

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

21 September 2015

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

Present:

Councillor Christopher Akers Belcher (In the Chair)

Councillors: Allan Barclay, Kevin Cranney, Marjorie James, Brenda Loynes, Carl Richardson, Chris Simmons, Kaylee Sirs, George Springer and Paul Thompson.

Also Present: Councillor Lindridge.
Julia Waller, Screening Immunisation Officer, NHS England

Officers: Gill Alexander, Chief Executive
Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive
Chris Little, Chief Finance Officer
Alyson Carman, Legal Services Manager
Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health
Sally Robinson, Director of Child and Adult Services
Danielle Swainston, Assistant Director, Children's Services
Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration
Steve Hilton, Public Relations Officer
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

75. Apologies for Absence

Councillor David Riddle.

76. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Paul Thompson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 94 and left the meeting during the consideration of the item.
Councillor Chris Simmons declared a personal interest in Minute No. 90
Councillor Brenda Loynes declared a personal interest in Minute No. 87

At Minute No. 89 Councillor Kevin Cranney declared a personal interest.

At Minute No. 96 Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher declared a personal interest.

77. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 August, 2015

Confirmed.

78. Minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board held on 22 June, 2015

Received.

79. Council Plan 2016/17 – Outcome Framework (*Assistant Chief Executive*)

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was for Finance and Policy Committee to consider the proposed Outcome Framework for the 2016/17 Council Plan and agree the timetable for the service planning process.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Chief Executive reported that, as members were aware, work was ongoing to review the future priorities and direction of the Council. In time this would have an impact on the structure of the Council Plan therefore the Committee was requested to note that the outcome framework may change before the final Council Plan for 2016/17 comes for approval in March 2016. In the meantime work to develop the Council Plan must continue alongside this review and therefore the appropriate proposed actions, PIs and risks would be fitted into the new outcome framework retrospectively as necessary.

The following recommendations were supported unanimously by Members.

Decision

1. That the proposed outcome framework for 2016/17 be approved;
2. That the Committee notes that this outcome framework for 2016/17 may change to reflect the parallel work currently underway to review the future priorities and direction of the Council;
3. That the proposed timetable for the service planning process be agreed.

80. Seaton Carew Masterplan – The Council of the Borough of Hartlepool (Longscar Building, The Front, Seaton Carew) Compulsory Purchase Order 2015 *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Key Decision tests (i) and (ii) RN14/13.

Purpose of report

To seek authority from the Committee to make The Council of the Borough of Hartlepool (Longscar Building, The Front, Seaton Carew) Compulsory Purchase Order 2015 (“the CPO”) for the purpose of facilitating the carrying out of development, redevelopment and/or improvement of land at Seaton Carew for the purposes of the regeneration and improvement of the seafront including public realm, landscaping, leisure and tourism related and associated works, and thereby achieving the promotion and/or improvement of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Regeneration reported subsequent to previous reports submitted to the Committee and updating Members on the progress to date. To date purchase by agreement of the property had not been possible, therefore, grounds existed for proceeding through to Compulsory Purchase. The report included as an appendix a draft Statement of Reasons that set out details of the Council’s case for compulsory acquisition, together with a draft Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for Members’ consideration.

The scheme comprising the regeneration proposals for the sea front would be brought forward in three phases, as identified in Appendix D to the report. Phase One comprised the clearance of the Longscar Building and provision of improved public realm, landscaping and outdoor leisure and tourist related facilities at The Front. This would improve the attractiveness of Seaton Carew to both residents and visitors. Phase Two would comprise additional leisure development including beach chalets with decking, play structures, water play and enhanced landscaping. Phase 3 was a longer term project including public realm improvements on land to the rear of the bus station. Full details of the proposals, legal and financial issues were set out in detail in the report.

The Assistant Director reported at the meeting that members of the family that owned the Longscar building had recently established a new registered company ‘Longsco’ with a 25 year lease of the building. This was likely to extend the timescales for the CPO, though this would become clearer once the order was advertised.

A Member of the public sought confirmation of the potential timescales involved in the processing of the CPO and subsequent development and the Assistant Director indicated that development was anticipated within twelve months of the CPO approval.

Decision

That the Director of Regeneration Neighbourhoods in conjunction with the Chief Solicitor be authorised to :

1. Make a Compulsory Purchase Order (“CPO”) pursuant to S226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to purchase compulsorily the land shown on the Order Map accompanying the report for the purpose of facilitating the carrying out of development, redevelopment or improvement of land at Seaton Carew for the purposes of the regeneration and improvement of the seafront including public realm, landscaping, leisure and tourism related and associated works and thereby achieving the promotion and/or improvement of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area; and
2. Make such amendments, modifications or deletions to the CPO (including for the avoidance of doubt to the Order Map) and to the Statement of Reasons as may be required to finalise and make the CPO; and
3. Publish and serve all necessary notices consequent on the making of the CPO; and to submit the CPO to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government; and otherwise to take all necessary steps, whether expressly required by statute or otherwise, to secure confirmation of the CPO by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government; and
4. Subject to the confirmation of the CPO by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government acquire title and/or possession of the CPO land (or any part thereof) whether by means of General Vesting Declaration or Notices to Treat and/or Notices of Entry, including publishing and serving any notices and/or executing any documentation required in connection with such acquisition or possession; and
5. Confirm the CPO in the event that the Council is authorised to act as confirming authority; and
6. Take all necessary steps to secure all necessary orders to stop up, extinguish or divert existing public highways and rights of way necessary in the event that such steps are necessary to achieve the delivery of the scheme for which purpose the CPO is to be made; and
7. Exercise powers of entry onto land in connection with the CPO and to

delegate such powers as appropriate to officers of the Council and/or to otherwise authorise external consultants to act on the Council's behalf in that regard.

81. Seaton Carew Masterplan Update (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

Key Decision (test (i)/(ii)) Forward Plan Reference No 14/13

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to seek endorsement of the Masterplan, approve funding to deliver phases 1 and 2, and approve indicative funding for phase 3.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods reported that in the past Members had approved the allocation of part of the capital receipt from the sale of land at Elizabeth Way to purchase and demolish the Longscar Building with the balance of the receipt being set aside towards the overall Seaton Carew regeneration scheme, including the potential development of community facilities.

Substantial work has been undertaken in conjunction with Esh to finalise the masterplan (submitted as an appendix to the report) taking in to account consultation feedback. The proposals reflect the vision to prioritise investment to support the resorts natural and historical assets of sea, beach and promenade.

Regeneration Services Committee on 27th August 2015 recommended approval for the adoption of the Masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to Council at its meeting on 17th September 2015. The purpose of the SPD was to set out the parameters and development principals.

The Director updated the Committee on the indicative valuations of the land sales that would fund the masterplan proposals, particularly the demolition of the Longscar building and the works to Seaton Carew sea front. The project itself was broken down into three phases:

Phase 1: Acquisition and Demolition of the Longscar Building to be replaced by the construction of a Market Square and events space/seating area.

Phase 2: Public realm Improvements to the land to the North of the Longscar site.

Phase 3: Public realm improvements to the land to the East of Seaton Carew Bus Station.

The costs for the individual phases were set out in a confidential appendix to the report. The Director stated that much depended on the valuations achieved for the land sales. It was, however, anticipated that phases 1 and 2 could be delivered, though phase 3 was seen as 'aspirational'. The development of Community Facilities would also be dependent on additional capital receipts in excess of the forecast amounts being achieved and/or external funding sources being identified.

The Director also drew Members attention to the £108,000 "Seaton Community Centre Management" reserve. The balance had been carried forward from previous years and represented surpluses generated by the Community Centre over the years. This funding was managed by the overseeing board and had been earmarked to contribute towards the projects being considered as part of the Seaton Master Plan. It was understood that the management board had not met for some time. In addition, there was a residual uncommitted capital receipt from the sale of the former Seaton Carew Nursery site of £11,000. These amounts were not needed for the phases 1 and 2 of the development and would continue to be held as an earmarked reserve and uncommitted capital receipt subject to this use being approved by Members.

A Member commented that the Community Centre Management Board did still meet, though less frequently than in the past. The Member also sought some clarity as to the funding as the report referred to both earmarked and uncommitted reserves. The Director stated that the Community Centre reserve was earmarked for general improvement works in Seaton Carew though further discussions would be needed with the Management Board. The Chair requested that a further report be brought to the Committee when all the various funding was established and the valuations of the land proposed for sale were firmed up. Members questioned how long the various investigations would take before land valuations were confirmed and the Director stated that the investigations and valuations would be determined within the next few months.

In relation to the Longscar building and the phasing of the project, the Director responded to Members questions by stating that the demolition of the Longscar building was key to the whole project. The valuation of the land at Coronation Drive was also an important factor as to what could be subsequently achieved. If there was a 'Plan B' it would be as it had been from the outset and that was to obtain the Longscar building thorough negotiation with the owners rather than by CPO. The Chair requested that the Committee be kept apprised of developments and the receipt of any objections to the proposed CPO that would require the matter to go to a public inquiry.

Decision

1. That proposed Masterplan, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

2. That the costed proposals for phases 1 and 2 detailed in Appendix 2 to the report be 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, (para 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). These phases to be funded from the capital receipts generated from the disposal of residential development sites within the development agreement with Esh and that these proposals be referred to Council.
3. That the indicative costed proposals for phase 3 detailed in Appendix 2 to the report be 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, (para 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). This phase will be funded from the capital receipts generated from the disposal of residential development sites within the development agreement with Esh and a further report will be submitted to this Committee when the actual value of the capital receipt is known to enable final proposals to be approved and then referred to Full Council.
4. That the proposals to submit funding applications to appropriate funding bodies to supplement capital for Phase 3 and the Community Facilities as part of the town wide Community Hub review be approved and that further reports will be submitted to enable Members to approve future proposals when funding outcomes are known.
5. That the allocation of the Seaside Grant Reserve to contribute towards the capital costs of the phase 1 works be approved as set out in Confidential Appendix 2 to the report (this item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, (para 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
6. That the Committee notes that the £108,000 “Seaton Community Centre Management” Reserve will be held as an uncommitted reserve and the residual capital receipt from the sale of the former Seaton Nursery site of £11,000 will be held as an uncommitted capital receipts. These resources will only be committed after a further report has been considered by this Committee and full Council.
7. That Members be kept apprised of any developments in relation to the developments around the Compulsory Purchase Order being sought for the Longscar Building and the final valuations of the land assets that were to fund the proposals.

82. Empty Property Management (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

Key decision (test (ii) applies). General Exception Provisions apply.

Purpose of report

To consider the options for management of Council owned non-residential property.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Regeneration reported the 'Council estate' was actively managed and programmes of asset rationalisation, lettings and disposal of surplus property were regularly undertaken. Reducing void levels and minimising the length of time properties are empty was a priority to maximise rental income and capital receipts, reduce holding costs and avoid the problems with crime and anti-social behaviour that were often associated with empty property. It was not always possible, however, for re-lettings/sales to be concluded prior to properties becoming vacant and therefore on occasion the Council does hold some vacant property.

In appropriate cases the Council had a general policy of demolishing vacant property and although this may be appropriate in certain circumstances it was important to consider the range of options to ensure the correct outcome was achieved. In terms of empty property the options other than demolition included; static guarding, security patrols, guardians, alarm systems and CCTV, boarding up and shuttering. Whichever option was chosen in any specific circumstances, there would be costs to the authority.

A General Policy for Empty Property Management had been drafted and was submitted for the Committee's approval.

Members welcomed the policy but stated that it was essential that Members, particularly appropriate ward members, were fully apprised of the options in regard to a specific building at the earliest opportunity, preferably before the property became vacant and before it became 'public knowledge'. The Assistant Director stated that this would be the case. The Chair indicated that the policy should include reference to Members at the earliest opportunity and should any Member consider that this was not the case in any specific instance; the matter should be referred to him and that the policy should be amended to reflect this.

Decision

That the General Policy for Empty Property Management as submitted be approved subject to the inclusion of a specific reference to Members,

including ward Councillors, being appraised of any council owned property that was, or was due to become, empty at the earliest opportunity.

83. Managing Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy (Assistant Chief Executive / Chief Solicitor)

Type of decision

Non-Key Decision.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report is for Members to approve and adopt a new Managing Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Chief Executive reported that the Council has a policy for dealing with persistent and vexatious complainants as set out within the Corporate Complaints Policy. This had been agreed by the Finance and Policy Committee in October 2013. However, this policy only covered complaints and did not cover the range of other areas where the Council was dealing with unreasonable customer behaviour for example through service requests, Freedom of Information requests (FOIs) etc. It was, therefore, considered timely to update the policy to broaden its scope and make it a stand-alone policy.

The proposed policy was intended to clearly set out the Council's position in regards to unreasonable customer behaviour. Individuals who were behaving unreasonably could have a negative impact on areas of identified risk and inhibit our ability to manage those risks at a reasonable level. Having an established process for dealing with those individuals meant that the Council would be better placed to effectively manage the risks it had already identified within appropriate tolerance levels.

Members commented that in many instances they received complaints from the public where the person that they had spoken to in the authority had not given their name when speaking to them. Many complaints seemed to arise through simple misunderstanding and it would be helpful if in all instances officers gave their name to the member of the public calling into the authority so that they, or their ward councillor, could contact them directly again to resolve such misunderstandings. The Assistant Chief Executive commented that in his experience most officers did give their names when answering the phone but would remind all staff to do so especially when dealing with the public.

Decision

That the 'Managing Unreasonable Customer Behaviour' policy as submitted be approved and adopted.

84. Quarter 1 – Council Overview of Performance and Risk 2015/16 *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

Type of decision

Non-Key Decision.

Purpose of report

To inform Finance and Policy Committee of the progress made against the 2015/16 Council Plan, for the period ending 30 June 2015.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Chief Executive reported that the Council Plan contained an action plan setting out how the Council proposed to deliver the Council's priority outcomes. Key Performance Indicators were also included which could then be used to monitor progress throughout the year and at year end. The report set out progress against the key indicators for each department to 30 June 2015 and included number of amendments as set out in the narrative of the report.

Decision

1. That the overall position in performance as at end of June 2015 (Quarter 1) be noted;
2. That the proposed PI targets as set out in section 5.4, 6.5, 7.5 and 8.5 of the report be approved;
3. That the removal of PIs as set out in sections 6.7 and 7.7 of the report be approved;
4. That the change to PI RND P114 from targeted to monitored as set out in section 7.8 of the report be approved;
5. That the change to risks as set out in sections 5.5 and 7.10 of the report be noted;
6. That the removal of risks as set out in section 5.6 of the report be approved.

85. Further Development of Advice and Guidance Services *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-Key Decision.

Purpose of report

To update Finance and Policy Committee on the effectiveness of the arrangements for the provision of advice and guidance since the new arrangements were implemented in May 2014 and outline proposals for the further development of the service that will strengthen support to the community.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Child and Adult Services reported that the decision to proceed with the implementation of the Advice and Guidance Hub was taken at a meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee on 31 January 2014. Committee agreed that functions associated with local welfare support, discretionary housing payment and front facing housing benefits support would move into the Child and Adults Services First Contact and Support Hub (FCSH) and the FCSH was reconfigured to undertake these responsibilities. The aim of the creation of the Advice and Guidance Hub was to improve the way in which the Council dealt with customers with complex personal and financial needs, with the aim of addressing the need at the first point of contact wherever possible.

The creation of the Advice and Guidance Hub had successfully transformed the way in which Hartlepool Borough Council delivered its first contact services to the community. Since the inception of the new service, other developments had emerged which would impact upon the work of both the FCSH and the Customer Services Centre alongside the local vision for the development of community hubs. The arrangements, therefore, needed to move into a new phase of development to respond to the changing ways in which services should be delivered.

In 2014, Hartlepool Borough Council and its partners were successful in their bid to the Department for Local Government and Communities (DCLG) Transformation Challenge Award to deliver a programme to transform processes, systems and service models within children's services. One key component of the programme was the delivery of a Multi Agency Children's Hub (MACH) providing an integrated single point of access across north Tees (including Stockton Borough Council) through a multi professional triage and assessment hub. Over the last nine months, officers had been working to develop the North Tees MACH which would become fully operational in April 2016.

The multi agency nature of the MACH meant that as this service became operational, partners from the police, health and a designated education officer, on behalf of schools, would be seconded into the team to facilitate the sharing of information and joint decision making about the needs of children and their families. The MACH builds on the functions of the current FCSH, creating a new multi disciplinary team and further strengthens the practice and response of the service. The MACH would be the first point of

contact for Hartlepool and Stockton Borough Council Children's Services delivered by Hartlepool on behalf of both local authorities.

The proposals for the next stage of development for the service which centred around the creation of a multi agency hub which brought together local authority officers from a range of children's services with staff from partners organisations including the Police, Foundation Trust and Mental Health Trust were set out in the report.

The implementation of phase two of the development of advice and guidance services with the creation of the multi agency hub aligned the council to be able to strengthen the provision of support within communities through the vision for community hubs. It ensured that those who require a service receive a timely and proportionate response to their presenting need or request and makes the most effective use of the available expertise and resources.

Members supported the detailed proposals set out in the report, though a Member did request that details of the staffing structure of the new service should be available to Members. The Chair indicated that any finalised costing for the new service should be reported to Committee, together with the requested staffing structure.

A Member questioned if the changes now proposed provided an opportunity to review the out of hours emergency duty team. The Director commented that the emergency duty team for the five Tees Valley authorities was currently operated by Stockton BC. The multi-agency service proposed in the report would be operated by Hartlepool and would also cover Stockton as it was aligned to the Hartlepool and North Tees Clinical Commissioning Group area. There was potential that the service could be extended across the other Tees authorities in the future but with a focus on daytime rather than out of hours services. The Chair requested that the current out of hours service be referred to Children's Services Committee to review the current provision and its outputs and whether its future commissioning needed to be reviewed.

Decision

1. That the implementation of the next phase of the development of the advice and guidance hub be approved and officers authorised to progress this work.
2. That a review of the current out of hours emergency duty team be undertaken by the Children's Services Committee.
3. That the finalised costing of the new service be reported to Committee, together with the requested staffing structure.

86. Local Welfare Support / Discretionary Housing Payment Administration – Review of Frameworks (Director of Child and Adult Services)

Type of decision

Non-Key Decision.

Purpose of report

To seek approval for amendments to Local Welfare Support (LWS) administration framework and Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) administration framework.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Children's Services reported that in relation to Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), in 2014/15, 99.7% of the £346,497 DHP fund was allocated to eligible Housing Benefit claimants, amounting to 989 individual awards. In 2014/15 DHP payments were made to 4 foster carers, 9 residents living in adapted premises, 4 residents that were terminally ill and 52 benefit cap families. In addition, 10 one off payments were made to prevent families with dependent children from being evicted from their homes. The remaining awards were made to residents unable to afford their shortfall in their rent due a number of financial reasons. The DHP award for 2015/16 is £286,417.

Appendix A to the report set out the proposed revised DHP framework. Largely the application process and eligibility criteria remained the same. It is hoped an e-form would be developed to allow applicants an alternative method of requesting funding. There were no significant changes to the framework though the report highlighted:

- A proposal to implement 100% DHP entitlement for claimants requiring an extra student studying at university (where the student is not claiming housing benefit and the room is not being sublet);
- A proposal to help for parents with dependent children regardless of their free school meal entitlement.

The Assistant Director also highlighted that government were proposing to reduce the benefit cap from £26,000 to £23,000 and ultimately £20,000 per annum. This could mean further families with four or more dependent children would be in need of DHP support. It was unknown at this stage how many families would be affected though it was anticipated an estimate from DWP would be forthcoming once government announced their final decision on the cap.

In relation to Local Welfare Support Scheme (LWS) it was reported that this had been introduced in 2013/14 with the aim of providing "in crisis" and "non-crisis" support to vulnerable people that meet the criteria. An initial

increase in applications once the fund opened had since settled into a steady number of applications. Over 60% of applications were for “in crisis support” (i.e. immediate crisis, in need of food, gas and electricity) and 40% were for “non crisis” support (i.e. household goods, support to settle into new accommodation).

Appendix B to the report set out the proposed revised LWS framework, which remained largely the same. One proposed change would amend award allowances that are made available to the public. Currently awards were made based on 60% of the basic DWP benefit personal allowance with an adjustment for Child Tax Credits. This was based on a set amount linked to benefits. The proposal was that awards were based on need instead of a proportion of benefits, up to the maximum of 60% of the basic DWP personal allowance, to ensure that those genuinely in need could be supported.

The advantages for the change to the framework would mean that funding would be targeted to those most in need and would be able to support more individuals/ families in need as the funding should last longer and be carried over to the following year. The disadvantages were that there may be a perception from the public that we are reducing the amount they can receive in awards and identifying recipients may also take slightly longer than in the past.

The proposed allowances based on need reduced the amount of “in crisis” support the Council would offer, however, service users could apply more than once for funding if they continued to be in need. The intention of this change was to reduce large one off payments which may be used for other than essential needs e.g. debt repayments.

The funding for Discretionary Housing Payments is in place until 2016/17. However, there is no guarantee of any further funding after this date. The funding for Local Welfare Support was currently budgeted until 2016/17. A reduction in allowances may enable any unspent funds to be carried forward in future years. The changes proposed to the frameworks can be accommodated within the current budget.

Members supported the proposals as it would support those that just miss out on support – in work poverty. These comments were echoed by other Members and the Chair commented that such comments had been made to government.

A Member questioned if the financial impact of the support required for refugee families coming to the town had been assessed. The Director of Public Health stated that she was to attend a meeting later in the week where authorities would be give initial information on the refugee families coming to the area. The Chair indicated that at this time the funding was anticipated to come initially from the overseas aid budget.

Decision

1. That the changes to the DHP administration framework be approved.
2. That the changes to the LWS framework to introduce a change in allowances based on need instead of a proportion of benefit payments be approved.

87. Ward Jackson Park Lodge (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

Non-Key Decision.

Purpose of report

To seek approval for the grant of a 10 year lease of Ward Jackson Park Lodge for the purpose of office accommodation.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Regeneration reported that Ward Jackson Park Lodge was surplus to the Councils operational requirements and had remained vacant for a considerable period of time. As the Park and Lodge are effectively held in Trust for the recreation of the public, Counsel's opinion was sought which stated that the Council does not have the power to sell off the freehold. A residential letting was also ruled out due to the risks of security tenure and right to buy provisions being obtained by the tenant.

Following a six week marketing period three bids were received, although one was subsequently withdrawn. Details of the bids were set out in a confidential appendix to the report which 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 (para 3), information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the authority holding that information.

It was proposed that Expression B be accepted as it was considered that the overall package of rent, length of term and financial security of the proposed tenant together with the use would be ideally suited to the property. The proposed tenant had a successful track record in business and was fully aware of the costs and responsibilities associated with the costs of maintaining and improving the property.

Members were supportive of the proposals as long as it was agreed that there would be no subletting allowed. A Member questioned how soon the property would be let. The Assistant Director stated that it was anticipated the property would be occupied in the next few months. The Chair

requested that appropriate information be shared with ward councillors.

Decision

That approval be given to the granting of a 10 year lease with 5 year break clause to EXPRESSION B on the terms as set out in Confidential Appendix 1 to the report which contains exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely (para 3), information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the authority holding that information.

88. Health Protection (*Director of Public Health*)

Type of decision

Non-Key Decision.

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to assure the Committee, regarding the discharging of the statutory duty to ensure the health of the population is protected and that local health protection arrangements are in place.

The term health protection includes preparing for and dealing with hazards and incidents that may threaten health. It includes, but is not limited to, infectious disease, environmental hazards and contamination

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Public Health reported that the term health protection covers a range of threats to health and whatever the specific threat posed, such as infectious disease or environmental hazard, there are four principles when protecting the health of the population. Those principles are:

- Prevention
- Surveillance
- Control
- Communication

Given the size and complexity of what could contribute to preventing a health protection issue, a plan on a range of key activities that contribute to managing risk and responding to incidents was set out in the report.

It was proposed that a more in depth consideration of the following issues be referred from Finance and Policy Committee to the Health and Well Being Board:

- Immunisation – September board meeting
- Screening – October board meeting

The report also highlighted the Director of Public Health's role as the co-chair of the Local Health Resilience Partnership. This multiagency health partnership was responsible for ensuring plans were in place and tested to ensure a robust emergency response in the event of an incident or outbreak that managed risk and was resilient.

A member of the public raised the issue of the recent reported outbreak of Gonorrhoea in Leeds and if that had any concerns for Hartlepool. The Director commented that the outbreak was of a specific strain of the infection that was being appropriately monitored with advice and guidance being issued as necessary.

Decision

1. The the activities relating to protecting the health of the population as outlined on the 'plan on a page' be noted.
2. The Committee confirms it is assured plans and arrangements are in place to protect the health of the population in keeping with the requirements under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

89. Durham Tees Valley Airport (*Chief Executive and Director Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

Non-Key Decision.

Purpose of report

The report outlined the proposals contained in the Master Plan for Durham Tees Valley Airport ("DTVA") and asked the Committee to consider a further proposal from DTVA/Peel concerning the airport company which was set out in an exempt appendix (Appendix 1) which contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, (paras 3, 5 and 8) to this report. Comparable reports were being presented to partner local authorities for their approval.

Issue(s) for consideration

As recorded at Minute No. 76, Councillor Cranney declared a personal interest the commencement of the item.

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods set out the background to the proposals being made by DTVA/Peel and the reports that had been considered by this authority in recent years and the scrutiny investigation into the recently published Airport Master Plan by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.

Generally, the airport is regarded as a key asset in the Tees Valley, with a desire to see it expand and grow in whatever guise was going to be profitable in order to ensure its continued presence.

The Master Plan claims that investment in re-positioning and growing the Airport will not be possible without capital raised from enabling housing development on land owned by DTVA. This would finance nine new hangars, office space and industrial units to expand the existing Northside Employment Park and provide 968 new jobs, £68M GVA (Gross Value Added) to the local economy and £1.9M business rates.

The Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership had secured £90.3M from the Government's Local Growth Fund, which included £5M provision for a new access road linking the Northside with the Southside at the airport, around the eastern end of the runway. This new link road would open up the Southside, to provide an employment park, and logistics and processing areas with a variety of employment uses. It was envisaged that 2,889 new jobs would be created, resulting in £280M GVA to the economy and £2.9M business rates.

In this respect, a planning application has now been submitted for the access (link) road to open up the Southside land for the purposes of this development, and the necessary funding to ensure that the access is constructed, if planning permission is granted, has been approved through the approval of DTVA/Peel's application for Local Growth Funding.

Progress is also being made in relation to the preparation of an application for the enabling housing development at the airport site, and discussions are ongoing with Darlington Borough Council, as the local planning authority, regarding a related section 106 planning agreement. This initiative to diversify and seek business activities that provide secondary income as outlined in the Master Plan, recognises that operational costs cannot simply be recouped from air traffic.

A Member suggested that DTVA/Peel be invited to a meeting of all councillors to outline their proposals and their future plans for the airport and the airport site prior to any decision being made by the Committee. The Member considered that the airport was an underused local asset from which local people expected more. People didn't expect to go via Schiphol to get to destinations. DTVA/Peel had already made a similar presentation to Stockton so could do so here. The Member also questioned what the consequence of the Committee not supporting Peel's request. The Chief Finance Officer indicated that the same request was being submitted to all six share holding authorities; if one authority said 'no' the proposal could fail.

Councillor Cranney, the Council's appointed representative to the Airport Board stated that with knowledge of the financial position of the company, delaying a decision may have a significant impact. Much of the financial

position of the company was in the public domain; Peel were supporting significant losses at the airport on an ongoing basis. The lack of government support for the country's small airports was also a major issue.

The Chair stated that he supported the request for DTVA/Peel to be invited to give a presentation to Members. The Chair supported the proposals on the basis that it would lead to the development of the southside and the creation of jobs.

The recommendations were put to the vote and carried on a majority of 7 votes to 2.

A member of the public asked if the DTVA/Peel presentation would be open to the public. The Chair indicated that if it was possible to have the meeting in public there would be appropriate publicity. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that there had been significant public consultation already during the development of the Airport Master Plan and the Master Plan document could be shared with Members.

Decision

That the report be noted and that the recommendations as set out in an exempt appendix (Appendix 1) which contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, (para 3, 5 and 8) to this report, be approved.

90. Northern Lights Academy (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Non-Key Decision.

Purpose of report

To inform members of the current position regarding Northern Lights Academy and for members to consider options for the future sustainability of this facility.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Regeneration outlined the background to the Northern Lights facility and the meetings that had taken place with representatives from the Department for Education (DfE) and St Hild's School and the Diocese.

Recent discussions had focussed on the lease for the facility, which was complicated by the past history of the building and involvement of groups no longer in existence. In a meeting between the Council, St Hild's School

and the Diocese on 30th June 2015, the Diocese confirmed that they were open to resolving the lease issues and would be flexible in terms of matters, such as time period of lease agreement. However, in the absence of an organisation with the capacity to manage the risks in relation to managing and developing the facility, consideration has been given to the Council 'stepping in' to take on this role.

Following the meeting and subsequent communication, the Council had submitted a draft Heads of Terms for the Diocese to consider which outlines the principle of the Council taking over this lease for 125 years on favourable terms. This offer was currently being reviewed by the Diocese.

The current position is that the school has indicated that they are no longer in a position to maintain responsibility for the building. There is no other organisation indicating a willingness to take on the building and therefore the Council is considering potential options to ensure that the people of Hartlepool can benefit from this innovative and outstanding resource.

The Chief Executive commented that this was an extremely difficult situation. Potentially there was a fantastic asset for the town as the equipment in the building was high quality, state of the art that was unavailable elsewhere in the immediate area. There was the potential to link the facility with the expanding Cleveland College of Art and Design (CCAD) which needed further examination. The main problem with the facility all along had been that there had not been a resilient organisation in place long enough to run it properly. If the Council were to invest in the future of the facility it needed security of ownership; once that was resolved, then things could be moved forward.

The Chair of the Children's Services Committee stated that the Northern Lights Academy building was an excellent facility that should be available to young talented people in the town. Members queried what was intended for the building; was it simply to be 'moth-balled'. The Assistant Director stated that would be the case, the Council would simply look to securing and insuring the building.

Decision

1. That officers be authorised to negotiate with the Diocese, Department for Education and Big Lottery Fund with a view to the Council becoming either the leaseholder for the Northern Lights Academy or freeholder of the asset.
2. That officers be authorised to make interim arrangements for the Council to maintain the building on a short term basis
3. That officers be authorised to develop a business plan and vision for the future of the facility which will be considered at a future meeting of Finance and Policy Committee.

91. Employee Sickness Absence 1st Quarter 2015/16
(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 first quarter of 2015/16.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Chief Executive reported that the target figure for the Council is 8.2 wte (whole time equivalent) days absence per employee. The actual sickness rate at the end of the 1st quarter shows the Council's performance is 9.6 wte per employee per annum, the first rise in the statistics for some time. These levels were high for this time of year and were due to an unusual peak in the number of current long term sickness absence cases across the Council. It was expected that with early intervention and good management of cases the numbers would decline. The Council would continue to focus on sickness absence management to try and achieve its 8.20 wte average sickness per employee target at the end of the reporting year.

The Chair requested that when the next update report was submitted that it include details of the key actions taken to resolve the increased sickness rates.

Decision

That the report be noted.

92. Corporate Complaints / Annual Monitoring Report 2014/15
(Assistant Chief Executive)

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To inform Finance and Policy Committee of the number of Corporate Complaints received in 2014/15.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Chief Executive reported on the number of Corporate Complaints received in 2014-15 along with number of complaints where

timescales were not met and the outcome of the complaint. Overall in 2014-15 there were 22 complaints investigated using the Corporate Complaints procedure with 3 of those complaints being upheld/partly upheld. This is a reduction from the previous year (2013/14) with 31 complaints being dealt with through the Corporate Complaints Procedure during this time period. However, the Complaints Procedure was reviewed in October 2013 whereby the Pre Formal Complaints Procedure was more clearly defined and easier to use resulting in more 'complaints' being dealt with at this point rather than through the full Corporate Complaints Process. Data was not formally collected on the number of pre formal complaints across the Council, however, it did appear that complainants were having their issues resolved in a timely manner to everyone's satisfaction. The figures were not directly comparable as there have been functional changes through this period.

The Assistant Chief Executive also reported on the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter 2015 which was submitted as an appendix to the report. The letter set out the annual statistics on complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) about Hartlepool Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2015. The data showed both the complaints and enquires that the LGO had recorded along with any decisions they had made. It was highlighted that the numbers quoted might not necessary match up with the figures the Council holds. For example a complainant might initially contact the LGO who then signposts them to the Local Authority but they never then make contact with the Local Authority.

During 2014/15 the LGO received sixteen complaints or enquiries with detailed investigations being carried out on just four of these complaints. This resulted in one complaint being upheld and three not being upheld. In the upheld complaint the Council was found to have wrongly served an allotment eviction notice and had incorrect information within the Allotment Handbook. A remedy was agreed and the process of notification of eviction and the Allotment Handbook were amended to prevent this from happening again. The LGO were satisfied with this and closed the complaint.

Decision

That the report be noted.

93. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chairman ruled that the following items of business should be considered by the Committee as a matter of urgency in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that the matter could be dealt with without delay.

Councillor Thompson left the meeting at this point in accordance with the declaration of interest made at the commencement of the meeting.

94. Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

Key Decision (test (i)/(ii)) Forward Plan Reference No. RN 15/15

Purpose of report

To update members of the recent progress in securing funding for the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and to seek approval as follows:

- To progress the scheme, subject to DWP approval of the YEI application, the satisfactory completion of due diligence and signing of legal agreements between the Council, grant funders and partners.
- For the Council to act as Accountable Body for the scheme.
- To agree the proposals for funding for the Council's share of the match funding.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Regeneration reported that in January 2013, the European Commission created the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) in order to tackle the high levels of youth unemployment across member states. EU funding would be specifically targeted at regions in which the youth unemployment rate exceeded 25%. The initiative would have a budget of €6 billion for the programme period from 2014 to 2020. Of the funding, €3 billion would come from a dedicated Youth Employment budget line complemented by at least €3 billion more from the European Social Fund.

The Tees Valley qualified for additional funding under the EU YEI and has a notional allocation of £10.9m which had been equally matched by £10.9m from the Tees Valley ESF allocation. The ESF element of the funding needed to be locally matched and due to the Tees Valley's Transition Region Status we were required to match the ESF element at 40% which equals around £7.2m. This meant that the total programme budget will be around £29m.

On the 22 April 2015, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), as the Managing Authority for YEI, issued three Open Calls to commission ESF/YEI projects. Following this announcement, the Council was approached by a number of partners and agreed to act as the Accountable Body to submit Outline Applications for all three Calls as part of a Tees Valley consortium.

The full consortium consisted of 61 partners including the four other Local Authorities in the Tees Valley and Tees Valley FE Plus. The Council had secured the full match funding requirements through this partnership approach. The Outline Applications were submitted on 22 May 2015 and

successful applicants would be invited to submit a Full Application.

On the 27 July 2015, the Council was informed by DWP that they had been successful in reaching the Full Application Stage for Open Call 2 and Open Call 3 which have a full contract value including local match of £22,140,535.

The YEI would support approx 5,300 young people aged 15 to 29 years over the lifetime of the programme across the Tees Valley with progression into education, employment, self-employment and training. The full applications were submitted to DWP on 4 September 2015 however projects were expected to commence on 1 October 2015 with all delivery needing to be completed by 31 July 2018. The commencement date set at 1 October 2015 had required the matter to be brought urgently to Committee.

Members welcomed the report and the news of the investment into the Tees valley. The Chair of the Regeneration Services Committee commented that it showed again that Hartlepool could punch above its weight in achieving this type of investment. Members congratulated all the officers involved in achieving the successful bid. The Assistant Director commented that as well as officers in the Economic Regeneration team, there had been valuable input from officers in Youth Services, Legal Services and the Finance Division.

Decision

1. That the success in attracting funding of £22,141,000 for the period 2015 to 2018 for the Tees Valley be noted,
2. That approval be given the Council to act as the Accountable Body on behalf of the Tees Valley for the full project value of £22,141,000 and note the related risks as detailed in section 6 of the report,
3. That the Chief Solicitor, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods, and Chief Finance Officer be authorised to complete contracts to transfer legal responsibilities under the grant conditions to the other Tees Valley authorities and partners including the potential for clawback in relation to each Councils share of the scheme,
4. That it be noted that no funding will be paid over to authorities until these agreements have been signed to accept the full transfer of the grant conditions and risks of non compliance,
5. That it be noted that the Council's net financial risk will be £3.213m,
6. That the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods, Chief Solicitor and Chief Finance Officer be authorised to approve the Councils acceptance of the grant subject to satisfactory completion of due diligences and completion of recommendation 3;

7. That it be noted that the Council's match funding will be met from other grant funding streams and existing staffing budgets as detailed in Section 5,
8. That further update reports will be brought to committee to advise on progress of the project.

95. 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 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

Minute 96 – Promoting Change, Transforming Lives Project – 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 furnished to the Council by a Government Department upon terms (however expressed) which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public.

96. Promoting Change, Transforming Lives Project

(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Director of Child and Adult Services) 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 furnished to the Council by a Government Department upon terms (however expressed) which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public.

Type of decision

Key Decision (test (i)/(ii)) Forward Plan Reference No. CAS 036/15

Purpose of report

To provide an update to the Committee.

Issue(s) for consideration

As detailed in the Exempt section of the minutes.

Decision

As detailed in the Exempt section of the minutes.

The meeting concluded at 11.30 am.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 1 OCTOBER 2015