

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

19 MAY 2014

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

Present:

Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rob Cook, Peter Jackson, Robbie Payne and Chris Simmons.

Officers: Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive
Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive
Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor
Chris Little, Chief Finance Officer
Gill Alexander, Director of Child and Adult Services
Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration
Phillip Timmins, Principal Estates Surveyor
Mark Smith, Head of Youth Support Services
Alastair Rae, Public Relations Manager
Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team.

258. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Ray Martin-Wells, Keith Dawkins, Carl Richardson and Marjorie James.

259. Declarations of Interest

None at this point in the meeting.

Councillor Jackson declared a personal interest in Minute Number 264 “Disposal of Surplus Assets – Strategic Housing Land Allocation Assessment – Council Owned Sites” as the meeting reached that item on the agenda.

260. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 April, 2014

Confirmed.

261. Health and Wellbeing Board - Minutes of the meeting held on 25 April, 2014

Received.

262. Hartlepool Youth Justice Plan 2014/15 (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework item.

Purpose of report

To present and seek comments from the Finance and Policy Committee on the development of the annual Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2014-2015.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Head of Youth Support Services reported that the annual Youth Justice Plan should provide an overview of how the Youth Offending Service, the Youth Offending Service Strategic Management Board and wider partnership would ensure that the service had sufficient resources and infrastructure to deliver youth justice services in its area in line with the requirements of the National Standards for Youth Justice Services.

The planning framework to support the development of the 2014/2015 Youth Justice Strategic Plan had drawn upon the appraisal of the Youth Justice Boards Regional Partnership Manager, the local Youth Offending Service Strategic Management Board and the views and opinions of service users, staff and key partners.

Alongside this, the development of the plan had also incorporated recommendations from Children's Services Committee, the views of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Executive Group and the current scrutiny investigation into re-offending in Hartlepool. The plan also acknowledged the role of the Youth Offending Service in taking forward the priorities of the Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner.

Based upon the findings from the Strategic Assessment, it was proposed that the Youth Offending Service and broader Youth Justice Partnership focuses on the following key strategic objectives during 2014 - 15:

- Re-offending
- Early Intervention and Prevention
- Remand and Custody
- Restorative Justice
- Risk and Vulnerability
- Think Family
- Maintaining Standards
- Effective Governance.

Members again registered their disappointment at the withdrawal of the Youth Court from Hartlepool and its transfer to Teesside Magistrates Court in Middlesbrough. A copy of the letter sent in January on behalf of the Policy Committee Chairs raising the Council's concerns at the potential move of the Youth Court was circulated at the meeting. The contribution to the plan from Cleveland Police was also criticised as Members considered it more appropriate to focus on prevention.

Some of the statistical information in the document was discussed. The table at the top of page 19 of the draft document submitted to the meeting highlighted the small numbers of reoffending young people that accounted for a disproportionately high number of offences. Members questioned the numbers and ages of offenders and the Head of Youth Support Services indicated that once over 17 years, offending statistics were included in the adult statistics. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods commented that there was liaison between the Youth Offending Service and the Probation Service when offenders transferred from one to the other to look to a continuation of support to reduce reoffending.

It was also noted that the funding organisations for the Youth Justice Plan should refer to Public Health rather than the Clinical Commissioning Group.

Decision

That, subject to the minor amendment detailed above, the Youth Justice Plan for 2014 – 2015 be approved for submission to Council for adoption.

263 Declaration of Interest

Councillor Jackson declared a personal interest in the following item, Minute Number 264 "Disposal of Surplus Assets – Strategic Housing Land Allocation Assessment – Council Owned Sites".

264. Disposal of Surplus Assets – Strategic Housing Land Allocation Assessment – Council Owned Sites
(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)

Type of decision

Key Decision (test (i) and (ii)) Forward Plan Reference No. RN 13/09.

Purpose of report

To update the Committee on progress in relation to the Strategic Housing Land Allocation Assessment (SHLAA) process and to seek approval both to a revised list of Council owned sites being progressed to the next stages of the SHLAA evaluation process and approval for these sites to be made available for disposal.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Regeneration reported that following the decision by Council on 17th October 2013 to withdraw the submitted Local Plan, officers had commenced work on a new Local Plan and in particular the Strategic Housing Land Allocation Assessment (SHLAA) which was a key part of the evidence base that underpins a Local Plan. The SHLAA requires the LPA (Local Planning Authority) to demonstrate the availability of sufficient available land for residential development to satisfy the predicted demand for housing within the plan period of 15 years.

The Estates and Regeneration Manager, in conjunction with the Planning Policy officers, reviewed the whole Council estate and selected a number of sites which were considered appropriate to be included in the SHLAA process. These were reported to Committee on 31st January 2014 and approval was granted for the sites to be assessed through the next stages of the SHLAA evaluation process. All the Council owned sites that had been previously selected had now been given further consideration under the SHLAA process and there were a number of Council owned sites that did not comply with the key evaluation requirements of the SHLAA methodology and had been rejected as not being suitable. Appendices to the report set out those sites for inclusion in the final stages of the SHLAA process and those to be withdrawn.

Members expressed some concern that the land at Jackson's landing was included in the SHLAA. The Chair commented that he had raised the same question but had understood the rationale for inclusion. While the authority was looking to some dynamic redevelopment of the site, the option for housing, even when it was the least favourable option, had to be accounted for.

Decision

1. That approval be granted for the inclusion of sites identified in Appendix 1 to the report to be considered for the final stages of the Strategic Housing Land Allocation Assessment evaluation process and to accept the withdrawal of the sites set out in Appendix 2 to the report.
2. That the sites identified in Appendix 1 to the report would be made available for disposal during the first five years of the plan period. This would ensure that the sites were deliverable in the short term.

265. Workforce Strategy *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

Type of decision

Non-Key Decision.

Purpose of report

To seek approval from the Finance and Policy Committee to adopt and implement the draft Workforce Strategy 2014 – 2017.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Chief Executive highlighted to Members the extensive consultation process undertaken in the development of the Workforce Strategy which included –

- Strategic Development Group
- Departmental Management Teams
- Corporate Management Team
- Employee Wellbeing and Protection Strategic Group
- Single Table
- Local Joint Consultative Committee

Feedback received during the consultation process had been positive and minor changes had been made to the draft strategy at the request of the Trades Unions.

Decision

That the the adoption and implementation of the Workforce Strategy 2014 – 2017 be approved.

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

Type of decision

For information purposes only.

Purpose of report

To inform the Committee of the recent Minor Property Issues dealt with under Delegated Powers since the matters were last reported on 26th July 2013.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Regeneration reported that under Part 3 of the Constitution (Responsibility for Functions) the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods had delegated powers for a variety of transactions within a prescribed threshold which was currently £30,000 in capital value and £12,000 in rental value. The powers were to approve land and property disposals, leases, lettings, licences, wayleaves, easements, undertaking and concluding rent reviews, lease renewals and the release and amendments of restrictions, covenants and other land and property matters within the prescribed thresholds as approved by the Council. This enabled minor property transactions to be concluded efficiently and effectively.

The Assistant Director indicated that in the future the report on such transactions would be reported to this Committee quarterly. To date the delegation had been effective and a number of transactions had been progressed in accordance with delegated consent as summarised in Confidential Appendix 1 to the report. The appendix contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely paragraph 3, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

A Member commented that the Council had been very effective in releasing land at reduced or no cost for schemes that had community benefit; such as housing development by Housing Hartlepool. However, there were occasions when residents wished to buy small parcels of land adjacent to their own property to increase their garden or bring an unmanaged problem area into their control they were charged relatively high costs for these small pieces of land. The Assistant Director commented that the Council was obliged to obtain the best consideration for any land when selling it but understood the Member's comments and would discuss the issue further with the Member.

Decision

That the property issues dealt with under Delegated Powers as reported, be noted.

267. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

No items.

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

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

Minute 268 – Approval for Compulsory Redundancies – This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely (para 1) information relating to an individual.

269. Approval for Compulsory Redundancies *(Assistant Chief Executive)* This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely (para 1)

The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report seeking a decision regarding the future employment of employees who are affected by budget proposals under consideration for 2014/15. Employees in two departments of the Council were affected. Details are set out in the Exempt section of the minutes.

Decision

The decision is set out in the Exempt section of the minutes.

270. Chairman's Closing Comments

The Chair thanked the Policy Chairs, Members and the Corporate Management Team for their input to meetings during the year and their invaluable support to him in his role as Leader of the Council. The Chief Executive thanked the Chair for the comments and stated that the meetings

of the policy committees in particular had proven to be very productive during the year.

The meeting concluded at 10.00 am.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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