

REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

14 AUGUST 2014

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

Present:

Councillor Robbie Payne (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rob Cook, Kevin Cranney and Keith Dawkins.

Also Present: Councillor Jim Ainslie.

Officers: Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration
Alyson Carr, Head of Finance (Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)
Dale Clarke, Estates and Assets Manager
Mick Emerson, Principal Economic Development Officer (Business)
Maggie Heaps, Adult Education Coordinator
David Worthington, Head of Culture and Information
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

29. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Stephen Akers-Belcher and Dr George Morris.

30. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Cranney declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 39 “Economic Regeneration Quarterly Update Including Grant Outturn 2013/2014”.

31. Minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2014

The Vice-Chair indicated that the resolutions under Minute No. 28 in the exempt section of the minutes should include an additional recommendation “that consideration be given to including the refurbishment of the properties in a ‘Foyer Project’”.

Subject to the above addition the minutes were confirmed.

32. Strategic Financial Management Report – as at 30 June 2014 (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods, Director of Public Health and Chief Finance Officer*)

Type of decision

For Information.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to inform Members of the 2014/15 Forecast General Fund Outturn, 2014/15 Capital Programme Monitoring and provide details for the specific budget areas that the Committee is responsible for.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Head of Finance (Regeneration and Neighbourhoods) outlined the main aspects of the first quarterly strategic financial management report for the Committee. A revised Appendix A to the report was circulated at the meeting. The Head of Finance indicated that at this time there was a projected underspend for the Committee and details were set out within the report. It was proposed that two specific reserves would be created utilising the projected favourable variance relating to Social Housing and CCTV Relocation. Details of the Committee's Capital Budget were also reported.

The Chair sought clarification in relation to the relocation of the CCTV service and the Head of Finance indicated that a report on the relocation of the control centre would be considered by the Finance and Policy Committee in September. The Assistant Director, Regeneration added that discussions on the relocation with partners were still ongoing.

Decision

That the report be noted.

33. Quarterly Estates and Regeneration Report April – June 2014 (*Assistant Director, Regeneration*)

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

To update the Committee on progress across key areas of the Estates and Regeneration Section relating to capital receipts and property management together with progress in relation to the masterplan, other regeneration initiatives and capital investment and funding bids. In addition endorsement was also sought to a proposed approach to dealing with the increasing pressures of lower priority workloads.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Estates and Assets Manager updated the Committee on progress across the key areas of the service including Development and

Regeneration, Capital Receipts, Acquisitions, Non-Operational Property, Operational Property, Statutory Valuations and Capital Investments. The Estates and Assets Manager highlighted that in relation to the Council's Empty Homes programme the target of acquiring 100 homes had now been reached.

The Estates and Assets Manager outlined the proposal in relation to the service's other workload that would see, until the end of the financial year, requests for the acquisition of small areas of land not being processed where the income was unlikely to exceed £5000. The service was facing an increasing pressure on resources due to the recent volume of applications to acquire small areas of Council owned land for garden extensions. These applications had a tendency to be extremely time consuming and the fees/capital receipt collected did not represent a particularly high value for money in terms of the use of officer time.

The proposal would require staff to inform members of the public seeking to acquire land that it may not be possible to undertake the work to process a garden extension until the next financial year in order that expectations were not raised. Members were concerned that while individually these applications may not represent a significant amount of money, they could in total be considered a valuable income source. The Estates and Assets Manager stated that even taken together they did not represent a significant income source.

It was suggested that this area may provide a potential opportunity for a trainee/apprentice though the impact of existing officers having to provide the training was acknowledged. The Assistant Director indicated that the suggestion would be explored further by officers. The Chair requested that a report be submitted to the next meeting setting out the numbers and estimated values of the applications being received for the purchase of small parcels of land for garden extensions. The Chair was concerned that often residents sought to purchase additional pieces of land to alleviate localised anti-social behaviour problems.

Members queried the attendance at the public consultation events for the masterplan and how the proposals had been received. The Estates and Assets Manager indicated that the first event had been a consultation exercise in the shopping centre and the general feedback had been positive and reinforced officers' identification of the key issues. The Business Consultation event at the Historic Quay had attracted over seventy local business representatives and had also produced some excellent feedback. Officers were very happy with the result of the two events.

Members questioned the present position in relation to the Morison Memorial Hall and the Carr / Hopps Streets Regeneration. The Assistant Director indicated that in relation to the Morison Memorial Hall scheme the Council was working with the NDC to progress the scheme and it was anticipated that works would start in the near future. In relation to the Carr Hopps Streets Regeneration, the Committee was informed that there were

still negotiations ongoing with the remaining property owners. The use of Compulsory Purchase Orders was not available to the Council in this instance. Enough properties had been purchased to progress some initial demolition works.

Decision

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the current workload pressures within the section are acknowledged and the proposal to suspend progressing approaches for minor land sales where the capital receipt would not exceed £5,000 be approved for the remainder of the current financial year or until spare capacity became available.
3. That the suggestion for the creation of an apprenticeship within the Estates and Regeneration Section be examined and a report on the viability of such a post be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.
4. That a report be submitted to the next meeting setting out the numbers and values of request for the purchase of small parcels of land for garden extensions currently outstanding.

34. Permission to Apply for Auerbach Drawing *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to seek Members permission to apply to the Arts Council for the donation of the Frank Auerbach drawing 'Study for Shell Building Site', 1958, pencil on paper.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Head of Culture and Information reported that the Museum Service already held the end product of this work and would like to obtain the drawing to display it alongside the finished painting. The Arts Council put out a call to Accredited Museums as it was seeking to permanently allocate a collection of paintings and drawing by Frank Auerbach worth £16.2m to public museums and galleries across the UK. The collection had been given to the nation through the Acceptance in Lieu (AIL) scheme by the estate of Lucian Freud, who died in 2011, and who is also represented in the Hartlepool collection.

Decision

That officers be authorised to apply to the Arts Council for the donation of the Frank Auerbach drawing 'Study for Shell Building Site', 1958, pencil on paper.

35. Quarterly Building Control Report January – March 2014 *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

For Information Only.

Purpose of report

To update the Regeneration Services Committee regarding the key areas of the Building Control Service including the fee earning and statutory enforcement activity, during the final quarter of 2013/14 and a brief overall performance over the year 2013/14.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Assistant Director, Regeneration updated the Committee on the performance of the Building Control Service during the final quarter of 2013/14 and a brief overall performance over the year 2013/14. The Assistant Director highlighted that the market share for the final quarter had reduced to 80% but the overall figure for the year was still a healthy 86% which remained well above the current national average of around 60%. Feedback from service users was also excellent.

There was some concern expressed at the high profile local schemes that had not chosen to utilise the Council's service and had chosen other private sector providers. Members questioned if this was due to costs and if so, could the service look at its charges. The Assistant Director indicated that reviewing charges would be difficult due to government guidance on how the authority could calculate its costs. The service did, however, provided a very high quality service meeting all industry standards and best practice.

Decision

That the report be noted.

36. Culture and Information Services Quarterly Report April – June 2014 *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

For information only.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to inform and update members on the work of the Culture and Information Services for the period 1st April – 30th June 2014.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Head of Culture and Information highlighted the services achievements and visitor numbers, where appropriate, during the quarter relating to Libraries, Digital Inclusion, Enquiries, Community Centres, Arts and Outreach, Exhibitions, Hartlepool Maritime Experience and the First World

War Project.

Members queried the WW1 event being held at the Hartlepool College of Further Education. The Head of Culture and Information indicated that this was not an event being supported by the Museum Service or the WW1 Project. The meeting discussed the events around the centenary of the bombardment of the Headland. Members expressed some concerns around the level of armed forces involvement that was being proposed in some quarters for what was largely a civilian commemoration. The Assistant Director, Regeneration indicated that a programme for the event had been finalised; the only question remained around the armed forces involvement. The Assistant Director indicated that he would contact the appropriate forces directly to finalise arrangements. The Chair requested a report setting out the programme for the commemoration event be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

Decision

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee detailing the event to commemorate the Hartlepool Bombardment in 1914.

37. Additional Funding for Maths Graduates (*Assistant Director, Regeneration*)

Type of decision

For information only.

Purpose of report

To inform the Committee of additional funding from the National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) to recruit a Maths graduate to increase the take up of Maths amongst adults.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Adult Education Coordinator reported that NIACE had recently launched a funding opportunity to established partnerships to apply for up to £20,000 to support the recruitment of a Maths graduate. The aim of the funding is to increase the number of qualified maths teachers in the Further Education sector and thus increase the take up of Adults wishing to gain a qualification in Maths.

Hartlepool Adult Education has been a member of a very successful Peer Review and Development (PRD) group for some time along with similar services in Redcar and Cleveland and Darlington. The PRD group was eligible to apply for this funding opportunity. Redcar Adult Learning service offered to apply for the funding and included Hartlepool and Darlington as partners in their application. The application had been successful and each Adult Learning service was awarded £20,000 to support the employment of the graduate.

Decision

That the report be noted and welcomed.

38. Quarterly Update Report for Planning Services April – June 2014 *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

For information only.

Purpose of report

To update the Committee on performance and progress across the key areas of Planning Services for the first quarter of 2014.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Assistant Director, Regeneration reported on performance across the four service teams - Development Control, Planning Policy, Landscape Planning and Conservation and Tees Archaeology – and in particular highlighted the income generated through the services provided.

The Assistant Director reported that the new Planning Services Manager had reviewed the timetable for the delivery of the new Local Plan following his recent appointment. It was considered that some of the timescales for the delivery of information were optimistic and the Planning Services Manager considered it was prudent to alert Members to the potential for the delivery date to slip by up to eight weeks should those timescales prove to have been underestimated.

Members wished to record their appreciation of the services provided to the public and businesses through the Planning One Stop Shop service. As well as generating vital income the service was a very user friendly public service. Members also wished their appreciation of the 100% delivery of major planning application approvals within the government set timescales to be passed on to staff.

Decision

That the report be noted and that Members comments forwarded to the Planning Services Teams.

In accordance with the declaration recorded at Minute 30, Councillor Cranney left the meeting at this point.

39. Economic Regeneration Quarterly Update Including Grant Outturn 2013/2014 *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

For information only.

Purpose of report

To update Members on the work of the Economic Regeneration Team (ERT). The report also provided details the grant outturn for 2013/2014.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Principal Economic Development Officer updated the Committee on the work undertaken by the Economic Regeneration Team highlighting the key activities in Business Support, the Hartlepool Enterprise Hub, Partnership Working, the Leapfrog self employment training programme, Grant Support, the Creative Industries Quarter and Tourism. An update on the schemes delivered through Hartlepool Working Solutions were also included in the report which included Hartlepool Youth Investment Project, the Youth Engagement and Support Project and the Tees Valley Workforce Skills Project.

The Officer referred to the grant allocations which were included in an exempt appendix to the report as the appendix contained exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely 3, Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It was indicated to members that through the grants awarded, the cost per new job in Hartlepool was around £1400 which was outstanding when compared to other job creation programmes.

The Principal Economic Development Officer also highlighted the work in improving employment opportunities for young people. Around a third of the grants awarded under the Enterprise Fund had gone to people 25 years or younger. The recently announced unemployment figures showed that unemployment in the town had fallen to 5% with youth unemployment down to 9%.

In response to Member questions, the Principal Economic Development Officer indicated that the grants schemes were not marketed in isolation; the advice and guidance services were the principle work of the Team with grants coming after those services had been provided.

Members welcomed the numbers that had been attracted to the Golf Week and questioned if any calculation of the financial benefit of the event had been made. The Assistant Director indicated that no specific measure had been made from this year's event but the collection of that data could be built into future events. Members also referred to some recent press reports relating to the Carnival and the requirement that those operating

floats in the carnival parade having to have public liability insurance. The numbers attending the carnival had however been reported as higher than recent years.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report and asked that the Committee's thanks for the excellent work undertaken within the team be shared with staff.

Decision

That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 10.50 am.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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