

CABINET

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

29 August 2006

Present:

The Mayor (Stuart Drummond) - In the Chair

Councillors: Pam Hargreaves (Children's Services Portfolio Holder),
Robbie Payne (Finance Portfolio Holder),
Victor Tumilty (Culture, Leisure and Transportation Portfolio Holder),
Ray Waller (Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder).

Officers: Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive,
Joanne Machers, Chief Personnel Services Officer
Nicola Bailey, Director of Adult and Community Services
Dave Stubbs, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning Services
Joanne Smithson, Head of Community Strategy
Ralph Harrison, Head of Public Protection and Housing
Chris Little, Assistant Chief Financial Officer
David Cosgrove, Principal Democratic Services Officer

48. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were submitted for Councillors Cath Hill (Deputy Mayor) and Peter Jackson (Performance Management Portfolio Holder).

49. Declarations of interest by members

None.

50. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 14th August 2006

Confirmed

51. Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2006-2007 (Director of Neighbourhood Services)

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework.

Purpose of report

To consider the Food Law Enforcement Plan 2006/07, as required under the Budget and Policy Framework.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Director of Neighbourhood Services sought consideration of an updated version of the Food Law Enforcement Plan revised to reflect performance in 2005/06. A copy of the Food Law Enforcement Plan 2006/7 was circulated and a summary provided of the main issues contained within it.

Decision

That the Food Law Enforcement Plan 2006/07 be forwarded to Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum.

52. Members ICT – Flexible and Remote Access (Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer)

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) applies

Purpose of report

To outline the approach that it is intended to take to enable members and officers to access to Council's ICT systems from places other than their usual office environment and to improve the facilities available to members attending meetings in the Civic Suite.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

There are four distinct objectives that need to be delivered in order to fully enable flexible and remote access for members and officers. These are as follows, though the report dealt with the first three in detail:

- a) access to the back office systems remotely from a Northgate owned PC under a desktop managed service arrangement (DMS PC)
- b) access to the back office systems remotely from a privately owned home PC (Home PC)
- c) wireless network access within the Civic Suite
- d) provision of the necessary equipment to members to enable them to gain access within the Civic Suite.

The four objectives are to be delivered by a mixture of solutions. This

proposal puts in the infrastructure and the solution is scalable to enable additional users to be added in the future should the Councils requirements for flexible working increase. Details of the financial costs of these were set out in the report.

The financial business case for flexible working and remote access becomes very compelling when the number of people actually working full time from home allows the Council to reduce office space, and consequently reduce our building portfolio. There are also likely to be savings in printing and distribution costs associated with committee papers as members begin to access them electronically.

Decision

1. That the proposal outlined in the report to enable the infrastructure to be established which will allow flexible and remote access to ICT systems be agreed.
2. That a demonstration of alternative equipment to allow members to decide on the most appropriate solution(s) for them be held.

53. To consider and approve the Supporting People Five Year Strategy 2006-11 (*Head of Public Protection and Housing*)

Type of decision

Key Decision – Tests (i) and (ii) apply

Purpose of report

A draft Supporting People Five Year Strategy for 2006-2011 was submitted for approval. The Strategy set the long-term direction for housing related support services by providing a framework based on the Local Strategic Partnership's vision for the future of Hartlepool.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

Guidance from Department of Communities and Local Government (previously ODPM) makes it clear that the Supporting People Strategy must be set within a strategic framework including the housing strategy. The overall strategic direction is outlined in the Community Strategy and it is from this that Supporting People takes its lead. The Supporting People programme (£3.8m annually) must contribute to and complement a great many other strategies, but at the same time have its own identity and vision.

The Strategy sets out how the authority will achieve good quality services that will have been reshaped or developed to more closely align with local strategic priorities and are flexible enough to meet the changing needs of service users.

Members referred to the budget shown as part of the annual plan (section 12 of the strategy) where a zero budget was shown for young persons with drug problems. Members were assured that this service was a priority for

Supporting People funding. Some Members were concerned at the residential accommodation to be provided at the Gainford House development. Specialised accommodation for people with complex needs was what residents in Waldon Street had been informed would be provided but this now seemed to be directed towards those with drug problems. Officers indicated that the facilities to be provided as part of this development would include residential accommodation for those with substance misuse problems, including drug addiction, and this had always been made clear from the conception of the scheme. Members also questioned when they would receive the report from the consultants into the authority's housing services that they had commissioned earlier in the year. The commissioned report would be included as part of the review of the management of the Housing Services which will be presented to Cabinet in the near future..

Decision

That the Supporting People Five Year Strategy be approved for submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government.

54. Scrutiny Partnerships Enquiry Action Plan *(Head of Community Strategy)*

Type of decision

Non-Key

Purpose of report

To agree an Action Plan in response to the findings of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's consideration of Partnership working in the Local Authority.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

In May 2006 Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum concluded its inquiry into Partnership working. The aim of the investigation was to assess the governance arrangements surrounding sub-regional and local partnerships on which Hartlepool Borough Council was represented. On 15th May, Cabinet received the Forum's final report and approved and supported the associated recommendations. An Action-Plan in response to the recommendations has now been produced and was submitted as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Children's Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor Hargreaves, commented in relation to three specific actions set out in the action plan. In relation to (e) (which was also linked to (i)) the Portfolio Holder considered that a voluntary sector representative should be involved. Councillor Hargreaves commented that the proposed action at (g) had already been completed. In relation to (k), Councillor Hargreaves considered that rather than awaiting the White Paper, there should be a move now to increase elected Councillor representation on the thematic partnerships. Councillor Hargreaves did not feel that the Councillor representatives needed to be

prescribed, i.e. linked to a particular portfolio holder or scrutiny chair. It was accepted that the functions and roles of the members involved would need to be decided and this would require further consideration. The Mayor was, however, concerned at pushing through changes now that could be affected by the White Paper when it was published.

A member expressed ~~his~~ concern at the amount of officer time the various partnerships the Council was involved in took up, particularly when the Council was facilitating partnerships where other partner bodies made no financial input. It was highlighted that the Scrutiny Investigation had only looked at governance issues but did acknowledge Council Officer input and the Council's financing of partnerships. The Head of Community Strategy commented that partnership working was being promoted by the government as the essential way forward for local service provision and indeed many services were already jointly provided and the Council has particularly strong links with local health service providers, the Police and Housing Hartlepool. Much of this work was now part of the Council's mainstream service provision. Councillor Hargreaves noted that partnership working was a necessary and efficient method of liaison and coordination between partners. It was also noted that there was an action in the Action Plan that related to the above matter.

Decision

1. That the Action Plan be approved.
2. That the report be forwarded to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum together with the comments made at this meeting.

J A BROWN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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