

# **REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

10 APRIL 2014

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Councillor Robbie Payne (In the Chair);

Councillors: Christopher Akers-Belcher, Kevin Cranney, Keith Dawkins, Keith Fisher and Dr George Morris.

Also Present: In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2, Councillor Marjorie James as substitute for Councillor Stephen Akers-Belcher.

Stephen Catchpole, Managing Director, Tees Valley Unlimited

Officers: Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive  
Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health  
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration  
Antony Steinberg, Economic Regeneration Manager  
Patrick Wilson, Employment Development Officer  
Pat Usher, Head of Sport and Recreation  
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team.

### **120. Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Stephen Akers-Belcher.

### **121. Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **122. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2014**

Confirmed.

### **123. Swim Development Programme** *(Director of Public Health)*

**Type of decision**

For information only.

### **Purpose of report**

The purpose of the report was to inform and update Members on the success of the aquatics programme at Mill House Leisure Centre. The report also highlighted the impact of the recent work to install a pool boom into the main pool tank and as a result, the potential for growth of aquatic provision for Hartlepool residents.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

The Head of Sport and Recreation reported up until November 2013, the Mill House Leisure Centre pool design was based on two pool tanks; a learner pool and an “L” shaped main pool. However, the installation of a boom in December 2013 allowed the main pool to be split into two, creating a 25 metre and a 20 metre pool. This work was linked to the financial strategy moving forwards for 2014/15 but had been undertaken in advance to ensure completion for April 1st 2014.

Aside from the general swimming offer available to all residents, a swim development programme has always been a main component of the Centre’s activity programme offering participation opportunities to a range of target groups. This programme adheres to the National Swimming Plan and ASA Learn to Swim Pathway to ensure high standards of teaching and developmental opportunities across a wide age group.

This academic year, ten schools are currently accessing the Learn to Swim provision provided by the Council and interest continues to increase from other schools. There are currently 512 children from schools who are learning to swim from Years 3 to 6. At this stage of the academic year, 43% of children have already achieved their 25 metre swimming award and are progressing to develop other skills.

The Head of Sport and Recreation indicated that the new pool configuration would allow the opportunity to further expand and develop swimming opportunities at Mill House Leisure Centre. The re-opening of the pools once the work had been completed at the end of December 2013 brought an instant positive reaction from customers. Not only was this due to the increased flexibility of water space arrangements but more importantly, that a substantial “face-lift” had been given to the swimming pool facilities.

A temporary pool programme had been in place until 3 April in accordance with the then lifeguarding and teaching arrangements. However, from 6 April onwards, new lifeguarding working arrangements had come into operation which further increased water space availability to all customers and allowed for a new permanent programme to be offered. During the refurbishment period, a training programme for staff involved in swim provision was undertaken to ensure that our development programme could successfully grow. All of the Lifeguarding Team (12 staff) successfully completed their ASA UKCC Level 1 in teaching swimming which would allow them to assist a Level 2 Teacher with classes and it is planned to hold a Level 2 course for these staff to allow them to fully qualify later this year.

The Head of Sport and Recreation reported that during January 2014, Mill House Leisure Centre had been audited under the leisure facilities management nationally accredited quality assurance system “Quest”. Members would be pleased to note that both the Mystery Visit report as part of this process and the Quest audit report was extremely complimentary about the new and improved pool arrangements and the positive impact this would have on swimmers and swimming provision in Hartlepool.

Members welcomed the report which showed the excellent service being provided at the Mill House Leisure Centre and that the reconfiguration of the pool had proved to be successful. Members did raise an issue of concern in relation to a local school that had indicated their concerns in regards to safeguarding issues for children when at the Leisure Centre. Members were clear that they did not believe there were any safeguarding issues at the pool and that the Council had recently been inspected by Ofsted which had resulted in the authority being shown to be at the forefront of safeguarding matters.

The Chief Executive stated that the facilities now provided at the Mill House Leisure Centre swimming pool were excellent with three separate sections for all abilities. The authority has a very strong reputation in regards to safeguarding and the issue appeared to be one that lay solely with the staff of the school concerned; Throston Primary School. School staff supporting swimming lessons at the pool were expected to play a supervisory role as well as the dedicated swimming staff at the pool.

The Chief Executive stated that he, the Director of Public Health and the Leader of the Council would be meeting with the school’s governing body very shortly to discuss this issue with them. The Leader stated that this authority was leading the way on safeguarding issues and that there were no concerns in any form that should lead to a school making such a decision.

Members of the Committee supported the comments of the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council. The Chair indicated that he would write to the school indicating this Committee’s disappointment in the comments made public by the school without having first come to the Council. Members sought assurance that the school was still allowing parents the final say in whether their children went to the swimming classes or not. The Chief Executive indicated that the school should have consulted parents before going public with such comments. It seemed, however, that the comments were to justify moving their swimming classes to one of the secondary school pools in the town.

The Chair indicated that he wished the Director of Public Health and the Head of Sport and Recreation to feed back to the staff at the Leisure Centre this Committee’s support and congratulations on an excellent report.

### **Decision**

1. That the report be noted and that staff at the Mill House Leisure Centre be congratulated on the excellent outcome of the 'Quest' audit and the Lifeguard team on achieving the ASA UKCC Level 1 in teaching swimming.

## **124. Youth Employment Initiative** (*Assistant Director, Regeneration*)

### **Type of decision**

For information only.

### **Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report was to inform members of the European Union Youth Employment Initiative (YEI).

### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

The Employment Development Officer reported that the European Union Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) formed part of a package of measures designed to deal with high levels of youth unemployment in many parts of the EU. The purpose of the YEI is to establish a dedicated source of EU funding to support the implementation of youth guarantee schemes and other initiatives to reduce youth unemployment. EU funding will be specifically targeted at regions in which the youth unemployment rate exceeds 25%. The initiative would have a budget of €6 billion for the programme period from 2014 to 2020. Of the funding, €3 billion would come from a dedicated Youth Employment budget line complemented by at least €3 billion more from the European Social Fund (ESF). Only the ESF element of the funding would require match funding.

The Tees Valley area also qualified for additional funding under the EU YEI and had a notional allocation of £12.59m from the dedicated YEI budget line. This had to be equally matched from the Tees Valley ESF allocation at £12.59m. Therefore, due to the Tees Valley's Transition Region Status Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU) were required to match the ESF element at 40% which equalled around £8.39m. In total, the Tees Valley had around £33.57m to invest in the YEI.

The Tees Valley European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy (ESIFS) for 2014 – 2020 outlines high level activity areas for the YEI and also outlines that TVU were proposing to 'Opt In' to the match funding offer from the Skills Funding Agency for the Employment Theme, which included the YEI. It is important that TVU start the process for the design of the detailed specification of activities that TVU would like to deliver through the YEI investment.

The timescales for the YEI also dictated that activity needed to be commissioned during 2014 and 2015. TVU had therefore arranged a Task and Finish Group with local partners, to specifically focus on the YEI. The

first YEI Task and Finish Group had been held on 3rd March 2014.

Members welcomed the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) but were concerned that because of the delays in starting the scheme, the young people the scheme was aimed at would have left school in the July and would not be picked up by this scheme until October/November when all the training schemes and college courses will have started in September.

The Managing Director of Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU) commented that this was an important issue. The scheme was designed to help the young unemployed in the worst areas of the country for youth unemployment. The delays to the scheme had been caused by Liverpool and Sheffield undertaking judicial reviews in relation to their allocations thus delaying the allocation of money for all areas. It had been initially thought that the programme would have to be delayed until the following year but the TVU Managing Director suggested that it might be possible to look outside the YEI and to pick up those young people who would benefit from the scheme in the short term and then bring the finance in after. The TVU Managing Director indicated that he would look into the potential of this and ask Hartlepool's representative's to the TVU Board to report back to the Committee.

Members suggested that the Youth Investment Partnership may be able to help plug the gap in the programme. An analysis of the numbers of young people involved may be needed initially. The TVU Managing Director considered this an appropriate approach. He commented that youth unemployment had dropped significantly due to the initiatives being run in the Tees Valley but it still remained high in comparison to the national figures.

#### **Decision**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a further report be submitted updating the Committee on the proposals to meet the funding gap in the Youth Employment Initiative.

## **125. Tees Valley European Structural and Investment Funds Strategies (ESIFS) 2014-2020** *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

#### **Type of decision**

For Information only.

#### **Purpose of report**

To update Members on the Tees Valley submission for a Tees Valley European Structural and Investment Funds Strategies (ESIFS) for the European Union Transition Funding Programme 2014-2020.

#### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

The Economic Regeneration Manager reported that in the next round of

ESIFS, Local Enterprise Partnerships – including Tees Valley Unlimited – were responsible for the design of the ESIFS to enable their areas to access European Regional Development Funds (ERDF), European Social Funds (ESF) and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

Tees Valley had been notionally allocated £173m from ERDF and ESF and an allocation of £1.1m from the EAFRD. As a Transition Region, Tees Valley benefitted from increased levels of funding and from having to find a 40% match (to the 60% European money), rather than 50% (as is the case in more developed regions). Phasing of drawing down funding would be developed in conjunction with the formation of the ESIFS implementation plan.

TVU and the Tees Valley Local Authorities had undertaken extensive engagement with stakeholders on creating the ESIFS, including two rounds of Task and Finish Groups and a public consultation process. Feedback was very positive and TVU responded to the 20 main questions arising from the feedback, mainly on SME competitiveness, the low carbon economy and climate change adaptation, and published these on the website.

Feedback had been received from Government in November 2013, which was very positive, outlining that “Tees Valley had produced a good comprehensive first draft,” with “a clear and compelling picture of Tees Valley and the issues and challenges the area faced. The draft was also praised for the amount of consultation undertaken and the strong governance arrangements that were in place.

However, Government had identified a number of areas where it felt more work was required from all LEPs, particularly:

- Strengthen the link between market failures and proposed interventions
- Develop the value for money case for interventions
- Review notional allocations to thematic objectives and look to concentrate funding on as few Thematic Objectives as possible to maximise impact
- Describe the rationale for allocations
- Details of match funding (particularly from opt-ins).

The Economic Regeneration Manager commented that, as had been mentioned in the previous discussion, the legal cases instigated by Liverpool and Sheffield were causing delays in a number of programmes. The TVU Managing Director commented that one of the initial results for the judicial reviews was that each area would now receive new allocations. It was anticipated that the Tees Valley allocation may be reduced slightly, though not markedly. Once the 40% match funding was added to the pool of money, it became a very significant fund and it was likely that this area would not see this much funding in one tranche again. There were still some parts of the proposals still being discussed and negotiated; the retro-

fitting of housing was one such area highlighted.

The TVU Managing Director indicated that the EU did not put 'place' at the top of its agenda, so places like Hartlepool with a clearly defined vision of its future would need to maximise the opportunities through the various programmes to further its vision.

A strategic submission had been made to government who were supportive of the local growth element of the bid. The projects had been pre-developed to a much greater extent than usual so that when the funding became available, they were ready to go at very short notice.

Members welcomed the report and the comments from the TVU Managing Director. Some Members did comment that the various schemes and funding regimes could be slightly confusing and it was suggested that at the beginning of the new municipal year, the training provided to the new Committee should cover these issues in some detail.

Members raised some concerns in relation to the targeting of the schemes if ward profile information was used. Following the introduction of the new wards in the town, not all the appropriate information for them may be in place. The Chief Executive indicated that this was on the agenda for the Task and Finish group. The Chief Executive also commented that all councilors needed to buy into the Tees Valley approach in relation to the schemes under the ESIFS. The Tees valley approach through the TVU was seen as 'mature' in terms of the areas being funded with a good track record of delivery. The majority of Hartlepool residents worked in the Tees valley already and support for schemes that may seem to be based in other Tees Valley authority areas still had to be seen as positive for Hartlepool.

### **Decision**

That the report be noted.

## **126. Tees Valley Business Growth Hub and Tees Valley Unlimited Skills and Apprenticeship Programme** *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

### **Type of decision**

For information only.

### **Purpose of report**

The purpose of the report was to inform members of the Tees Valley Business Growth Hub (TVBGH) and the Tees Valley Skills and Apprenticeship Programme (TVSAP). The projects are funded through the Regional Growth Fund and cover the whole of the Tees Valley.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

The Assistant Director, Regeneration reported that the TVBGH was an enhanced business support programme which would improve coordination

of business support services across the Tees Valley. It was funded through Lancaster University RGF funding, matched with local public and private sector funds. A total of £2.379m is available to fund interventions.

In March 2013, Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU) submitted an application to Round 4 of the Regional Growth Fund for TVSAP. Although the full application was not supported, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) awarded funding to an element of the programme. TVSAP was therefore announced in July 2013 with an allocation of £7million to create 700 jobs across the Tees Valley. However, there had been delays in TVU receiving the contract.

The TVU Managing Director commented that the Tees Valley Skills and Apprenticeship Programme (TVSAP) was on course to create the 700 apprenticeships before the £7m funding had been exhausted. TVU hoped that it could make sufficient case to government for the remaining funding to be used to create even more apprenticeships, potentially increasing the number to 1000. However, there was no guarantee that may happen and the government could clawback to uncommitted funds. Members indicated that they hoped that the government would allow the creation of even more apprentice opportunities through the TVSAP and the support of all political leaders in the Tees valley should be enlisted to that aim.

The Vice-Chair indicated that he was aware that some voluntary sector trading companies were classed as SME's but were being told that they were unable to access RGF funds. The TVU Managing Director commented that by definition under the RGF criteria the businesses supported could not be from the public sector. For voluntary sector trading companies to comply with the criteria, at least 50% of their trade had to be with the private sector. These criteria were set by the government and rather than complain, the voluntary sector trading companies needed to be encouraged to move towards meeting the rules that came with the money. If TVU could assist them to do this, then they would.

The Chair thanked the Managing Director of Tees valley Unlimited for attending the meeting and his valuable insight and comments.

#### **Decision**

That the report be noted.

### **127. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent**

No items.

The meeting concluded at 11.25 am.

**P J DEVLIN  
CHIEF SOLICITOR  
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