

REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

18 SEPTEMBER 2014

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

Present:

Councillor Robbie Payne (In the Chair)

Councillors: Stephen Akers-Belcher, Rob Cook, Kevin Cranney and Keith Dawkins.

Also Present: Councillors Jim Ainslie and Allan Barclay.

Stephen Catchpole, Tees Valley Unlimited

Officers: Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive
Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health
Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Antony Steinberg, Economic Regeneration Manager
Sarah Scarr, Landscape Planning and Conservation Manager
Maggie Heaps, Adult Education Coordinator
David Worthington, Head of Culture and Information
Joanne Burnley, Principal Environmental Health Officer
Laura Stones, Scrutiny Support Officer
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

40. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Dr George Morris.

41. Declarations of Interest

None.

42. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 August, 2014

Received.

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

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Committee gave consideration to the exclusion of press and public from the meeting for

the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The meeting considered that the update to be provided by the Managing Director of Tees Valley Unlimited could be considered in open session.

44. TVU Management Report (*TVU Managing Director*)

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To update the Committee of the work undertaken regarding the current position of the Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU) Business plan.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The TVU's Managing Director, Stephen Catchpole, was present at the meeting and had circulated a copy of the July 2014 TVU Management update which set out the progress made in respect of key elements of TVU's Business Plan and highlighted future activities/issues. A copy of the August Update was circulated to Members at the meeting.

The Managing Director of the TVU updated the Committee on –

The future of the Northern and Transpennine Express Rail Franchises. TVU had submitted a consultation response in August which provided the opportunity to cover some key rail issues/priorities, including: -

- The retention of Transpennine as a strategic, long distance rail service;
- The retention of direct Transpennine links between Middlesbrough and Manchester Airport and Darlington and Manchester Airport and improvement in service levels/timetables;
- The protection of the East Coast mainline services;
- The upgrading of Darlington Rail Station;
- The electrification of the Northallerton to Middlesbrough/Teesport section as soon as possible;
- The replacement of local rolling stock within the Northern franchise as a matter of urgency;
- The provision of revised timetables.

The Local Growth Fund – it was anticipated the funding agreements would be in place in the early part of 2015. TVU is working on the Growth Deal Implementation plan which must be agreed with Government.

The European Structural and Investment Fund Strategy (ESIFS).

Jobs and Skills Investment Scheme: -

- 157 jobs had been created and 12 safeguarded
- The initial target of creating 700 jobs had been exceeded with over £1.2m of the initial budget for the scheme of £6.45m remaining.
- It was hoped the total number of new jobs achieved could exceed 900 by the end of the scheme.

The potential outcome of the Scottish Independence Referendum and how the North East would have to reposition itself whichever result came forward.

Members sought clarification on the numbers of jobs created through the Jobs and Investment Scheme and the jobs safeguarded. The TVU Managing Director stated that the jobs had been created across all sectors across the Tees Valley. The safeguarded jobs were the result of investment which created new jobs and safeguarded 12 existing jobs within the Tees Valley. Most applications were purely for new jobs but there were a few applications where investment had allowed local expansion rather than the move of jobs elsewhere. In Hartlepool 87 new jobs had been created with a further 97 in the pipeline. In terms of numbers of new jobs, Hartlepool was second among the Tees Valley authorities in terms of numbers.

On the recent unemployment numbers the TVU Managing Director commented that the figures were often difficult to use for comparison purposes due to the differing means by which they were calculated. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that the unemployment figures for Hartlepool had shown an improvement over recent months and the youth unemployment figures were encouraging; down to 8.2% from 17% in September 2012. Much of this work was down to the investment from TVU and the excellent work of the Economic Development Team at the Council. There did need, however, to be effort put into ensuring the gap between Hartlepool and the rest of the country was also closing in terms of numbers unemployed.

Members questioned if youth employment and apprenticeships was part of the agenda in job creation for the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The TVU Managing Director stated that youth employment was a particular focus but improving skill levels in general was a priority as getting young people into apprenticeships in itself would not fill the skills gap; there still needed to be great efforts made into up-skilling the existing workforce. Understandably, many sectors had shed staff and training during the recession quite quickly – construction and transport were two particular areas. As the economy picked up there would be skills shortages in these areas – the building sector was already highlighting this. Getting young people into apprenticeships in those sectors would help in the longer term but there were issues that needed to be tackled now.

Members commented that they had heard the Government was considering the amalgamation of LEPs around the Country. The TVU Managing Director indicated that this was not something he was aware of. There was talk among political parties of a potential minimum size for LEP areas which the Tees Valley LEP disagreed with. It was considered that the Tees Valley LEP was the right size and responsive to the needs of the Tees Valley.

The Chair thanked the Managing Director of Tees Valley Unlimited for his update report and responses to Members questions.

Decision

That the TVU Management Update report be noted.

45. Shop Front Design Guidance *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework.

Purpose of report

The report provided details of the response to the public consultation on the Draft Shop Front Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Landscape Planning and Conservation Manager reported on the response to the public consultation on the Draft Shop Front Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document which, if adopted, would eventually form part of the Hartlepool Local Plan. The Shop Front Guidance Supplementary Planning Document was intended to encourage good design within retail areas of Hartlepool. It was not intended as an undue burden on development but was technical guidance that would be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Compliance with its contents would ensure that retail areas were vibrant and pleasant to visit.

A copy of the Consultation Statement outlining the approach to the consultation and the response received were set out in Appendix 1 of the report. The consultation was particularly targeted at individuals who were owners of commercial buildings in Hartlepool and those who provided guidance to owners and, or, comment on planning applications for commercial properties.

The draft document was presented to the Conservation Area Advisory Committee on the 26th February, where the guidance was welcomed. Despite the circulation of the document to the Economic Forum and individuals who had an involvement with commercial properties in Hartlepool there were no responses from anyone with a direct involvement in commercial properties.

The document had been through a lengthy development process prior to being taken out to public consultation and it was considered that the final draft document represented wide ranging guidance on commercial property. It was considered that there was ample opportunity for all interested parties to comment on the guidance as part of the consultation process and, therefore, the guidance was proposed for adoption by Council.

Members sought assurance that the guidance was not imposing an increased level of regulation on the retail sector which was still struggling in Hartlepool. The Landscape Planning and Conservation Manager stated that the Supplementary Planning Document provided advice and guidance and would be used in the planning process. The aim was to provide attractive shopping areas not just for shoppers but businesses. There was no intention to introduce undue regulation.

Decision

That officers be authorised to make any necessary final amendments to the Draft Shop Front Design Guidance Supplementary Planning document and submit the revised documents to Council in October for adoption.

46. Sport and Recreation Service Options Appraisal Review *(Director of Public Health)*

Type of decision

Key Decision (test (i)/(ii)) Forward Plan Reference No. PH05/14.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to identify proposals for the delivery of savings in respect of one of the Public Health core revenue grant funded services, Sport and Recreation. This was part of the 2015/16 budget process.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Director of Public Health reported that a report had previously been presented to Regeneration Services Committee on 24 July 2014 concerning savings proposals for the two core Council revenue funded services in Public Health – Sport and Recreation and Public Protection. This supplementary report focused solely, however, on the options for savings concerning the Sport and Recreation services.

The services within Sport and Recreation were non-statutory but were key contributors to the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities concerning Public Health and the improvement of health inequalities across the Borough. In this respect, the contribution and impact of these services had already been clearly recognised by the Council with the transfer of Sport and Recreation to the newly formed Public Health Department back in January 2014.

The Sport and Recreation service budgets for 2014/15 are as follows:-

	£
Gross Budget	2.914m
Income Target	1.545m
Overall net budget (and cost to HBC)	1.369m

These figures include all centralised premises costs.

The Director stated that the savings target for Sport and Recreation for 2015/16 was £150,000. In addition to this, a further £37,500 of additional income needed to be achieved to allow for the 2.5% inflation uplift of income targets that is applied each year corporately. As a result, the report considers a strategy for achieving an overall savings target of £187,500. In addition, savings may need to be made to offset any income shortfall that there has been historically with the Borough Hall if the situation could not be improved during the current financial year.

Officers had considered two alternatives to achieve the savings required, the first being to look at different management options available to the Council as an alternative to “in-house” delivery and identify the potential benefits and savings that could be made.

The second option considered had been to assess whether the savings for 2015/16 could be achieved with the continuation of the existing in-house provision purely through internal improvements to service delivery resulting in additional income generation.

The report set out detailed consideration of the two savings options, which were –

Option A – consider alternative management arrangements for the delivery of sport and recreation services to achieve savings.

Option B – achieve savings through additional income generation by the existing in-house team.

In summary, the financial implications of Option A which was to commission an alternative delivery partner for the services were as follows:-

- Savings forecast of between £114k and £194k (net cost of client and retained functions) compared to savings target for 2015/16 of £187.5k.
- It is unlikely that this can be achieved in full during 2015/16 due to procurement timescales which are estimated to take a minimum of 12 months.
- The cost of procurement is estimated to be in the region of £100k as a one-off payment.
- All income risk would be transferred to the new delivery partner

The financial implications of Option B which was to continue with the

Council delivery of services and achieve savings through increased income generation were as follows:-

- It is anticipated that the savings target of £187.5k can be achieved by increasing income.
- The Council will have more control over the delivery of the increased income which it is anticipated can be achieved for 2015/16.
- Financial risk regarding income generation remains with the Council.

Under Option A, the vast majority of staff involved in the delivery of services would be transferred to a new management partner provider under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) with terms and conditions of service and pension protected. Some staff would, however, be retained within the Council's employ to provide the client function as well as a strategic component of the Public Health Department. Under Option B however, all staff would remain within the Council's employment.

The Director stated that Officers had examined two options available to the Council to achieve a savings target of £187,500 with the Sport and Recreation service area for the financial year 2015/16. The assessment was that the service should continue to be delivered by the Council as there appeared to be no justifiable reason to consider alternatives at this present time.

Members welcomed the proposal particularly as the services and jobs would be retained within the Authority.

Decision

1. That the adoption of Option B be approved; that is to continue with the existing in-house Council delivery of Sport and Recreation services.
2. That an appropriate response on the savings to be achieved be presented to Finance and Policy Committee.

47. Fuel Poverty and Energy Switching *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Key Decision test (i) Forward Plan Reference No. RN 29/14.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to approve the promotion of a second energy switching scheme to help Hartlepool residents reduce their fuel bills.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods reported that the official definition of fuel poverty was the Low Income High Cost (LIHC) Indicator which classed a household as being in fuel poverty if its energy costs were

above the average (median) for its household type and this expenditure pushed it below the poverty line. In 2012, this meant that 12% of households in the North East region were in fuel poverty.

The Council had been able, through a number of measures, to influence the impact of fuel poverty of Hartlepool residents and energy efficiency of homes. These have included -

- Health funding
- Home Plus Grants and Regional Loans
- Warm up North
- Collective Energy Switching (first scheme)

The Collective Energy Switching involved 1504 households who registered an interest with around 400 completing the process. Whilst this take up was considered good in terms of the size of the Hartlepool population, it was lower than hoped. It was likely that the low take up was due to the way the offer was structured, i.e. it was based on a loyalty rebate of up to £210 at the end of the scheme rather than a reduction in fuel bill over the course of the scheme.

Subsequent to this scheme, Ichoosr (the company the Council had engaged with to run the scheme) had stated that this offer would no longer be acceptable and that any future schemes would need to be based on an energy unit cost reduction.

The Director indicated that it was now proposed that work was undertaken to promote a second energy switching scheme which would include borough-wide publicity through the Council's website and intranet, the use of social media, Hartbeat, local press and radio. It was proposed that officers undertake this work to promote the winter auction which will launch on 2 December 2014 and close on 16 March 2015.

In response to Member questions, the Director indicated that households would still need to sign up themselves to the scheme through the internet. If people were tied into other agreements they may not be able to switch. It was intended to provide as much support as possible to support residents sign up to the scheme. Members indicated that utilising local centres and groups that could provide support, advice and internet access for those that did not have it should be a key element of the process to ensure as many as possible could benefit. The Director indicated that she would take Members comments on board. It was intended that this scheme would operate across the North East and many other councils would have similar concerns.

Decision

That the proposal to promote a second collective energy switching be approved and that details of the proposal be reported back to the Committee once the details had been finalised.

48. Proposed Introduction of Tourist Bus Service between Seaton Carew, the Historic Quay, the Marina and the Heugh Gun Battery (*Assistant Director, Regeneration*)

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to seek approval for the introduction of a 'tourist bus' route and service running between Seaton Carew, the Historic Quay, the Marina and the Heugh Gun Battery on a trial basis.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods reported that as part of the Hartlepool Master Plan process, GVA, the consultants appointed to develop the Master Plan, had investigated the connectivity around the town in general, but also the linkages between key visitor attractions spread across a wider area. The town had some key visitor attractions which attract tourists, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool Maritime Experience, the Marina and the Historic Headland which featured St Hilda's Visitor Centre and the Heugh Gun Battery. For people visiting one of these attractions as part of a day visit or a longer stay in the area, the perceived lack of connectivity between these visitor attractions could impact on visitor experience by discouraging them from seeing all that Hartlepool had to offer.

An opportunity existed to address this through the proposed provision of a 'tourist bus' link between key visitor attractions across the town utilizing the Council's yellow school buses which do not operate during the school holiday period and thus represented spare capacity. It was proposed that the Council operated a 'tourist bus' service four times a day return journey from Seaton Carew to the Heugh Gun Battery on the Headland via the Historic Quay and the Marina, initially on a trial basis.

Possible dates for the introduction and operation of the proposed service were 30th March 2015 to 10th April 2015 to cover the Easter school holidays (excluding Good Friday and Easter Monday) and 21st July 2015 to 30th August 2015 to cover the Summer school holidays. The proposed route would need to be registered with the Traffic Commissioner at least 56 days prior to the commencement of the service (28th January 2015).

The proposed introduction of the 'tourist bus' route and service would need to be marketed by the Council, along with potential private and public sector partners, for example, the National Museum of the Royal Navy, the Heugh Gun Battery and businesses located on the Marina and along the sea front at Seaton Care.

The total estimated cost for the service on a trial basis to cover the period

referred to above was £5,920. The Director stressed that the proposal was not without risk, particularly if there were strong objections from the bus companies to the Traffic Commissioner. There was a risk it could be used by residents to get free travel but it could also be used by young people or families with children to access the visitor attractions of the town during the holidays.

Members indicated their support for the proposal and considered that the publicity around the service would be key to its success if it was introduced. Providing a visitor guide showing the key attractions should also be considered around the service.

Decision

That the proposed introduction of a 'tourist bus' on a trial basis as reported be approved, subject to a further report to the Committee outlining: -

- (i) the final funding package
- (ii) the proposed marketing programme, and
- (iii) the results of the consultation with the Traffic Commissioner once notice has been sent to register the proposed service.

49. Living Wage (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

To update Members on impact of a Hartlepool Living Wage on Commission Arrangements and to seek Members views regarding the formation of a consortium, including representatives of the business sector in the town, to consider how to work together to ensure that everyone in Hartlepool receives a Living Wage.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods reported that at full Council on 6th June 2013 Members endorsed the Council's approach to the "Living Wage". The Finance and Policy Committee on 23rd August 2013 considered the options for a Living Wage further and at Council meeting on 5th September 2013, Members approved the funding arrangements for the implementation of a Living Wage of £7.26. At that meeting Members spoke in support of applying a Living Wage both through the Council and to organisations external to the Council. As such an addendum was moved and supported unanimously

"That a consortium be formed, lead by this Council, including representatives of the business sector in the town to consider how to work together to ensure that everyone in Hartlepool receives a living wage."

It was proposed that the formation of a consortium be referred to the

Regeneration Services Committee.

A further report was received by Finance and Policy Committee on the 18th October 2013 advising on the impact of a Hartlepool Living Wage on commissioning arrangements. Encouragement of suppliers, as supported by the Council, was recognised by the Living Wage Foundation as the most practical approach to Living Wage adoption and one which, through their efforts, was recognised UK wide as the way the aims of the initiative would ultimately be met. Members approved an 'encouragement' approach to addressing the Living Wage in its commissioning arrangements through supply chains and to encourage, particularly, other Hartlepool employers to pay our 'Hartlepool Living Wage' to their employees. The Council's Contract Procedure Rules were amended accordingly.

Prior to setting up any consortium information needed to be gleaned as to whether or not there was an appetite from the business community for the introduction of a Hartlepool Living Wage. The research undertaken since December 2013 showed that the number of businesses that had adopted the Living Wage (as defined by the Living Wage Foundation) was 77.8%. 60.8% had a policy in place to pay all employees a minimum Living Wage of £7.26 per hour and two thirds of the 22% that did not pay a Living Wage had confirmed they would consider paying all their employees a minimum Living Wage in the next twelve months, demonstrating the principle of a Living Wage was widely accepted.

The Director proposed that rather than establish a new group to continue the promotion of the living wage, a report would be submitted to the Economic Forum seeking the views and comments of the business community regarding this issue which will in turn be fed back to the Committee.

Members supported the proposal and considered the Economic Forum the most appropriate group as it involved sectors of the local business community. A Member did express a concern in relation to the potential for unscrupulous employers to exploit apprenticeships and those returning to work as a means of avoiding paying the living wage.

Decision

That report be submitted to the Economic Forum regarding the setting up of a Consortium and which business sectors are invited to consider how to work together to ensure that everyone in Hartlepool receives a Living Wage.

50. Events to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Bombardment of Hartlepoons 16th December 2014 (*Assistant Director, Regeneration*)

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to advise Members on the proposals for events to mark the 100th anniversary of the Bombardment of the Hartlepoons on 16th December 2014. Members were also requested to determine on exact format of the day from the options listed.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Head of Culture and Information reported that on the 16th December 1914 the Hartlepoons were attacked by the German Navy, at least 114 civilians, 9 soldiers and 7 sailors were killed, with 500 others being seriously wounded. Contemporaries truthfully stated that no local family was untouched by the events of that day. This was the first point of the British mainland to be attacked in the First World War along with the towns of Scarborough and Whitby. This was singularly the most momentous day in the history of the town and a series of events were planned to mark this somber occasion.

At the meeting of the Committee on 14th August 2014 concerns were expressed about the military nature of part of the event. The Mayor had also received communication expressing safety concerns regarding the large numbers of serving and former military personnel parading around the Headland on this day.

A series of options were therefore put to the Committee as alternative arrangements for the day.

Option 1 – to abandon the military element involving parades and begin the Hartlepool Borough Council event at 12.00 pm with the Lord Lieutenant unveiling the new memorial and the laying of 130 ceramic poppies and wooden crosses bearing the names of the 130 people who died. The military role would be to invite a representative from the four services that lost personnel – Durham Light Infantry; Royal Artillery; Royal Navy and the Royal Engineers – to present their service badges that are to be incorporated in the memorial. It is further suggested that the other emergency services representatives are to be involved on the day.

Option 2 – to have a reduced military parade only involving the four services who lost personnel in the action of 16th December 1914.

Option 3 – to undertake a full military parade as per the original programme.

At the meeting, the Head of Culture and Information indicated that a fourth option which would extend option 1. The Heugh Gun Battery had indicated that following the service at the Battery which commences at 8.00am, the Battery would be open, free of charge until the unveiling ceremony began at 12.00 noon.

It was also reported at the meeting that a letter had been received by the Chair from Mr T Wilson, the letter was shared with all Members of the Committee and the main points were read to the Committee by the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods. Members expressed their concern at some of the views expressed by Mr Wilson in relation to Council Officers. It was, however, proposed that the four armed forces – Durham Light Infantry; Royal Artillery; Royal Navy and the Royal Engineers – that were to be invited to send representatives as part of Option 1 should be asked if they wished to have a greater involvement in the day's events, potentially involving a march past of the new monument. This should be done as quickly as possible with an emphasis that the Council wished to finalise the event arrangements within the next few weeks. The Chief Executive indicated his support for the proposal. It was also proposed that a formal response to Mr Wilson's letter be sent on behalf of the Committee.

Members indicated that subject to the response from the armed forces, they had a preference for Option 1 together with the fourth option identified at the meeting. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods reported that it had been very recently proposed that a time capsule be interred at the same time as the new monument was constructed. Members supported this proposal and requested that children from the two local schools be involved in the process of deciding what items should go into the time capsule.

Decision

1. That the Committee's preferred options for the events to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Bombardment of the Hartlepoons on 16th December 2014 be based on Option 1 together with the offer from the Heugh Gun Battery (Option 4) to open the museum and displays to the public and invited guests.
2. That Durham Light Infantry; Royal Artillery; Royal Navy and the Royal Engineers be asked to indicate if they would wish to have a greater involvement in the commemoration events through the holding a march past of the new memorial.
3. That a formal response be sent to Mr Wilson's letter to the Committee.

51. Youth Engagement Fund *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

No key decision.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to inform members of a funding application which would be submitted by Tees Valley Unlimited on behalf of the five local authorities for the Government's Youth Engagement Fund.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Economic Regeneration Manager reported that on 30 April 2014, the Deputy Prime Minister announced a package of measures to help address youth unemployment and homelessness. These included a new Youth Engagement Fund of over £16 million over three years which would be delivered on a payment by results basis. The funding would be provided through social impact bonds (SIBs) with investors funding innovative initiatives to prevent young people from becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training). Government would only pay if the initiatives were successful and lead to positive outcomes. The Youth Engagement Fund was officially announced on Monday 14th July 2014 and was jointly funded by the Cabinet Office, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Ministry of Justice.

If the bid was successful, the proposed project would be led by Tees Valley Unlimited in partnership with the five local authorities who would commission specialist providers from the public, private and third sectors to employ dedicated Transition Education Mentors who would work within a multi-disciplinary team framework. They would provide intensive bespoke support packages to those young people who had already been identified, through local intelligence, as being the most disadvantaged in society and who were or at risk of becoming NEET.

The Economic Regeneration Manager reported that Tees Valley Unlimited was proposing a project value of £4,500,000 for a three year period. This funding amount would include social investment and local contributions. The deadline for the first stage application had been 18th August 2014 with Tees Valley Unlimited successfully submitting an application on behalf of the five local authorities. The successful shortlisted bidders who were being invited to the next stage would be informed in the autumn with final contract awards being made in early 2015.

Decision

That the report be noted and that a further report be submitted to the Committee if the first round bid was to progress to the second round.

52. Quarterly Report – Adult Education (*Assistant Director, Regeneration*)

Type of decision

For information only.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report is to update Members about the work of the Adult Education service.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Adult Education Coordinator updated the Committee on the activities of the Adult Education service from the beginning of the academic year 2013-2014 until the end of July 2014. This incorporated the first quarterly report as well as the annual report for the academic year 2013-2014. The report detailed the key activities and achievements of the Adult Education service in providing skills training and education to 3356 learners during the year and creating income of £3,050,329.

Members welcomed the report and congratulated all involved in the service for their excellent work over the year. Members asked if there had been any adverse affects on numbers following the implementation of the recently approved increase in fees and charges. The Adult Education Coordinator commented that course recruitment had only recently commenced but there had been no complaints received to date.

Decision

That the report be noted.

53. Borough Hall – Update (*Director of Public Health*)

Type of decision

For information only.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to update Members on the work in progress to improve upon the operation of the Borough Hall and Buildings. The report gave some contextual detail, an update on the work currently in progress to develop the facility as well as usage detail. It also highlighted some issues where there was work to be done and how Officers intended to address these.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Director of Public Health reported that subsequent to the report submitted to the Committee in March 2014, a number of key changes had been made to the management of the Borough Hall. Issues such as the consistency in fees and charges had been addressed and the management

of the Hall was integrated with the management of the Sports Hall. There had been retraining of staff undertaken and all staff now had new uniforms. The venue was now being more appropriately marketed and an appendix to the report showed the level and variety of bookings and events that were to be held at the Hall over the coming months.

Members asked if there had been any progress on the potential of any refurbishment of the Borough Hall involving the Heritage Skills Apprenticeships scheme agreed by the Committee. The Director confirmed that this had been discussed by officers for inclusion in any potential capital improvements to the fabric of the building.

Decision

That the report be noted.

54. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

The meeting concluded at 10.50 am.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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