnership). More recently the Department has had a leading role in the preparation of the Local Area Agreement.

Neighbourhood Renewal Activity and especially the coordination, preparation and review of Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs) has also involved close working with communities and encouragement for the establishment of sustainable community groups and associations in the form of Neighbourhood Action Plan local forums. These oversee the local NAP delivery process within the context of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and are intended specifically to influence the activities of local service providers, including the Council, to reduce the gap between disadvantaged and more prosperous wards within Hartlepool. More importantly local forums also determine how the NRF resident priority budgets are spent and decide on the theme for the Neighbourhood Element funding as well as overseeing spend.

The department has also led on area regeneration programme activity. This has involved intensive partnership development, area based programmes and community capacity development such as in the Single Regeneration Budget areas and in the New Deal for Communities area. The European Programme has also involved strong community development activity and support. Sustainable Communities are at the heart of the departments activities established through planning, regeneration and housing activity. The Development Planning System is increasingly requiring more intensive involvement and participation from the community. And this will increase significantly with the new Local Development Framework, which is more broadly based than previous planning legislation and requires e.g. publication of a Statement of Community Involvement (achieved Feb 2006), and an emphasis upon “spatial” rather than purely land-use planning so will be

strongly linked into the Community Strategy aims and objectives through the production of a “Core Strategy” and other associated documents. Community Safety has also become part of the Department as part of the Council re-structure, and currently assist the Local Forums for Dyke House/Stranton/Grange in their Neighbourhood Element Funding.

The Housing Market Renewal Activity also requires strong involvement from the community through extensive consultation with local residents, businesses and housing landlords in the future planning of housing programme areas.. In addition, the Department leads on the development of the business community through the Economic Forum, support to business and business networks and leads on the implementation of the Commercial Area Strategy for the Central Area. More recently the department has taken the lead on the strengthening communities themes of the community strategy in the Best Value Performance/Corporate Plan which has resulted in a degree of responsibility for leading upon the preparation of this Best value Review into the Strengthening Communities theme.

The Chief Executives Department supports the theme from a corporate position and has been involved in the preparation of a number of documents such as the recently prepared Communications Package that includes the Consultation Strategy, Complaints and Compliments Procedures, Customer Charter and Corporate Communications Strategy. A number of consultation exercises have also been arranged including View Point, a resident’s panel and also a SIMALTO budget exercise. This department is also involved in the development of the Contact Centre.

As a result of the first Sounding Board meeting, held with the Council Officers, a number of other services and activities that contribute to the strengthening communities theme were identified. These include Street Ambassadors, joint-working with the VCS to commission and provide services, Community Safety Initiatives, Youth Offending Referral Order Panels, the Children’s Information Service, Extended Schools and Children’s Centres, 80% of services accessible online and cultural events, such as International Women’s Day that encourage community cohesion (13).

The subsequent Sounding Board Meetings challenged how well Council services and activities are doing to meet the Strengthening Communities objectives (14). The scoring exercise showed that generally it is thought the Council is performing averagely or below average in all areas of the Strengthening Communities theme. It was found that the Council is performing best in the areas of Empowering Communities and Accessibility to Services. The Council was found to be performing poorly in the areas of Democratic Processes and Community Cohesion.

Monitoring of the Best Value Performance Plans for 2004/5 and 2005/6 illustrates that the key achievements in this area have been the completion of NAPs for the Burbank / Rift House/Bum Valley / Owton and Rossmere areas and the drafting of NAP’s for the North Hartlepool and NDC areas (North

Hartlepool NAP was completed May 2006 3 Local Forum sub-groups were set up in June 2006 with the main forum for the area to be established by the end of July 2006). Also the Audit Commission's validation of the Hartlepool Partnership's Performance Management Framework and the Government Office's Green/A rating of the Hartlepool Partnership, the SIMALTO exercise and consultation with young people aimed at improving mechanisms for their involvement. (need to update for 2005/06)

Performance against current indicators in the Strengthening Communities area is satisfactory. In terms of the Community Strategy and electronic service delivery the Council are performing well (15). The Review however has recognised that the range of performance indicators needs expanding to better reflect the Strengthening Communities theme.

2. Improving Future Performance

The improvement priorities identified at each of the separate Sounding Board groups reflected the needs of each individual group(16). For example top priority for: the VCS Sounding Boards is Objective 2, Support for the VCS; the NCF is Objective 3, To Empower Communities; the Officers is both Objective 1, Democratic Processes and Objective 3, To Empower Communities; the Councillors is Objective 1, Democratic Processes.

The separate Sounding Board groups also discussed areas for improvement with many ideas for improvement being put forward. These included suggestions such as promoting children and young people's participation in the democratic process, rewarding people who become actively involved in community planning and development. Also a relaunch of the Compact, and involvement of the VCS in service delivery options was called for, plus an accelerated management programme for the VCS. Other suggestions included ensuring all consultation has a 'feedback' process, making smaller NAP areas, improving the Community Portal, putting NAP groups in touch with each other, and using more plain English. The Council also needs to think 'out of the box', support the infrastructure for the VCS, include minimum standards for the VCS in service level agreements. It should conduct planning at a neighbourhood level, offer increased basic IT training, and train older people to be mentors for younger people. Simplifying the democratic process, giving more financial support to the VCS, increased VCS representation at meetings, and use of the Community Network for capacity building and empowering specific groups was also called for. As was the use of more public venues for consultation events, continuing to have a human face to services – not just access through the Contact Centre – and more cultural awareness events. (17)

The Joint Sounding Board (18) was used to identify high priority areas for improvement as agreed by all groups involved in the Review process. It was agreed by Cabinet that resources would initially be used for improvements in the areas identified by the officers, councillors, VCS representatives and NCF representatives as important. The high priority areas are:

- Support for the VCS
- Empowering Communities
- Community Planning

The Joint Sounding Board consequently agreed suggested areas for improvement, these are (19):

Democratic Processes

- Improve understanding of the democratic processes in Hartlepool.
- Develop a consistent approach with difficult to reach groups – need to support groups to access democratic processes.
- Consider ways to maintain a Youth Council and promote other forums where young people can be involved in the democratic process, e.g. school councils and local youth forums.

Support for the VCS (High Priority)

- The Compact – strengthen and relaunch.
- Increase support for the VCS and its infrastructure.
- Increase Council familiarity with VCS services and expertise.
- Enable VCS to access Council training programmes that both Officers and Councillors participate in.
- Review Community Pool.
- Create list of VCS groups and services.

Empowering Communities (High Priority)

- Use the Community Network for capacity building and empowering specific groups.
- Provide all parts of the town with a resident association and NAP.
- Raise awareness of NAPs in communities affected by them.
- Create a resident representatives training programme.

Consultation for All

- Consultation needs to take a community development approach.
- Consultation needs to be done with more young people.
- Improve mechanisms for feedback to those who have been consulted, and introduce ways of informing people how their suggestions have been used.
- Consult more 'hard-to-reach' groups.
- Better use of public buildings for consultation events that are outside of working hours.
- Use various consultation methods.

Community Planning (High Priority)

- Review NCF consultation mechanisms.
- Develop a training programme for those involved in consultation.
- Develop NAP in other areas.

Accessibility to Services

- One-stop shop (Contact Centre) should include VCS.
- Regular audit of all service providers to share new ideas and make people aware of what is available.
- Develop and explain the community portal.
- Simplify Council language – KISS
- Improve access for physically disabled to public buildings, bus service and other agencies.
- Have one single telephone number to be used 24-hours in case of an emergency.

ICT

- ICT in all major public buildings and post office.
- Redesign portal and set up support groups to use the portal.
- ICT in poorest areas.
- Support and provide equipment for VCS to use and access portal.
- Use ICT to improve mobile working within the community.

Community Cohesion

- More inter-generational work and events.
- Continue to put NAP groups in touch with each other socially and formally.
- Make the most of links and networks that already exist.

Research (10) carried out during the period of the review, the results from the Sounding Board meetings (11) and the results from comparison activities (12) have been used to establish a set of outcomes upon which the Improvement Plan is based. And these have subsequently been reinforced by selecting indicators / impacts / outcomes developed for the LAA and BVPP to help manage future performance.

2.1 Improvement StrategyAim

To ensure that the people of Hartlepool are empowered to influence decisions and participate in activities that will make the communities they live in safe, friendly and prosperous places to live. (Revise in context of Community Strategy Aim and LAA outcomes).

Outcomes (subject to further consideration)

As a result of the Improvement Plan the following outcomes are expected in 2-3 years time:

- Greater understanding in the community of how the established democratic processes work.
- An updated Compact that will be used to ensure the Voluntary and Community Sector has better access to funding, support, and service provision opportunities.
- Increased range of services and activities that have been developed and delivered in partnership with local communities.

- Consultation will continue to be with a broad range of groups and all results, and impact of results will be fed back to the consultees.
- To have clear community planning mechanisms in place and that are used at both a town-wide and neighbourhood level.
- More Council buildings will be accessible to members of the public.
- Access to ICT is town-wide and residents are highly satisfied with the services.
- Increase in number of activities and events that bring different groups and communities of interest and generation together.

Targets (Subject to further consideration)

- Increase in numbers participating in the democratic process.
- VCS satisfaction levels increased.
- Increase in number of services provided by VCS.
- Increased number of residents involved in community activity and issues that affect them.
- Increase in number of children and young people involved in consultation.
- 100% public buildings accessible to people with disabilities.
- Increased use of the Community Portal.
- Increased number of inter-generation work and events.
- Increase in number of volunteers

Resources

A number of the actions identified in the Improvement Plan will be completed using existing financial and non-financial resources. Where there is a need for extra resources this has been identified.

Timescales

The Improvement Plan covers a 2-3 year period. It is anticipated that with the Improvement Plan implemented all of the outcomes will be achieved within the allotted time-scales.

Reporting Mechanisms

Progress on the Improvement Plan will be reported to the Liveability Portfolio Holder (CHECK) on a quarterly basis. The Corporate Performance Plan will also monitor progress on an annual basis over the next 3-years. The actions contained within the Improvement Plan will also be monitored through Best Value Review quarterly monitoring and service planning reporting mechanisms within each department of the Council.

**9.1
Appendix A**

3. Actions to Achieve Continuous Improvement

The Improvement Plan has been considered by Scrutiny and agreed by Cabinet (August Mtgs) and adopted by all relevant Departments. The objectives identified as high priority will initially be addressed, with all actions complete by 2008/9.

3.1 Improvement Plan (To be considered by Scrutiny in association with Annexe 1)

Objective 1. To enhance the democratic process by introducing new democratic structures that reflect the wishes of the community and increase involvement in the democratic process.			Outcome: Greater understanding in the community of how the established democratic processes work.		
Ref. No. / Priority	Actions Required	Responsible Person	Time-scale	Resources	Progress/ Comments
1. Med	Improve understanding of and participation in election processes and Neighbourhood Consultative Forums (NCF's) and Police and Community Liaison (PCL) Forums	Democratic Services (Amanda Whitaker) Neighbourhood Services (Neighbourhood Managers) and Regen & Planning (Alison Mawson)	By Mar 2008	Existing	NCF and PCL mechanisms are considered to be a particularly valuable resource to encourage engagement with the democratic processes
2. Med	Develop a consistent approach to engaging people from different communities in the democratic processes, particularly :- Work with Young People Work with BME Communities	John Robinson Vijaya Kotur	By Mar 2008 By Mar 2009	Current work on Participation is being funded by Children's Fund Partnership until April 2008 when programme ceases	At a recent BME consultation event it was agreed to no longer use the terminology "Hard to Reach" groups and to instead refer to "people from different communities in Hartlepool". Participation strategy will include a range of opportunities to involve all groups of children and young persons and should be in place by April 07

**9.1
Appendix A**

3. Med	Enhance the impact of Local Democracy Week year on year including greater involvement in the initiative by young people. Reflect relevant outcomes from the Children's Services Scrutiny process when these become available.	John Robinson / Dave Cosgrove / Amanda Whittaker	By Mar 2007 (ongoing)	Existing	
Ref	Performance Measure	Outturn 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Longer Term	Target
Objective 2. To fully value and support the voluntary and community sectors and the communities in the Borough.			Outcome: An updated Compact that will be used to ensure the Voluntary and Community Sector has better access to funding support and service provision opportunities		
Ref. No. / Priority	Actions Required	Responsible Person	Time-scale	Resources	Progress/ Comments
4. High	Strengthen and re-launch the Compact within the context of emerging guidance for Compact Plus. Utilise this as the vehicle for increasing Council awareness of CVS and ensuring it has better access to funding and service provision opportunities.	Existing BVR Team (Lead Geoff Thompson) supported by Neighbourhood Managers	By Mar 2007	Increased capacity provided by soon-to-be appointed Neighbourhood Managers	Use the results and findings of the Strengthening Communities BVR as the starting point for this process including consideration of Compact Plus principles

**9.1
Appendix A**

5. High	Monitor developments arising from the Lyons Review, Local Government White Paper and other associated guidance including the emerging “neighbourhood agenda”. Consult with Members/ Officers/ Partners on appropriate adoption in Hartlepool and feed into the Compact Review process.	Chief Exec / LM DP Project Team / Peter Scott CMT / LN DP Project Team	By Mar 2007	Existing	Various initiatives already underway as indicated per the BVR Improvement Plan main report
Ref	Performance Measure	Outturn 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Longer Term	Target
Objective 3. To empower communities, develop community capacity and opportunities for residents to take a greater role in planning and delivery of services			Outcome: Increased range of services and activities that have been developed and delivered in partnership with local communities		
Ref. No. / Priority	Actions Required	Responsible Person	Time-scale	Resources	Progress/ Comments
6. High	Better publicise the existence of the Community Network and utilise more effectively for empowering community groups as appropriate. Recognise the additional resource of the soon-to-be appointed Neighbourhood Managers as an additional resource to help increase capacity.	Joanne Smithson Neighbourhood Managers	By Mar 2007	Existing	Recruitment of Development officers is currently underway with appointees potentially in post Nov 2006

**9.1
Appendix A**

7. High	Continue to fine-tune and develop the current NAP consultation processes and implement any recommendations from the NAP Review around these issues, including the extent to which NAPs have the potential for being extended into other areas of the town.	Sylvia Burn Neighbourhood Managers	By Mar 2007	Existing Staffing resource plus NRF funding	NAP Review currently underway
8.	Implement the findings of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny inquiry into Partnership Working	Joanne Smithson	As set out in Action Plan	As identified in Action Plan	The draft Action Plan will be considered by Cabinet in August
Ref	Performance Measure	Outturn 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Longer Term	Target
Objective 4. To increase opportunities for everyone to participate in consultation, especially people from different communities in Hartlepool			Outcome: Consultation will continue to be with a broad range of groups and all results, and impact of results will be fed back to consultees		
Ref. No. / Priority	Actions Required	Responsible Person	Time-scale	Resources	Progress/ Comments
9. Med	Promote the use of appropriate buildings for consultation events and meetings with the community through Good Practice Guide and the Council's Corporate Consultation Group.	Liz Crookston	By Mar 2008	Existing	
10. Med	Promote use of appropriate consultation methods through the Good Practice Guide and Corporate Consultation Group.	Liz Crookston	By Mar 2008	Existing	

**9.1
Appendix A**

Ref	Performance Measure	Outturn 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Longer Tem	Target
Objective 5. To develop the community planning approach at a town wide and neighbourhood level so that residents themselves consider issues and contribute to determining the way forward			Outcome: To have clear community planning mechanisms in place and that are used at both a town-wide and neighbourhood level		
Ref. No. / Priority	Actions Required	Responsible Person	Time-scale	Resources	Progress/ Comments
11. High	Review Neighbourhood Consultative Forum (NCF) consultation mechanisms within context of the wider emerging Local Neighbourhood agenda.	Dave Stubbs/ Neighbourhood Managers	By Mar 2007	Existing	
12. High	Promote consideration of training requirements for specific consultation through the Good Practice Guide and Corporate Consultation Group.	Liz Crookston	By Mar 2007	Existing	
Ref	Performance Measure	Outturn 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Longer Tem	Target
Objective 6. To improve the accessibility of services and information to residents and businesses			Outcome: All buildings will be accessible to members of the public		
Ref. No. / Priority	Actions Required	Responsible Person	Time-scale	Resources	Progress/ Comments
13. Med	Consider inclusion of VCS along with other Council partners in the One-Stop-Shop (Contact Centre) facility.	Christine Armstrong	By Mar 2008	Additional Requirement	Time-scales as previously agreed by Cabinet

**9.1
Appendix A**

14. Med	Simplify Council Language – keep it simple and specific (KISS)	Alistair Rae	By Mar 2008	Existing	Immediate attention being given to a review of all Council standard letters to ensure they are easily readable and understandable. Other aspects of Council communications to be considered thereafter
Ref	Performance Measure	Outturn 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Longer Term	Target

Objective 7. To promote the development, access to and use of information communications technology (ICT) in the public, private and voluntary sectors to benefit everyone in the community			Outcome: Access to ICT is town-wide and residents are highly satisfied with the services		
Ref. No. / Priority	Actions Required	Responsible Person	Time-scale	Resources	Progress/ Comments
15. Low	Provision of ICT in all major public buildings(JOAN CHAPMAN TO REVISE)	Joan Chapman	By mar 2009		
16. Med	Map current provision of ICT access and identify gaps particularly in poorest areas based upon an assessment of availability via the library network	Paul Diaz	By Mar 2007		
Ref	Performance Measure	Outturn 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Longer Term	Target

9.1
Appendix A

Objective 8. To increase understanding and collaboration between communities of interest and generations			Outcome: Increase in number of activities and events that bring different groups and communities of interest and generations together		
Ref. No. / Priority	Actions Required	Responsible Person	Time-scale	Resources	Progress/ Comments
17. Med	Continue to put NAP groups in touch with each other as part of the NAP production processes	Sylvia Burn	Sept 2006 (ongoing)	Existing including NRF Funding	
18. Med	Make the use of other links and networks that already exist	All Departments	By Mar 2008		Revisit this action as part of the Compact Review
Ref	Performance Measure	Outturn 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Longer Term	Target

Note: Actions still under consideration by Review Team and may be subject to minor alterations, pending outcome of further discussion with officers and key stakeholders.

**9.1
Appendix A**

ANNEXE 1 TO THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN SCHEDULE : HOW SOUNDING BOARD SUGGESTIONS HAVE BEEN DEALT WITH THROUGH THE REVIEW

<u>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>
<u>OBJECTIVE 1 – DEMOCRATIC PROCESS</u>		
Improve understanding of the democratic process in Hartlepool	<p>Suggest this action needs to be extended to also include improved understanding about Neighbourhood Consultative Forums (NCF) and Police and Community Liaison (PCL) Forums. It is also not just about improving “understanding” but should make reference to increasing “participation” in the election processes.</p> <p>Participation Strategy for children and young people concentrates on service development and democratic process and will link children and young people into local democracy and involve them in the development of services.</p>	Revised wording carried through into the Improvement Plan Schedule (Ref 1)
Develop a consistent approach with difficult to reach groups – need to support groups to access democratic services	Suggest the emphasis of this action needs to be about engaging people from different communities in Hartlepool in the democratic processes with an emphasis	Revised wording carried forward into the Improvement Plan Schedule (Ref 2) as follows:-

9.1
Appendix A

<u>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>
	<p>upon work with young people and BME communities.</p> <p>The “Talking with Communities” consultation programme established since Sept '05 is one mechanism for doing this e.g. this forum is currently working with the Community Network on the elections for a new BME representative for the Hartlepool Partnership.</p> <p>For further info : http://consultation.hartlepool.gov.uk/innovation/consultation/talkingwithcommunities/consultationHome</p> <p>In the corporate workforce development plan there is a commitment to attract young people to local government with a specific action to hold one event to coincide with local democracy week. (see below)</p>	<p>“Develop a consistent approach to engaging people from different communities in Hartlepool in the democratic processes, particularly :</p> <p>Work with Young People</p> <p>Work with BME Communities”</p>
<p>Consider ways to maintain a Youth Council and promote other forums where young people can be involved in the democratic process, e.g. school councils and local youth forums.</p>	<p>School Councils will be involved in elections of the United Kingdom Youth Parliament (likely to be 19/10/06). Hartlepool Young Voices developing brand for town-wide youth forum to be in</p>	<p>Revised wording with emphasis upon Democracy Week and outcomes of Children’s Services Scrutiny carried through into the Improvement Plan Schedule (Ref 3)</p>

9.1
Appendix A

<u>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>
	<p>place by April 2007. Participation strategy currently evolving with support of children and young people.</p> <p>The references about school councils and local youth forums should also link more closely with the annual Democracy Week.</p> <p>Work with corporate on developments for involvement of young people in the Children's Services Scrutiny process is ongoing with a final report due in September / October and these outcomes also need to be reflected.</p>	
<u>OBJECTIVE 2 – SUPPORT FOR THE VCS</u>		
The Compact – strengthen and re-launch	The failure of the Council to effectively take forward the Compact has been a main concern of the partners and stakeholders participating in the Best Value Review. This needs to be rectified as a high priority. There is also a need to consider with the CVS any re-launch of the Compact within the context of emerging guidance for Compact Plus (main BVR report refers). This seeks to	<p>Carried forward as a high priority within the Improvement Plan Schedule (Ref 4) and reworded to reflect Compact Plus principles.</p> <p>The opportunity has also been taken during the course of the Best Value Review to identify and re-assess those existing actions contained within the existing Compact that have fallen behind</p>

9.1 Appendix A

<u>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>
	introduce some form of accreditation scheme, backed up with the appointment nationally of a Compact Commissioner Office to monitor progress and promote the principles of the Compact into a more clear statement of core commitments.	schedule and not been undertaken. These are identified and commented upon immediately below to serve as a precursor in support of the proposed Compact re-launch.
Compact : Merge voluntary sector and HBC directories as one reference document for staff and the public	Voluntary sector directory now used by HBC Departments?	Reconsider as part of Compact Review
Compact : Produce a CD-Rom version of the Directory	May no longer be necessary given availability on web-sites / internet	Reconsider as part of Compact Review
Compact : Provide directories on Hartlepool integrated ICT networks being developed In libraries, community centres, voluntary sector and other HBC facilities	Further clarification needed	Reconsider as part of Compact Review
Compact : Nominate specific HBC “contact” officers in each department as facilitators to assisting in liaison with voluntary sector and encourage their access to info / services (intranet and contact ctr included)	Nomination considered fairly straightforward but doing so may dilute the attention given to CVS by other officers within the departments?	Reconsider as part of Compact Review
Compact : Liaise with Corporate Strategy to identify current HBC consultation programme	Consultation programme readily available but action below is the more significant	Reconsider as part of Compact Review

9.1 Appendix A

<u>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>
Compact : Collate HBC consultation with Voluntary Sector and other agencies' consultation proposals to forecast and develop a comprehensive Consultation Strategy for Hartlepool	May be very resource intensive ?	Reconsider as part of Compact Review
Compact : Promote and encourage volunteering – including links with Personnel (HR) re Jobs Bulletin	Volunteering mainly covered via CEN and Voluntary Sector membership of Hartlepool Partnership	Reconsider as part of Compact Review
Compact : Establish principles of longer term funding intent without guarantee	An audit is currently underway by Adult and Community Services (requested by scrutiny) in relation to ongoing pressures on voluntary sector, focussing on those organisations with premises or staff to support	Reconsider as part of Compact Review
Compact : Quality standards to be incorporated into funding agreements	The issue of QS is now raised as part of the monitoring process of groups funded by HBC	Reconsider as part of Compact Review
Compact : Training programme to increase participation from minority communities in partnership working, consultation and representation	Partly covered by Improvement Plan Schedule (Ref 11)	Reconsider as part of Compact Review
Compact : Annual review of Compact and action plan	BVR the first opportunity to review since compact was launched due to limited capacity	Reconsider as part of Compact Review
Increase support for the VCS and its infrastructure	Agreed is a high priority. VCS has aspirations to work with the Council to deliver services but specific details will	Carried forward into the Improvement Plan Schedule (Ref 4) as a High priority as part of the high-level action to review

9.1
Appendix A

<u>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>
	best materialise from the proposed Compact re-view and in context with the Council's Procurement Strategy. CHECK - Graham Frankland to provide text)	the Compact.
Increase Council familiarity with VCS services and expertise	This refers to the CVS wishing to make more presentations about it's work to the Council (members, Senior Officers and individual departments. Again, needs to be reflected within the higher level action to review the Compact.	Carried forward into the Improvement Plan Schedule (REF 4) as a High priority as part of the high-level action to review the Compact. Also reflected in the Improvement Plan Schedule (Ref 5) in relation to the emerging Neighbourhood Agenda expected to be set out in the Government's White Paper
Enable CVS to access Council training programmes that both Officers and Councillors participate in	The corporate training programme is currently available to all voluntary and community groups and is distributed via the HVDA	Not carried through into the Improvement Plan schedule
Review Community Pool	A review of the Community Pool was undertaken in 2004/05 in order to make the grant criteria more focussed.	Not carried through into the Improvement Plan schedule.
Create a list of VCS groups and services	This has already been implemented by the HVDA and the document is available for use throughout the local authority.	Not carried through into the Improvement Plan schedule.

**9.1
Appendix A**

<u>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>
<u>OBJECTIVE 3 – EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES</u>		
Use the Community Network for capacity building and empowering specific groups	This is considered to be partly about needing to publicise the existence of the Community Network and also when it is most appropriate to use it. The Council has also recently decided to appoint three new Neighbourhood Development Officers within the Neighbourhood Services Department which will be an additional valuable resource to help increase capacity building in the community. Recruitment process underway – interviews Sept 2006.	Revised wording carried through into the Improvement Plan Schedule (Ref 6)
Provide all parts of the town with a resident association and NAP	Currently a NAP Review is being undertaken that will look at the relative merits and disadvantages of providing all parts of the town with a NAP. Resident Associations should not be imposed as they need to be flexible and responsive to particular local initiatives at any particular point in time.	Revised wording carried through into the improvement plan schedule (Ref 7)
Raise awareness of NAP's in communities affected by them	As above	Revised wording carried through into the improvement plan schedule (Ref 7) above
Create a resident representatives training programme	Resident representatives are included and invited to attend some Member	Not carried through to the Improvement Plan Schedule.

9.1 Appendix A

<u>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>
	Development activities if appropriate	
OBJECTIVE 4 – CONSULTATION FOR ALL		
Consultation needs to take a community development approach	Further dialogue / clarification is needed to ascertain what this actually means (CHECK – Keith Bailey ?). The type of consultation to be used depends on the topic, the target groups and the type of information needed/ resources available etc.	Not carried forward into the Improvement Plan Schedule. However there will be an opportunity to re-visit this suggestion through the Improvement Plan action to re-launch the COMPACT (Ref 4 refers).
Consultation needs to be done with more young people	There is an extensive programme of consultation and involvement with Children & Young People currently underway using a variety of techniques. This is being led by John Robinson, Children's Fund Manager, in the Children's Services Department. This work is ongoing and is central to the development of the Participation Strategy. A vision statement backed up by standards will be taken through the political and consultative process in the Autumn of 2006.	No need to carry forward into the Improvement Plan Schedule. Revisit by inviting Children's Fund Manager (John Robinson) to become involved in the COMPACT review.
Improve mechanisms for feedback to those who have been consulted, and introduce ways of informing people how their suggestions have been used	This currently is done eg View point participants receive regular newsletters and actions arising out of these surveys are also reported to the Performance	No need to carry forward into Improvement Plan Schedule. Revisit by inviting representative of Corporate Consultation Group (Liz Crookston) to

9.1
Appendix A

<u>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>
Consult more “hard to reach” groups	<p>Management Portfolio Holder. Corporate Consultation Strategy (adopted Oct 2005) states that “results of any consultation should be fed back to participants”. Consultation good practice guidelines currently being developed will emphasise this message – due for completion Autumn 2006.</p> <p>The Corporate Consultation Strategy has in its 2006/7 Action Plan to “promote consultation with hard to reach groups”. The “Talking with Communities” meetings which concentrate on the BME communities are part of this. The Children’s Services Department (John Robinson) is leading on work with young people – see consultation with young people reference above. We will next be exploring the area of people with disabilities to look at what is currently being done and whether it can be improved – for completion this financial year. The Corporate Consultation Plan indicates that a very wide range of groups is already consulted.</p>	<p>become involved in the COMPACT review .</p> <p>No need to carry forward into the Improvement Plan Schedule but can revisit and assess progress as part of COMPACT Review .</p>
Better use of public buildings for	This suggestion for improvement is	Revised wording “promote use of

9.1 Appendix A

<u>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>
consultation events that are outside of working hours	considered to be really about the Council ensuring that we are using appropriate venues for consultation – convenient, accessible, safe, welcoming etc – whether they are Council buildings or not and being used during the day or in the evening.	appropriate buildings through Good Practice Guide and Corporate Consultation Group” carried through into the Improvement Plan Schedule.(Ref 9)
Use various consultation methods	The HBC Consultation Plan indicates that a range of consultation methods is being used across the authority. The methods used include postal questionnaires, on-line surveys, face to face interviews, focus groups, workshops, action planning, whole system events, public meetings, information stands, Neighbourhood Consultative Forums, user groups and so on. The forthcoming corporate consultation guidelines will cover aspects such as choosing an appropriate methodology.	Revised wording “promote use of appropriate consultation methods through the good practice guide and Corporate Consultation Group” carried forward into the Improvement Plan Schedule (Ref 10)
OBJECTIVE 5 – COMMUNITY PLANNING		
Review NCF consultation mechanisms	Being undertaken as part of the wider investigations into the emerging “neighbourhood agenda”	Revised wording carried through into the improvement plan schedule (Ref 11) above
Develop a training programme for those	The officer view is that training needs are	Revised wording “promote consideration

**9.1
Appendix A**

<u>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>
involved in consultation	best considered on a case by case basis as training with no clear purpose is unlikely to be effective in achieving the desired outcomes. People have different skill levels and different needs depending on the type of consultation they are involved in or want to do. The Workforce Development and Diversity Officer does recognise the need for this training and will include in the corporate training programme.	of training requirements for specific consultations through the good practice guide and Corporate Consultation Group” carried through into the Improvement Plan Schedule. (Ref 12)
Develop NAP in other areas		Comments Ref 7 above refer
<u>OBJECTIVE 6 – ACCESSIBILITY TO SERVICES</u>		
One-Stop-Shop (Contact Centre) should include VCS	Cabinet has already approved the roll-out programme for the Contact Centre. This makes provision for expansion of Contact Centre to include partners up to 2008. This is important to allow consolidation of the corporate Contact Centre through to March 2007.	Suggested improvement carried through into the Improvement Plan Schedule (Ref 13) but priority reduced from High to Medium to reflect the already agreed time-scales by Cabinet.
Regular audit of all service providers to share new ideas and make people aware of what is available	Suggest this be considered as part of the Compact Review and within the wider context of the Council’s Procurement	Not carried forward into the Improvement Plan Schedule. But re-visit as part of Compact Review.

9.1
Appendix A

<u>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>
	Strategy	
Develop and explain the community portal	The Community Portal received Government and Single Programme funding that ended in March 2005. An evaluation of the existing package was undertaken and a new product purchased that went live in April 2006. This provides a Council Web-site and micro-sites for partners, including the Hartlepool Partnership.	No longer appropriate to carry forward into work programme as Community Portal no longer available.
Simplify Council Language – KISS	The Council's Communications Strategy includes an action to review all Council standard letters to ensure they are easily readable and understandable. Thereafter other aspects of how the Council communicates with others will be similarly reviewed, potentially with a view to meeting the standards of the Plain English Crystal Mark	Revised wording to reflect the actions being brought forward through the Communications Strategy carried through into the Improvement Plan Schedule. (Ref 14)
Improve access for physically disabled to public buildings, bus service and other agencies	There are already actions to improve accessibility in the Community Strategy, the Corporate Plan and within the Neighbourhood Services Departmental Service Plan. BVPI 156 is the relevant performance indicator for this improvement suggestion. Only 20% of Council buildings currently comply with	No need to carry forward into the Improvement Plan Schedule or extend beyond non-Council facilities as part of this review.

9.1 Appendix A

<u>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>
	the accessibility standard and there is a target to achieve 30 % by GF CHECK WHEN).	
Have one single telephone number to be used 24-hours in case of an emergency	A 24hr sign-posting service is already available – a recorded message giving emergency number for Richard Court. There are no plans currently for a dedicated 24-hour emergency number.	This is not considered to be a priority for the Contact Centre. Not carried forward into the Improvement Plan Schedule. (however there are plans for a police related 999 non-emergency number)
<u>OBJECTIVE 7 – ICT</u>		
ICT in all major public buildings and post office	JOAN CHAPMAN – to consider and provide alternative wording for the Improvement Plan schedule if an action is deemed appropriate.	Revised Action awaited
Redesign portal and set up support groups to use the portal	Comments on Community Portal in Objective 6 above refer	Not carried forward into the Improvement Plan Schedule
ICT in poorest areas	It is considered that there are already many ICT opportunities out in the community. In terms of the Council's priorities, the network of community libraries is deemed to be the best infrastructure from which to map current provision and identify gaps in coverage.	Revised wording to map provision and identify gaps through the library network carried through to the Improvement Plan Schedule but as a lower priority (Ref 16).
Support and provide equipment for VCS to use and access portal	There are no resources available to do this. The Council does not own ICT equipment as the assets are provided through the ICT contract with Northgate	No need to carry forward into the Improvement Plan Schedule

9.1
Appendix A

<u>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>
Use ICT to improve mobile working within the community	There is already a great deal of mobile working supported by ICT done in the community. Mobile benefits is already targeting disadvantaged groups by allowing officer to visit and assess claimants in their homes. Adult and Community Services are piloting a similar scheme to assess peoples needs within their homes.	No need to carry forward into the Improvement Plan Schedule
<u>OBJECTIVE 8 – COMMUNITY COHESION</u>		
More inter-generational work and events	There is already a great deal of inter-generational work done in the community. Examples include an art exhibition in conjunction with the Imperial War Museum to highlight the end of WW2 aimed at young people. Others include... (John Mennear to provide text)	No need to carry forward into the Improvement Plan Schedule
Continue to put NAP groups in touch with each other socially and formally	The Neighbourhood Managers and Development Officers within Neighbourhood Services are a resource that could help take forward this suggestion for improvement but the emphasis should not be on "socially and formally"	Revised wording carried through into the Improvement Plan Schedule (Ref 18)
Make the most of links and networks that already exist	Further clarification is being sought about what was intended from this	Revised action under consideration. Possibly revisit as part of Compact

9.1
Appendix A

<u>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>
	suggestion for improvement and its relevance for the Council.	review .

Background Papers / References

-
-
- 1 Community Strategy
 - 2 Objective Meanings
 - 3 Meeting Agendas
 - 4 Meeting Notes
 - 5 Objective Scores
 - 6 Scoping Schedule
 - 7 Priority Ratings
 - 8 Lyons Inquiry Interim Findings
 - 9 Comparison Report
 - 10 Neighbourhood Issues in Hartlepool
 - 11 Restructure Report
 - 12 Compact Action Plan
 - 13 Scoping Schedule
 - 14 Objective Scores
 - 15 Strengthening Communities BVPP Section
 - 16 Objective Priorities Round 1&2, Final Sounding Board Priorities
 - 17 Suggestions from Officers, VCS and NCF
 - 18 Final Sounding Board Results
 - 19 Joint Sounding Board suggestions – Objectives 1-8
 - 20 List of Documents Read -
 - 21 Notes/results from each Sounding Board meeting
 - 22 Comparison case studies

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

4 August 2006



Report of: Joint Report of the Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development) and the Scrutiny Manager

Subject: COMMITTEE ON RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT (CORWM) SCRUTINY REFERRAL – PROGRESS REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee with an overview of the work undertaken to date by CORWM, to determine this Committee's preferred course of action, in response to the Scrutiny Referral agreed by Council on 13 April 2006.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of Council on 13 April 2006, Members views were sought on the CORWM's recommended option(s) for the long term management of solid radioactive waste. Given the severity of the long term implications, it was agreed that it was premature to discuss the issue at the Council meeting, in advance of all relevant information being available to Members.
- 2.2 It was subsequently resolved by those Members present at the Council meeting that an officer of the Authority was to attend a further meeting in May 2006 and report back to Council with a report on all the options to allow full discussion and consultation, involving the Neighbourhood Forums and the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (Minute 151 refers).
- 2.3 To therefore assist this Committee in the undertaking of the Scrutiny Referral, an overview of the work undertaken to date by CORWM is provided within this report, to assist this Committee in responding to the Scrutiny Referral made by Council.

3. CORWM

- 3.1 CORWM was appointed jointly by Ministers of the UK Government and the administrators of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, to oversee a review of options for managing solid radioactive waste in the UK and recommend the option(s) that can provide a long-term solution, providing protection for people and the environment.
- 3.2 It is important to stress that CORWM is considering different types of long term storage or disposal but is not assessing specific locations.
- 3.3 The Committee has taken a phased approach to its work:
- (a) producing an inventory of wastes requiring management;
 - (b) identifying a long-list and then a short-list of options for managing the wastes in the long term;
 - (c) producing detailed criteria for assessing options;
 - (d) assessing the short-listed options against the criteria; and
 - (e) producing recommendations on how to manage the wastes and advice on how these could be implemented

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 CORWM is scheduled to produce its finalised report and recommendations on the long-term waste management option(s) to Government on 31 July 2006. It is understood that CORWM may continue in existence through to November 2006 to undertake some further work on the ways by which recommended management option(s) should be implemented.
- 4.2 In these circumstances it is therefore conceivable that there may in due course be opportunities for the Council to respond to
- (a) the Government's response to the CORWM recommendations; and/or
 - (b) any further consultation which CORWM undertake in connection with their ongoing work on implementation.
- 4.3 Officers are seeking further information from CORWM on these matters and it may be possible to provide further information at the Committee meeting on both the finalised CORWM recommendations and future consultation arrangements.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Clearly there is no immediate need or opportunity for the Council to comment in response to a consultation process but it may well be advantageous to make CORW Ms imminent report and recommendations the subject of a Members' Seminar. In this way, Members should be suitably informed to assist any discussions and response to future consultation opportunities.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 That Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee consider the appropriateness of holding a Members Seminar on this issue, in response to the Scrutiny Referral.

Contact Officer:- Stuart Green – Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development)
Regeneration and Planning Services Department
Hartlepool Borough Council
Telephone Number: 01429 523401
E-mail: stuart.green@hartlepool.gov.uk

Charlotte Burnham – Scrutiny Manager
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523 087
Email: charlotte.burnham@hartlepool.gov.uk

Adrian Hurst – Principal Environmental Health Officer
Public Protection and Housing Division
Neighbourhood Services Department
Hartlepool Borough Council
Telephone Number: 01429 523323
Email: adrian.hurst@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- (i) Decision Record of Council held on 13 April 2006.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

4 August 2006



Report of: Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

Subject: SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE –
PROGRESS REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee of the progress made to date of this Committee, since the start of the new 2006/07 Municipal Year.

2. PROGRESS ON THE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2006/07

- 2.1 I am pleased to report that this is the first year that the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme has been finalised by the end of June 2006. The planning and preparation that has been undertaken to ensure this date was achieved has been invaluable and certainly good practice to follow for future years.
- 2.2 Following endorsement of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's Work Programme for 2006/07 on 30 June 2006, the agreed work programme of this Committee is as outlined in the below table:-

Issue/Topic	Tim escale
HR Strategy Working Group (Portfolio Holder Scrutiny Referral)	To be completed in August 2006
CORWM (Council Scrutiny Referral)	August 2006
Closure of Rossmere Pool (Council and Portfolio Holder Scrutiny Referral)	August 2006 to October 2006
Withdraw al of European Funding to the Voluntary Sector in Hartlepool	October 2006 onw ards / TBC

Issue/Topic	Timescale
Authority's Use of Agency Staff	To be determined
Service Improvements	To be determined

- 2.3 In addition to the above, this Committee will also consider corporate and financial issues relating to the Authority as and when appropriate, in particular the Review of the Community Strategy, budget consultation process for 2007/08, Inspection Reports, Quarterly Budget/Performance Monitoring Reports, compilation of the Corporate Plan for 2007/08 and so on.

3. GENERAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ISSUES

- 3.1 Scrutiny Members Development Programme for 2006/07 – Work is currently being undertaken by the Scrutiny Support Team to devise a Scrutiny Members Development Programme for 2006/07 in consultation with myself and the Chairs of the four standing Scrutiny Forums.
- 3.2 It is with regret that the training provider used during last year's programme is no longer available. As such enquiries are being made with alternative providers, the outcomes/findings of which will be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.
- 3.3 Agreed Selection Criteria for dealing with Non-Mandatory Scrutiny Topic Referrals from the Authority's Regulatory Panels and other Committees – Following endorsement of the proposed Selection Criteria at the last meeting of this Committee held on 30 June 2006, I am pleased to report that the words 'has the capacity to act as public champion' has been inserted into point (ii) of agreed criteria, as per Members' requests.
- 3.4 It is proposed that the criteria will be considered at future meetings of the Cabinet and the Constitution Working Group/Committee prior to its implementation.
- 3.5 Procedure for the Decision Making Route for Scrutiny Final Reports – I am pleased to report that following this Committee endorsement of the procedure at our last meeting held on 30 June 2006, the procedure was implemented with immediate effect. With the introduction of an Action Plan in table format that clearly details all the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Forum along with delivery timescales, nominated lead officer and proposed course of action, I am pleased to report is proving to be an invaluable tool in monitoring the delivery of the recommendations both by Elected Members and Officers.
- 3.6 Informal Meeting of the Scrutiny Chairs – I am pleased to report that we held our first informal meeting of the 2006/07 Municipal Year with the Scrutiny Chairs on

30 June 2006. To ensure openness and transparency is maintained, I am pleased to inform Members that the following issues were discussed during the meeting:-

- (a) Scrutiny Training and Development Programme for 2006/07;
- (b) Raising the Profile of Scrutiny in Hartlepool (press releases, article in future edition of Hartbeat, website, Scrutiny Leaflet, Regional Networking Meetings);
- (c) Attendance at NEREO Joint Members/Officers Scrutiny Network by Scrutiny Chairs;
- (d) Monitoring of agreed Scrutiny Recommendations – Strengthening of current process;
- (e) CfPS Scrutiny Champion's Network – May 2006 Bulletin (Information Item); and
- (f) The Authority's LGIU Membership.

3.7 Final Reports Recently Considered / Awaiting Consideration – At the time of writing this report the following Final Reports/Formal Responses were either awaiting consideration or had already been considered by the Authority's Cabinet or other Committees:

- (a) Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's 'Formal Response to Parish Council Election Recharges Scrutiny Referral' – (To be considered by the Performance Management Portfolio on 24 July 2006); and the
- (b) Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's 'Notification of Decision: Parish Council Election Recharges Scrutiny Referral' – (To be considered by Council on 27 July 2006).

3.8 Members may wish to note that in response to this Committee's Formal Response to the Parish Council Election Recharges Scrutiny Referral I have arranged for a copy of the correspondence addressed from Councillor Jackson to myself to be circulated to Members during this meeting for information.

3.9 Frequency of Future Joint Cabinet/Scrutiny Events – You will recall at the last meeting I informed the Committee that I was awaiting a response from the Elected Mayor in relation to the frequency of such events. I am pleased to confirm that I have now received a formal response with the suggestion that we discuss the frequency of meetings at our first joint meeting to be held in September 2006 (date to be determined).

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee notes the content of this report.

**COUNCILLOR MARJORIE JAMES
CHAIR OF SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

4 August 2006



Report of: Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

Subject: CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM –
PROGRESS REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform the Member of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee of the progress made to date by the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum.

2. PROGRESS OF THE SCRUTINY FORUM

2.1 Since the Forum's last progress report to this Committee on 7 April 2006, the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum has undertaken the following work:-

2.2 Boys' Achievement - Bridging the Gap - Following confirmation of each of the Forums Work Programmes by Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on the 30 June 2006, the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum on the 17 July 2006 approved the Aim, Terms of Reference and Timetable for its investigation of 'Boys' Achievement – Bridging the Gap'.

2.3 In order to progress the investigation without delay, the Forum on the 17 July 2006 received, as part of the first stage of its investigation, a brief 'Setting the Scene' presentation from the Children's Services Department. The Forum also undertook a practical exercise to demonstrate preferred learning styles.

2.4 The Forum will at its next meeting receive evidence from national and regional bodies on the factors affecting boys' achievement and the strategies/models identified to address the gender gap.

2.5 Visits will also to be undertaken immediately following the school holidays to a number of schools in Hartlepool, and another Local Authority as a benchmarking exercise to discuss the issue and observe strategies/models implemented to deal with it. Finalisation of dates and times for these visits is ongoing.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee notes the progress of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum.

**COUNCILLOR JANE SHAW
CHAIR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

4 August 2006



Report of: Chair of the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum

Subject: ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AND HEALTH SCRUTINY FORUM – PROGRESS REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform Members of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee of the progress made to date by the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum.

2. PROGRESS OF THE SCRUTINY FORUM

2.1 Since the Co-ordinating Committee met to approve the Forum's annual work programme on the 30 June 2006 the Forum has been involved in the following issues :-

(a) Reconfiguration of PCTs – Teesside:- The Forum met to consider the issues and options facing Hartlepool PCT following the Strategic Health Authority's request for Hartlepool and other Teesside PCTs 'to identify the shared management arrangements that will deliver PCTs that are fit for purpose for the future' and that will deliver the 15% management savings required 'of each individual PCT. As no formal proposals have been shared with Hartlepool Borough Council the Forum considered a range of options that the Local Authority can assume the PCT Chief Executives might have considered and those that involve greater integration with the Local Authority which, it is assumed, have not been given serious consideration by PCT Chief Executives as no formal discussions have taken place with the Local Authority. The Forum will finalise its view on this issue at its meeting on 25 July 2006 and progress will be reported verbally to the Co-ordinating Committee.

- (b) Acute Services Review – Darzi:- Following the recommendation of the Joint Section 7 Consultation Committee to refer the Acute Services Review proposals made by Professor Darzi to the Secretary of State, the Forum will determine what action to take in response to the referral at its meeting on 25 July 2006 and consequently progress on this issue will be updated verbally to the Co-ordinating Committee.
- (c) Scrutiny Investigation into Social Prescribing:- The Forum will be establishing, at its meeting on 25 July 2006, the terms of reference, aim and timetable for its investigation into Social Prescribing.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee notes the progress of the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum.

**COUNCILLOR GERALD WISTOW
CHAIR OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AND HEALTH SCRUTINY
FORUM**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

4 August 2006



Report of: Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum

Subject: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM
– PROGRESS REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Member of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee of the progress made to date by the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum.

2. PROGRESS OF THE SCRUTINY FORUM

- 2.1 Since the Forum's last progress report to this Committee on 7 April 2006, the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum has undertaken the following work-
- 2.2 Hartlepool's Local Bus Service Provision - The Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on the 24 March 2006 completed its investigation of Bus Service Provision in Hartlepool and presented its Final Report to Cabinet on the 2 May 2006.
- 2.3 Following consideration of the Final Report by Cabinet, the Culture, Leisure and Transportation Portfolio Holder attended the meeting of the Forum on the 12 July 2006 to convey Cabinet's response and confirm approval of all of the recommendations contained within the report. Details were also provided of progress to date on the implementation of each of the recommendations and the Forum advised of a further Progress Report to be presented in November 2006.
- 2.4 Hartlepool's Public Convenience Provision - Cabinet on the 12 April 2006 referred to Scrutiny consideration of options and proposals for public convenience provision in Hartlepool, with a prescribed timescale for the submission of a report back to Cabinet by September 2006.
- 2.5 The Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on the 12 July 2006 scoped the process for consideration of the referral and approved the Aim, Terms of Reference and Timetable for its investigation.

- 2.6 As part of the first stage of its investigation the Forum undertook, on the 20 July 2006, a site visit to various public conveniences around the town to gain an understanding of the level and condition of local provision. A further visit to Scarborough Borough Council to benchmark Hartlepool's provision against that of another Local Authority is to be undertaken prior to the next meeting of the Forum on the 9 August 2006.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee notes the progress of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum.

**COUNCILLOR GERA RD HALL
CHAIR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

4 August 2006



Report of: Chair of the Regeneration and Planning Services
Scrutiny Forum

Subject: REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES
SCRUTINY FORUM - PROGRESS REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Members of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee of the progress made to date by the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum.

2. PROGRESS OF THE FORUM

- 2.1 Since the Co-ordinating Committee met to approve the Forum's annual work programme on the 30 June 2006 the Forum:-

(a) Met on 13 July 2006 to consider a scoping report on the 'Railway Approaches' investigation. Members of the Forum agreed the Terms of Reference for the investigation and a timetable for the conduct of the inquiry. In addition, a couple of amendments were made to the suggested sources of evidence for the inquiry. Consequently, the Forum has agreed the scope of the Railway Approaches investigation and anticipates it will be concluded by 7 December 2006.

(b) A site visit is planned for mid-August 2006 on a train that will approach the town from both the north and the south. This is intended to give Members and officers a better understanding of key 'problem spots' and areas of good practice on the way into Hartlepool.

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee notes the progress of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum.

COUNCILLOR STEPHEN WALLACE
CHAIR OF REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

4 August 2006



Report of: Scrutiny Manager

Subject: SCOPING REPORT – ROSSMERE LEARNER POOL
(COUNCIL AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER REFERRAL)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To make proposals to Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee for their investigation into the closure of Rossmere Pool, which was referred to this Committee by Council on 3 February 2005 and subsequently by the Joint Liveability and Children's Services Portfolio on 24 February 2005.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Joint Liveability and Children's Services Portfolio, held on 13 December 2004, the Director of Community Services and Acting Assistant Director of Education outlined that Rossmere Pool had been in a state of deterioration for some time and that a Health and Safety Investigation in November 2004 determined that the pool did not meet the required standards. It was also indicated that restoration of the pool would be of significant cost to the Authority. Therefore the Elected Mayor as the relevant portfolio holder approved the closure of Rossmere Pool.
- 2.2 At the meeting of Council held on 3 February 2005, it was agreed unanimously 'that the Executive be requested to reconsider its decision to close Rossmere Swimming Pool with a view to spending £9,570 to re-open the pool within one month, and that the issue be referred to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee in order to allow a public investigation of:-
- (a) The way in which the decision was made;
 - (b) The cost of fully refurbishing the pool;
 - (c) The costs of replacing the existing pool on the same site; and
 - (d) The necessary steps to protect the pool from further damage that may be taken immediately'.

- 2.3 At the meeting of the Joint Liveability and Children's Services Portfolio held on 24 February 2005, the Mayor agreed that, in relation to Rossmere Pool, the following issues be forwarded to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee for a full and detailed investigation, with a report to be submitted to a future meeting:-
- (a) That the detailed and costed investment required to fully refurbish Rossmere Pool be investigated;
 - (b) That detailed consideration be given as to whether it was cost effective to fully refurbish the pool or to demolish the existing building and rebuild the current site;
 - (c) That an investigation of what possible external avenues of funding were available to either refurbish or rebuild the pool be undertaken;
 - (d) That the condition of the school swimming pools in the town be examined to ensure that a similar situation to that which has arisen at Rossmere Pool was not occurring elsewhere; and
 - (e) That Scrutiny be requested to seek appropriate information from representatives from Hartlepool Swimming Club in its investigations.
- 2.4 **Members will recall that at the meeting of this Committee on 10 March 2006, consideration was given to the progress of the above-mentioned Scrutiny Referrals at which point Members agreed to postpone the investigation until this current Municipal Year.**
- 2.5 **Members should be aware that since the actual dates of the Scrutiny Referrals, a considerable amount of time has elapsed. In addition to this there has been a high turnover of staff with responsibilities for this issue, therefore, to undertake the two Scrutiny Referrals in accordance with the original Terms of Reference would be problematic.**
- 2.6 **Consequently, in responding to the two mandatory Scrutiny Referrals, a combined alternative Terms of Reference for the undertaking of the investigation are outlined in paragraph 4 and 5 of this report.**

3. SETTING THE SCENE

- 3.1 Rossmere Learner Pool, was at the time of the initial Scrutiny Referrals, the only 1 metre depth learner pool available within the town for delivering weekly swimming lessons to school pupils and other pool users via the former Education and Community Services Departments.
- 3.2 Furthermore, the Rossmere Learner Pool had been in a state of deterioration for some time. Following a series of problems relating to the plant, pool operation and condition of premises along with the significant cost required

to rectify all of the defects, the decision was taken to close the Rossmere Pool in December 2004 in the interest of public and staff safety.

- 3.3 Since the closure of the Rossmere Leamer Pool in December 2004, work has been delayed in the demolition of the site. In light of the deteriorating condition of the site which has been subject to vandalism in addition to the related health and safety concerns, the Children's Services Department are holding funding for the demolition of the premises and to improve the general appearance of the site, if this was deemed to be appropriate.

4. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY REFERRAL

- 4.1 The overall aim of the Scrutiny Referral is to determine the circumstances leading to the closure of Rossmere Pool and the proposed future use of the site.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY REFERRAL

- 5.1 The proposed Terms of Reference for the review are as outlined below :-
- (a) To gain an understanding of the circumstances leading to the closure of Rossmere Pool?
 - (b) To determine the Council's policy around health and safety in relation to the maintenance of Rossmere Pool?; and
 - (c) To establish the current and future proposals in relation to the Rossmere Pool site?

6. POTENTIAL AREAS OF ENQUIRY / SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

- 6.1 Members of the Committee can request a range of evidential and comparative information throughout the Scrutiny Referral.
- 6.2 The Committee can invite a variety of people to attend to assist in the forming of a balanced and focused range of recommendations as follow s:-
- (a) Elected Mayor;
 - (b) Cabinet Member - Portfolio Holder for Children Services;
 - (c) Interim Assistant Director (Resources and Support Services) – Children's Services;
 - (d) Assistant Director (Community Services) ;

- (e) Principal HR Officer (Employee Wellbeing) – responsible for the undertaking and co-ordination of Health and Safety Inspections to Council buildings;
- (f) Ward Councillors;
- (g) Resident Representatives; and
- (h) Members of the Public.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 7.1 Community engagement plays a crucial role in the Scrutiny process and paragraph 6.2, details who the Committee could involve. However, thought will need to be given to the structure in the way that the Committee wishes to encourage those views.

8. PROPOSED TIMETABLE FOR THE SCRUTINY REFERRAL

- 8.1 The proposed timetable for the undertaking of this review is as outlined below :-

4 August 2006 – Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee: Consideration of Scoping Report – Closure of Rossmere Pool / Setting the Scene

15 September 2006 - Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee: Evidence to be determined / Formulation of the Committee's views with delegated approval being granted to the Chair to agree the content of the Final Report for submission to Council.

26 October 2006: Council - Consideration of the Final Report of this Committee into the Closure of Rossmere Pool.

9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee agrees the revised Terms of Reference together with the suggested timetable for the undertaking of this referral as outlined in paragraphs 4, 5 and 8 of this report.

July 2006

Contact Officer:- Charlotte Burnham – Scrutiny Manager
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523 087
Email: charlotte.burnham@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer/Research Assistant entitled 'Scrutiny Topic Referral – Rossmere Pool: Progress Report' presented to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee held on 10 March 2006.
- (ii) Minutes of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee held on 10 March 2006.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

4 August 2006



Report of: Scrutiny Manager

Subject: SCRUTINY TOPIC REFERRAL FROM COUNCIL –
'CLOSURE OF HARTLEPOOL COLLEGE OF
FURTHER EDUCATION'S ON-SITE NURSERY
FACILITY'

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee of the recent scrutiny topic referral from Council to the Overview and Scrutiny Function.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 As outlined within the Authority's Constitution, the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee has a mandatory obligation to consider referrals from Council, Cabinet and individual Cabinet Members within the timescale prescribed.
- 2.2 As such at a meeting of Full Council on 27 July 2006, Members unanimously approved the following resolution:-

'That the Council resolves to scrutinise the decision to close the nursery of the College of Further Education in the context of gaining a fuller understanding of the College's underlying financial position and any alternative source of funding;

That a letter be sent to the governing body of the Hartlepool College of Further Education (HCFE) informing them of the Council's resolution and concerns expressed during the meeting and requesting that the College puts on hold its action to close the nursery until the Scrutiny process has concluded'.

- 2.3 During the meeting there was considerable debate on this issue and after much discussion Members stressed the importance of the matter being referred to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, to enable a full and extensive investigation to be undertaken, emphasising the importance of listening to the views and obtaining evidence from the HCFE and students who currently use the on-site nursery facility.

- 2.1 Consequently this matter is being considered at today's meeting of this Committee, to ensure, if felt appropriate, the investigation is undertaken without undue delay.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 In line with Council procedure, it is recommended that the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee considers the appropriateness of undertaking a scrutiny investigation into this matter.

Contact Officer:- Charlotte Burnham – Scrutiny Manager
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523 087
Email: charlotte.burnham@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

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

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

4 August 2006



Report of: Scrutiny Manager

Subject: SCOPING REPORT – CLOSURE OF HARTLEPOOL COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION'S ON-SITE NURSERY FACILITY (COUNCIL REFERRAL)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To make proposals to Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee for their investigation into the decision of Hartlepool College of Further Education to close its on-site nursery facility, known as First Steps, which was referred to this Committee by Council on 27 July 2006.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At the meeting of Council held on 27 July 2006, Members unanimously approved the following resolution:-

'That the Council resolves to scrutinise the decision to close the nursery of the College of Further Education in the context of gaining a fuller understanding of the College's underlying financial position and any alternative source of funding;

That a letter be sent to the governing body of the Hartlepool College of Further Education (HCFE) informing them of the Council's resolution and concerns expressed during the meeting and requesting that the College puts on hold its action to close the nursery until the Scrutiny process has concluded'.

- 2.2 During the meeting there was considerable debate on this issue and after much discussion Members stressed the importance of the matter being referred to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, to enable a full and extensive investigation to be undertaken, emphasising the importance of listening to the views and obtaining evidence from the HCFE and students who currently use the on-site nursery facility.
- 2.3 Consequently this matter is being considered at today's meeting of this Committee, to ensure the investigation is undertaken without undue delay.

3. SETTING THE SCENE

- 3.1 The HCFE currently offers on-site child minding facilities for children aged 6 weeks to 5 years old through their First Steps Nursery both to HCFE students and to members of the public during term time.
- 3.2 The on-site nursery is able to accommodate 48 child places, however, the occupancy of the nursery during the last 2005/06 financial year has been averaging at approximately 47% of its total capacity. Of that 47%, 10% of the total capacity was taken up by students of the HCFE.
- 3.3 Since 2003, the HCFE has not been able to use the nursery as a training facility as unqualified individuals could not be given the responsibility for looking after children, consequently, increasing the HCFE's staffing costs for the nursery.
- 3.4 The First Steps Nursery has had an increasing deficit despite the many efforts over the last five years to turn it around. During recent years the HCFE has used its growth potential to generate small surpluses that has enabled the subsidising of the nursery.
- 3.5 The HCFE's Board of Governors took the decision to not re-open the nursery on 29 August 2006 on the basis of the financial position and after considerable effort by the HCFE to find other means of retaining the on-site nursery facility.
- 3.6 In addition to the above, the HCFE are currently facing considerable financial pressures in relation to the substantial deficit forecast during the 2005/06 financial year and the projected shortfall of future funding, therefore to establish a stable and sustainable financial base, it is expected that 40 redundancies, 13 of which are nursery staff, will be made during their current financial year.

4. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY REFERRAL

- 4.1 The overall aim of the Scrutiny Referral is to gain an understanding of the circumstances and process leading to the decision of the HCFE to close their on-site nursery facility known as 'First Steps' and to explore any possible options which the HCFE had available for the retention of such facility.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY REFERRAL

5.1 The proposed Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Referral are as outlined below:-

- (a) To gain an understanding of the circumstances and process leading to the decision of the HCFE to close their on-site nursery facility with particular reference to marketing, usage and demand;
- (b) To explore what options the HCFE considered to enable the continuation of the on site nursery facility with particular reference to funding issues and further marketing;
- (c) To examine the impact of the loss of such facility in relation to those parents or carers using the facility.

6. POTENTIAL AREAS OF ENQUIRY / SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

6.1 Members of the Committee can request a range of evidential and comparative information throughout the Scrutiny Referral.

6.2 The Committee can invite a variety of people to attend to assist in the forming of a balanced and focused range of recommendations as follows:-

- (a) Key Representatives from the HCFE;
- (b) HCFE students who use the First Steps Nursery;
- (c) Ward Councillors; and
- (d) Members of the Public.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

7.1 Community engagement plays a crucial role in the Scrutiny process and paragraph 6.2, details who the Committee could involve. However, thought will need to be given to the structure in the way that the Committee wishes to encourage those views.

8. PROPOSED TIMETABLE FOR THE SCRUTINY REFERRAL

8.1 The proposed timetable for the undertaking of this review is as outlined below:-

4 August 2006 – Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee commencing at 2.00 pm in Committee Room B, Civic Centre: Consideration of Notification of Council Referral and the Scoping Report.

(Please note the additional meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee to be held on 11 August 2006 has been CANCELLED following the unavailability of key witnesses)

1 September 2006 – Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee commencing at 4.00 pm in Committee Room B, Civic Centre (Additional meeting) – Evidence from representatives of the HCFE, students who use the nursery facility, members of the public and Elected Members.

Formulation of the Committee's views with delegated approval being granted to the Chair to agree the finalised content of the Final Report for submission to Council.

14 September 2006: Full Council commencing at 2.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre - Consideration of the Final Report of this Committee into the Closure of the HCFE's On Site Nursery Facility 'First Steps'.

9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee agrees the proposed Terms of Reference together with the suggested timetable for the undertaking of this referral as outlined in paragraphs 4, 5 and 8 of this report.

August 2006

Contact Officer:- Charlotte Burnham – Scrutiny Manager
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523 087
Email: charlotte.burnham@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

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