

# **FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

23 February 2015

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

**Present:**

Councillor: Christopher Akers-Belcher (In the Chair)

Councillors: Allan Barclay, Keith Dawkins, Tom Hind, Marjorie James,  
Robbie Payne, Carl Richardson and Chris Simmons.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2 (ii), Councillor George Morris was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Brenda Loynes.

Officers: Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive  
Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor  
Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health  
John Morton, Assistant Chief Finance Officer  
Carole Johnson, Head of Health Improvement  
Catherine Grimwood, Partnerships and Performance Manager  
Alastair Rae, Public Relations Manager  
Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager  
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

### **123. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Brenda Loynes and David Riddle.

### **124. Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **125. Minutes**

- (i) Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee held on 30 January 2015 – Received.
- (ii) Minutes of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership held on 12 September and 21 November 2014 – Received.

**126. Community Safety Plan 2014-17 (Year 2)** *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

**Type of decision**

Budget and Policy Framework

**Purpose of report**

To consider the Community Safety Plan 2014-17 (Year 2).

To consider referral to Council for adoption of the Community Safety Plan (Year 2).

**Issue(s) for consideration**

The Safer Hartlepool Partnership produced a Community Safety Plan in line with the statutory duty placed on the Local Authority by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The current Plan, attached at Appendix A, was published in 2014 and outlined the strategic objectives of the Partnership for a three year period. Year 2 of the Plan provided an overview of progress made by the Partnership during 2014/15 with an update on end of year performance. In addition, the Plan incorporated performance indicators for 2015/16 along with a proposed delivery structure to progress the 2015/16 priorities.

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods informed Members that there had been numerous meetings with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Assistant Chief Constable to highlight the concerns previously expressed by this Committee in relation to the withdrawal of police resources in Hartlepool and these representations continue to be made. This issue was discussed further with Members highlighting that crime was not being reported for the fear of reprisals and the fact that residents were losing faith in the Police as they were not seen as a regular presence on the estates. There were concerns that all the hard work undertaken to embed community policing in local neighbourhoods was in danger of being lost.

A Member suggested that the actual number of unemployed young people aged 18-24 be included within the 'Unemployment' section of page 5 of the Plan and requested that a further breakdown of this figure be forwarded to all Members on a ward by ward basis to enable Members to give consideration to any correlation between crime and unemployment and deprivation. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that this information would be collated and circulated to the Committee. It was suggested that to encourage the reporting of crime, a mechanism

needed to be identified to enable people to report crime safely, be listened to and have it recorded within their neighbourhoods, to the Council or the Police, in a similar to the way the Community Safety Office operated in York Road before it was closed. The Chair referred to a previous discussion on utilising the local community centres and libraries to enable people to contact the Police with their concerns or report crimes and suggested that this be included within the review which was to be undertaken on the operation of community centres and libraries within the town.

A Member requested that comparison figures be provided on the level of reporting of crime before and after the closure of the Community Safety Office in York Road. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods confirmed that the reporting of all crime was now centralised and dealt with by response Police, however comparisons will be collated and circulated to Members on the information available. In relation to the Respect Your Neighbourhood initiative, a Member sought clarification on whether the operational hours of this initiative were flexible to include evening times when issues were more likely to occur. The Assistant Chief Executive commented that subject to the ongoing discussions on the Terms and Conditions of Council Employees, the potential to review the overall delivery arrangements of this initiative could be undertaken. The Chair suggested that this issue be referred to the Neighbourhood Services Committee for further consideration and if the need for additional resources was identified, this would be considered by Council.

## **Decision**

That in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework, the Community Safety Plan 2015/16 was referred to full Council with the following caveats:

- (1) That the number of unemployed young people aged 18-24 be included on the 'Unemployment' section of page 5 of the Plan and a further breakdown of this figure on a ward by ward basis be forwarded to all Members of the Committee.
- (2) That comparison figures be provided on the level of reporting of crime prior to and since the closure of the Community Safety Office in York Road and forwarded to all Members of the Committee.
- (3) That the operational hours of the Respect Your Neighbourhood initiative be referred to the Neighbourhood Services Committee for further consideration and if the Committee identified the need for additional resources, a further report would be submitted by the Neighbourhood Services Committee to Council for consideration.

**127. Council Plan 2015/16 – Chief Executive’s Department, Public Health Department and Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department Proposals** *(Chief Executive’s Management Team)*

**Type of decision**

Non key.

**Purpose of report**

To provide the opportunity for the Finance and Policy Committee to consider the proposals for inclusion in the 2015/16 Council Plan that fall under the remit of the Committee for the Chief Executive’s Department, Public Health Department and Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department.

**Issue(s) for consideration**

The report provided the background to the review of the Outcome Framework which was undertaken as part of the 2014/15 service planning process. As in previous years, detailed proposals were considered by each Committee throughout February in respect of their areas of responsibility and a further report would be submitted to the Committee on 23 March detailing the comments/observations made by those Committees along with a full draft of the 2015/16 Council Plan.

The Assistant Chief Executive presented the report which highlighted that each Director will explain the key challenges that the Council faced over the next few years setting out the proposals from the Departments and how these will be addressed. The outcomes that fall under the remit of the Finance and Policy Committee from the Chief Executive’s, Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and Public Health Departmental Plans were outlined in the report.

In response to clarification sought by a Member, the Assistant Chief Executive commented that further detail will be submitted to the individual Policy Committees for their specific areas of responsibility.

A Member suggested that the hard work undertaken by the Revenues and Benefits Service to recover council tax and business rates income should be acknowledged within the Plan.

## **Decision**

- (1) Members considered the proposed outcome templates (Appendices A, B and C) for inclusion within the 2015/16 Council Plan.
- (2) That an acknowledgement of the hard work undertaken by the Revenues and Benefits Section to recover council tax and business rates income be included within Plan for the overall presentation to the meeting of the Committee on 23 March 2015.

## **128. Sexual Health Service Review and Re-Procurement** *(Director of Public Health)*

### **Type of decision**

Key decision – Test (i) and (ii) apply – Forward Plan Reference PH 09/14.

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval to review and re-procure sexual health services with a view to commence 1 April 2016.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The report provided the background to the commissioning arrangements for sexual health services across Local Authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups and NHS England which will be funded through the 2016/17 ring fenced Public Health Grant. It was proposed that a full sexual health review be undertaken with a view to re-tendering for an integrated sexual health service across Teesside as the current contract expired on 31 March 2016. The review would inform the development of an integrated sexual health service specification based on best practice and national guidance which will take into consideration local needs and views from the consultation process. It was noted that the governance arrangements would be provided by the Tees Valley Public Health Shared Service (TVPHSS) on behalf of the four local authorities in Teesside through regular updates on the progress of the service review and re-procurement to be shared with the Governance Board.

A Member expressed disappointment that the majority of attendances at sexual health services were by females which gave the impression that males were not accepting responsibility for their own sexual health. The Director of Public Health Services commented that the information on people attending sexual health services would form part of the review of the service. A Member requested a breakdown of the number of people attending the sexual health service in addition to the percentages provided

within the report. The Director of Public Health indicated that working closely with Public Health England provided good data on numbers of sexually transmitted diseases and the types of diseases as it was important to identify and understand trends to inform prevention and treatment services.

### **Decision**

- (1) That a breakdown of the actual numbers of males and females attending the sexual health service be provided to Members of the Committee.
- (2) The report was noted.
- (3) The review of sexual health services during 2015/16 and the development of a service specification based on best practice and national guidance which will take into consideration local needs and views from the consultation process were approved.
- (4) That a provider for open access sexual health services be secured and funded by the ring fenced public health grant in 2016/17.

## **129. Workers' Memorial Day** *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

### **Type of decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

To present a request from the Hartlepool Joint Trades Union Committee for the Council to continue to recognise and support Workers' Memorial Day on Tuesday 28 April 2015.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The report provided the background to Workers' Memorial Day which takes place around the world on 28 April each year. The proposed arrangements for this year's event were detailed in Appendix A along with a list of guest speakers.

Members were fully supportive of Workers' Memorial Day and noted that Hartlepool had become a national focal point for this commemoration service. In addition, Hartlepool Joint Trades Union Committee were commended for their continued work on this which really did have an impact on the way in which people viewed their workplace health and safety.

## **Decision**

- (1) That the Authority promote a minute's silence in all public buildings and to Council staff at 12.30pm on Tuesday 28 April 2015 in remembrance of those workers who had lost their lives through industrial accident or disease.
- (2) That the lowering of flags on public buildings on Tuesday 28 April 2015 be authorised.
- (3) That the sale of the Workers' Memorial Day Remembrance forget-me-not ribbons on Council premises to staff and public be allowed.
- (4) That the Authority assist, promote and publicise the event to the wider public.
- (5) That the use of Council premises on Tuesday 28 April 2015 be authorised for the service and for guests after the Workers' Memorial Day Service and Wreath Laying Ceremony.

## **130. Quarter 3 – Council Overview of Performance and Risk 2014/15** *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

### **Type of decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

To inform Finance and Policy Committee of the progress made against the 2014/15 Council Plan, for the period ending 31 December 2014.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The report provided the background to the agreement of the current Council Plan as well as an overview of performance and risk which included 214 actions and 162 performance indicators. It was noted that 155 (72%) of all actions had been assessed as being on target to be achieved by their scheduled completion date. In addition, 52 performance indicators (82%) had been assessed as being on track to achieve their year end target. There were 3 performance indicators (5%) that had been assessed as requiring intervention and further detail on these was provided within the report. Further detailed updates were included on a Departmental basis.

A Member noted with disappointment that the percentage of invoices paid to local businesses was below target when this had been highlighted as a success previously. The Assistant Chief Executive indicated that this had been picked up as part of the Chief Executive's Management Team discussions and Members were informed that a very significant number of

invoices were paid in full to local businesses within 12.5 days. However, it was noted that a couple of issues had affected performance and this was an area for improvement. It was highlighted that Council had taken the decision to make the payment of invoices to local businesses a performance indicator due to the economic benefits that would be achieved on a local basis. It was therefore requested that an update on progress to improve the performance of this indicator be included within the Quarter 4 update report on performance and risk 2014/15 to be submitted to this Committee and if a need for additional resources to support this performance indicator was identified, a report from the Committee to Council would be required. It was suggested that the Chief Finance Officer be advised of Members' comments on this issue.

### **Decision**

- (1) The current position with regard to performance was noted.
- (2) That an update on the progress to improve CEDFI P030, invoices paid to local businesses within 10 working days, be included within the update on performance and risk 2014/15 report to be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee and that the Chief Finance Officer be advised of Members' comments on this issue.
- (3) The inclusion of the following three new risks was noted:
  - Failure to meet the agreed timetable for the relocation of Cleveland College of Art and Design (CCAD) to the Lynn Street Depot site.
  - Failure to establish a new depot facility in a timely and cost effective manner.
  - Failure to continue delivery of Council services safely and efficiently during the relocation of the new depot.

## **131. Resource Implications – Councillor Complaints** (*Chief Executive and Chief Solicitor*)

### **Type of decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

At the Council meeting on 18 December 2014 a Member question was raised with the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee requesting an *'overview of the current status of complaints against Elected Members'* and for the procedure detailing the complaint process to be specifically outlined.

Following debate, it was resolved that the matter be referred to the Finance and Policy Committee to enquire as to the level and feasibility of resources required to *'administer the procedure for progressing and considering*



*complaints received against Elected Members, including the involvement of Independent Persons’.*

This report therefore covered the standards functions applied to the Council together with general commentary upon the complaints process and the resources involved in the administration of these functions.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The report provided the background to the duty placed on Local Authorities under the Localism Act 2011 ‘to promote and maintain high standards of conduct’ with the following general principles:

- Selflessness;
- Integrity;
- Objectivity;
- Accountability;
- Openness;
- Honesty; and
- Integrity.

The Chief Solicitor presented the report which provided further details on the appointment of two Independent Persons in advisory roles. The report included details on the criteria adopted to determine whether a matter of complaint was investigated, other action or no action should be undertaken. Further details were provided on the number of complaints received since May 2013 along with comparable figures with other Local Authorities in the north east region. Members were informed that the Chief Solicitor and Legal Services Manager were the Chief Officers assigned to deal with the majority of complaints, however additional assistance had been provided by the Scrutiny Support Officer who has a legal qualification and background, and had been able to lend commendable support in this regard.

The report outlined the functions and responsibilities of the Audit and Governance Committee, the roles of the Monitoring Officer and Independent Persons. It was highlighted that the Council was fully compliant with legislation and endeavoured to adopt local protocols and guidance on Member/Officer relations, the operation of the planning system, gifts and hospitality and other useful procedural guidance. The Chief Solicitor concluded that if Members simply acted with respect toward each other, such reports would not need consideration, present resources were adequate and it was not a recommendation that any additional resources should be utilised at this point in time.

During a lengthy discussion and debate the consensus of Members was that the complaints process was unfair, lengthy and drawn out and was open to the submission of vexatious complaints. It was suggested that the process should include the option for early resolution of the complaint through both parties being brought together to discuss the issue of the

complaint. There were concerns expressed that the complaints process was becoming a self perpetuating industry with back stabbing and petty politics fuelling the process.

The Chief Solicitor confirmed that he would be writing to all Members on a six monthly basis to remind them of their obligations in relation to the Code of Conduct underpinned by the general principles noted above. In addition, the submission of an annual report to the Audit and Governance Committee on the number of complaints received would be introduced. The Chief Solicitor added that a timely conclusion was sought for all complaints received including initial mediation with the complainant and the person subject to that complaint. A Member requested that any communication to Members in relation to the Code of Conduct should be undertaken in a concise and direct manner to leave no doubt to each and everyone's responsibilities. The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that the Chief Executive did communicate a very clear and direct message to all Members, although it was suggested that this may not have had the required impact. Members were reassured that the Corporate Management Team including the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer would continue to support the sentiments expressed by Members and make every effort to ensure the operation of the Council was not damaged.

The Chair expressed concerns that a lot of the additional burden placed on Officers in dealing with complaints also included dealing with vexatious emails and questions and requested further details on this particular aspect. It was suggested that a further report be submitted to the Committee in six months time to include how resource intensive dealing with vexatious emails and questions was and whether that was a good use of Officers' time. It was also suggested that a target be included within the Council Plan on a timescale to resolve complaints received.

A Member commented that it may be useful to re-examine the level of detail provided on the Code of Conduct in new Member inductions post election including how to address The Mayor and Deputy Mayor in Council meetings and that everyone should be treated with the highest level of dignity and respect that they would expect themselves and to act within the Law.

## **Decision**

- (1) The report was noted.
- (2) That a further report be submitted to the Committee in six months' time including information on how resource intensive dealing with vexatious emails and questions was.
- (3) That consideration be given to the inclusion of a target for the resolution of all complaints being included within the Council Plan.
- (4) That during the new Member induction how to address The Mayor or Deputy Mayor within Council meetings be highlighted along with the need to treat everyone with the highest level of dignity and respect that they would expect themselves and to act within the Law.

## **132. NHS Health Check Briefing – Contract Review and Strategy Development** *(Director of Public Health)*

### **Type of decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

To advise the Finance and Policy Committee of proposals in relation to existing commissioned Public Health Services for NHS Health Checks, which form part of the Council's plan to address ill health, inequalities and premature mortality caused by Cardiovascular Disease (CVD).

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The report outlined the background to the mandated responsibility of the Local Authority to provide NHS Health Checks as part of a national strategy to tackle ill health and premature mortality from CVD. Appended to the report was further information on the transfer of the responsibility to the Local Authorities as well as the eligibility criteria. An initial analysis of the data from Health Checks delivered in the community and workplace had indicated that significant numbers receiving the checks were not local residents.

It was proposed that a formal review of the provision of NHS Health Checks would be undertaken by the Tees Valley Public Health Shared Service and details of the scope of the review were provided in the report. In order to enable the review to be completed, the extension clause within existing contracts with General Practices had been implemented to extend these contracts for one year. In line with this, Members were asked to consider the extension of the Mobile Health Improvement Service for 12 months or secure a new service for a 12 month period through a competitive procurement exercise.

A discussion ensued on whether this service could be provided as an in-house service or via a Council facility. The Director of Public Health commented that suitably qualified health professionals were required to provide the Health Checks which the Council did not currently employ, however there may be an opportunity to utilise Council premises for the provision of this service and this could be explored as part of this review. Further clarification was sought on what the breakdown of people using this service was and whether any costs were transferred for service provided to people who were not resident in Hartlepool. Concern was expressed by Members at extending this Contract for a further 12 month period and it was suggested that the service be extended for a 6 month period to enable a

specification to be developed and procurement process undertaken with the new service provision commencing on 1 October 2015. The Director of Public Health reassured Members that all public health contracts were rigorously monitored and challenged to ensure the Local Authority was receiving best value for money.

A Member highlighted the importance of undertaking health checks within the a community setting especially in more deprived communities and suggested that an evaluation of the number of people utilising the current service be provided along with how effective the service was including the proportion of heart defects/problems identified as a result of this service. The Director of Public Health confirmed that the recent scrutiny investigation into COPD would be reported to the Extraordinary Council meeting on 16 March 2015 and would include a lot of the information requested by Members adding that the vast majority of health checks were undertaken within GP practices. A Member referred to the suggestion made last year to provide health checks for the parents/carers attending the local swimming baths with children as part of the 'free swims initiative'. The Director of Public Health added that the Healthy Trainers service had recently been brought in-house and this had the potential to offer public health intervention and wellness for all Hartlepool residents and would be considered as part of the service review process. The Chair commented that community engagement should be a key part of the development of any specification or delivery model to ensure more people utilise the service.

### **Decision**

- (1) That the process for the formal review of the provision of NHS Health Checks in Hartlepool, Stockton, Redcar and Cleveland, Middlesbrough and Darlington be noted.
- (2) That further breakdowns be provided to Members of the Committee on the number of Hartlepool and non-Hartlepool residents undertaking Health Checks within the town as well as an evaluation of the effectiveness of the service, including how many heart defects/problems were identified.
- (3) That in relation to the contract for the provision of mobile health improvement services in Hartlepool, an exemption be sought to extend the current for a 6 month period to enable the development of a specification, including the utilisation of Council premises within the community, in particular Community Centres and Libraries, wherever feasible and appropriate procurement process to be undertaken with a view to implementing a new contract for the provision of mobile health improvement services from 1 October 2015.

### **133. 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 134 – 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 namely information relating to an individual (*para 1*).

**Minute 135 – Purchase of New Depot Premises at Tofts Farm Industrial Estate** (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*) 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 information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (*para3*).

### **134. Approval for Compulsory Redundancies** (*Assistant Chief Executive*)

#### **Type of decision**

Non key.

#### **Purpose of report**

To seek a decision regarding the future employment of employees who were affected by budget proposals under consideration for 2015/16. Employees in three Departments of the Council were affected and they were identified on the schedule attached at confidential Appendix A. **This item contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation Order 2006) namely information relating to an individual (para 1).**

#### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The report provided the background to the requirement to identify savings as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 across a wide

range of services. Formal consultations had been undertaken with recognised Trades Unions and included the arrangements for consulting and implementing staffing changes. Formal consultation had been undertaken with employees identified as potentially affected by the proposals and feedback from the consultation was considered by Departmental Management Teams in December 2014. A Redundancy Support Programme had been implemented to provide specialist advice to support those employees at risk.

The employees, their posts and redundancy costs were listed on confidential Appendix A. **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 information relating to an individual (para 1).**

Further details can be found in the exempt section of the minutes.

### **Decision**

The compulsory redundancy of those staff identified within confidential Appendix A were approved. **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 information relating to an individual (para 1).**

- 135. Purchase of New Depot Premises at Tofts Farm Industrial Estate** *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*  
**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 information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (para3).**

### **Type of decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

To request approval to complete the purchase of the new depot premises at Tofts Farm Industrial Estate prior to the determination of the planning application for the change of use and alterations.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

Further details can be found in the exempt section of the minutes.

## **Decision**

Further details can be found in the exempt section of the minutes.

**The meeting returned to open session.**

### **136. Proposed Merger of Teesside and Hartlepool Coroner Areas – Invitation to Respond to Consultation** *(Chief Executive and Chief Solicitor)*

#### **Type of decision**

Non key.

#### **Purpose of report**

To respond to the consultation on the proposed merger of the Teesside and Hartlepool Coroner areas in conjunction with the consultation exercise undertaken through the Ministry of Justice. Under Paragraph 2 (2) of Schedule 2 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, the Lord Chancellor is required to consult with interested parties before a proposed merger can take place. This report therefore sought the approval of the Committee to provide affirmative responses to this consultation, as outlined herewith and before the close of submissions on Friday 6 March 2015.

#### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The report provided the background to the merger of the Teesside and Hartlepool Coroner Areas. Attached at Appendix A was the business case which was based upon a structure model which combined flexibility and resilience. A consultation exercise was ongoing and included the following questions:

“Q1) Do you agree with the proposed merger of coroner areas in Teesside and Hartlepool?

Q2) Do you agree with the assessment, made by Middlesbrough Borough Council in the attached business case, of the potential impacts and outcomes of this proposed merger?

Q3) If you disagree, what other impacts have you identified? If these are negative, how might these be mitigated?”

It was highlighted that the Council had previously approved the Business case as submitted to the Lord Chancellor. It was therefore proposed that affirmative responses be given to the first two questions in this consultation exercise and that the third question had no application. It was also

suggested that accompanying correspondence reinforced the sentiments previously expressed by this Committee that inquests should be retained in Hartlepool and that consistency in standards be maintained.

Members were supportive of the proposed merger on the understanding that the agreed protections for Hartlepool residents were in place. It was noted that the consultation closed on 6 March 2015 therefore all responses may not yet have been returned.

### **Decision**

- (1) The Committee reaffirmed their support to the proposed merger of the coroner areas in Teesside and Hartlepool and that there was confirmation of the assessment made in the Business Case as submitted in support of the proposed merger.
- (2) That further reports be submitted to the Committee following the outcome of this consultation exercise.

## **137. Corporate Procurement Quarterly Report on Contracts** *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

To satisfy the requirements of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules with regard to the Finance and Policy Committee:

- To receive and examine quarterly reports on the outcome of contract letting procedures including those where the lowest/highest price was not payable/receivable; and
- Receiving and examining reports on any exemptions granted to these Contract Procedure Rules.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The report provided the background to the quarterly monitoring of contracts. Attached at Appendix A were the details required for each procurement tender issued since the last quarterly report. Included within Appendix B were details of the required information in relation to Contract Procedure Rules exemptions granted since the last report. Also attached at confidential Appendix C was a table including the commercial information in respect of the tenders received. **This item contained exempt information under Schedule 12A 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) para 3.**

A Member sought clarification on the definition of the ‘most economically advantageous’ as a basis for the award of a contract and how companies from outside Hartlepool could fit this definition better than firms located within the Hartlepool. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods confirmed that the most economically advantageous basis usually indicated best price and it was noted that some tenders were part of a framework with some companies offering different elements, for example specialist printing. The Assistant Chief Executive clarified that in relation to the Occupational Health Services contract, one of the providers was significantly more expensive and did not meet all the requirements of the specification. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods confirmed that the Council's Contract Procedure Rules enabled local firms to tender for contracts for consideration within the procurement process which was based generally on a best price basis.

A Member commented that sharing services with other public sector organisations to enable savings to be made should be considered where feasible.

**Decision**

- (1) That the report was noted.
- (2) It was noted that a review of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules would be undertaken once the detail of the new rules was released to consider whether any changes were required to ensure conformity.
- (3) That a further report be submitted to the Committee identifying these changes, should that be the case.

**138. Social Media Update** *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

**Type of decision**

For information.

**Purpose of report**

To provide Members with an update of how the Council was developing its social media presence to promote two-way communication with the public. This update was requested by the Audit and Governance Committee and agreed to by the Chair of this Committee.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The report provided the background to the development of social media within the Council. It was noted that the use of social media had increased at a phenomenal rate with OFCOM research showing that the average consumer spent around 90 minutes a week on social networking sites with 71% of UK adults using the internet to access such sites. The report provided further detail on the review of social media within the Council undertaken to inform the development of social media as a two-way communication tool. It was highlighted that whilst good progress had been made to develop social media, it was important that the work continued in a co-ordinated manner and how this would be undertaken was outlined in the report.

During the discussions that followed, it was suggested that the Council's social media could be utilised to inform the public of decisions made by the Council's Policy Committees almost instantaneously. Whilst there were some concerns expressed by Members over the confusion of the official publication of decisions, the Assistant Chief Executive indicated that as part of the further development of social media, consideration would be given to the use of social media to inform the public of decisions in the most effective and timely manner without confusing the processes already in place.

### **Decision**

- (1) The report was noted.
- (2) That as part of the further development of the Council's social media presence, consideration be given to the use of social media in relation to the decisions of Policy Committees.

## **139. Employee Sickness Absence 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2014/15** (Assistant Chief Executive)

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

To update the Committee on the Council's performance in relation to employee sickness absence, for the third quarter of 2014/15.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The report provided detailed information on the Council's performance by Department, including schools up to the third quarter of 2014/15. It was noted that the target figure for 2014/15 for the Council was 7.40 days absence whole time equivalent (wte) employee and the actual sickness rate at the end of the second quarter shows the rate at 7.16 days per wte. Further detail was provided on the reasons for sickness and an analysis of long, medium and short term sickness absence.

The Assistant Chief Executive added that it was testament to the hard work and commitment of Council employees that this figure was under target. Members endorsed this and requested that this be conveyed to all employees.

### **Decision**

- (1) That the employee sickness absence rates for the third quarter of 2014/15 be noted.
- (2) That Members endorsement and support of the hard work and commitment of employees which had resulted in the sickness absence figures being under target be conveyed to all employees.

## **140. Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act** (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

To provide an update on legislative changes introduced through the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The report provided the background to the introduction and implications for Local Authorities of the Act which included:

- 1) Civil Injunctions and Criminal Behaviour Orders;
- 2) Community Protection Notices, Public Space Protection Orders and Closure Notices/Orders;
- 3) Absolute Grounds for Possession; and

4) Community Trigger and Community Remedy.

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that a presentation had been prepared to inform Members of the legislative changes and this would be circulated to Members of the Committee under separate cover.

A Member referred to the Community Protection Orders that could be utilised to expedite the eviction of landlords' anti-social tenants. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that whilst the legislation had yet to be tested, it was considered as a way of dealing with a wide range of behaviours. It was confirmed that a training programme on the new legislation would be implemented for all staff who operated within Hartlepool for the Council, Housing Hartlepool and the Thirteen Housing Group.

In response to a query from a Member, the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated she would speak to that Member about a specific case directly and outside of this meeting.

**Decision**

- (1) The legislative changes introduced through the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 were noted.
- (2) It was noted that the impact of the legislation on the Council's Constitution in relation to 'Responsibilities and Functions' was addressed in the Chief Solicitor's report on the Constitution to be presented to Council on 26 March 2014.
- (3) That the presentation detailing the impact of the legislative changes be circulated to Members of the Committee.

The meeting concluded at 12.00 pm

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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