

REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

12 FEBRUARY 2015

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Robbie Payne (In the Chair)

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

Officers: Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration
David Worthington, Head of Culture and Information
Nigel Johnson, Head of Housing
Sylvia Pinkney, Public Protection Manager
Maggie Heaps, Learning and Skills Manager
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

103. Apologies for Absence

Councillor George Morris

104. Declarations of Interest

None.

105. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2015

Confirmed.

106. New Dwellings Outside of Development Limits Supplementary Planning Document (*Assistant Director, Regeneration*)

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to seek permission of the Regeneration Services Committee to re-consult the public on the Draft New Dwellings Outside of Development Limits Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The re-consultation follows changes in planning legislation which needed to be reflected on the SPD.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Assistant Director, Regeneration reported that during preparation of the Local Plan 2012, which has since been withdrawn, the SPD was accordingly drafted and consulted on. However, preparations for a new Local Plan were now underway and there was, therefore, the need to re-draft and re-consult on the New Dwellings Outside of Development Limits SPD. There had also been changes in national guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework set out where isolated development in the countryside may be justified.

It is proposed that public consultation be undertaken on the draft SPD, a copy of which was submitted with the report, commencing on 20 February 2014 and running for a minimum period of eight weeks. The public consultation would be undertaken in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI was prepared in compliance with the Hartlepool Compact and its associated protocols.

Decision

That the report be noted and that consultation on the draft New Dwellings Outside of Development Limits Supplementary Planning Document be approved.

107. Culture and Place Strategy Scoping Report (*Assistant Director, Regeneration*)

Type of decision

Non Key Decision.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to establish the scope of the Council's Culture and Place Strategy and to agree a mechanism for the Council's contribution to the North East Case for Culture Manifesto.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Head of Culture and Information reported that the current Hartlepool Borough Council Cultural Strategy expired in 2014. It is proposed that a new strategy is written covering the period 2015-2030 with a review every five years; this aligns with the time period covered in the North East Case for Culture Manifesto.

Hartlepool has been asked to contribute to the North East Partnership in their aim to prepare a manifesto for culture to 2030, this will be presented to the new Government in June 2015 and would create a positive and constructive vision for the arts and heritage. The Manifesto would aim to illustrate how culture can contribute to the economy, health and wellbeing, and a sense of place and community.

Consultation sessions on the manifesto would take place in early March 2015. Hartlepool's findings would be submitted to the North East partnership by 20th March with the finalised Manifesto being launched in June 2015.

The Council's own Culture and Place Strategy would be reported to the Regeneration Committee in September 2015 for consideration. This would include an action plan for delivery which could be monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Members questioned the delay between the previous Council plan which expired in 2014 and the new plan which would not be submitted to Members until September. The Head of Culture and Information indicated that the existing strategy had been carried forward. It was decided that it would be more productive to have the new strategy tie in with the new North East Partnership document to ensure the Council was best placed to maximise the potential for future funding bids.

Decision

That the proposed scope of the Culture and Place Strategy as reported be approved.

108. Housing Services Policies (For Stock Management)
(Assistant Director, Regeneration)

Type of decision

Non Key Decision.

Purpose of report

The report was to advise the Committee about the policies and procedures that were required to deliver an efficient and cost effective Housing Management Service in line with statutory regulations.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Head of Housing reported that on 28th March 2014, the Committee approved internalising the management of Council owned stock into the remit of the Housing Services Team. On 30 June 2014, Committee also approved a proposal to set up a Social Lettings Agency in Hartlepool.

Robust policies and procedures were required to deliver a housing management service. Housing management involved responsibilities to collect rent, recover debt, provide responsive repairs and maintenance, void preparation and undertake tenancy management duties ranging from the allocation of the property, tenancy sign up, tenancy visits and dealing with any complaints including reports of anti social behaviour.

The effective delivery of these services also involved accessing the expertise and support from other Council teams and internal Service Level

Agreements have been developed with Legal, Finance, Building Maintenance and Consultancy and Community Safety.

A range of policies had been developed for implementation by the Housing Services Team and the team would also follow the existing Tees Valley Compass Allocations Policy when dealing with applications to the housing register, allocations and lettings, and the Council's existing Anti-Social Behaviour Policy when dealing with nuisance complaints.

Members questioned the specifics of the proposed Right to Buy Policy. The Head of Housing indicated that the policy was broadly similar to that previously adopted by the Council and used by other social landlords but differed in that the calculation of the purchase price had to take account of the 'cost floor target' of the property which reflected the purchase price and costs to improve the property.

The Chair wished to record his thanks for the work undertaken by the Housing Team in developing the policies.

Decision

That the policies and procedures as detailed below and submitted with the report be approved and adopted to deliver the housing management service.

Aids and Adaptations Policy
Complaints Policy
Decoration Policy
Debt Recovery Policy
Estate Management Policy
Rechargeable Repairs Policy
Repairs and Maintenance Policy
Rent Setting and Service Charge Policy
Tenant Involvement and Consultation Policy
Right to Buy Policy
Tenancy Policy
Tenancy Management Policy
Void Management Policy.

109. Quarterly Update Report for Public Protection (*Director of Public Health*)

Type of decision

None – the report was for the Committee's information only.

Purpose of report

To update the Regeneration Services Committee on performance and progress across key areas of the Public Protection service.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Public Protection Manager updated the Committee on the work undertaken over the last quarter by the three discrete within Public Protection; Commercial Services, Environmental Protection and Trading Standards and Licensing.

The Chair welcomed the report and particularly the reports on the actions taken by the team in relation to fraudulent doorstep callers through the 'Say No to Doorstep Callers Campaign in conjunction with Cleveland Police. Officers were to be congratulated on campaigns such as this that provided valuable protection to the public, particularly the elderly, who were often the subject of fraudulent cold callers.

Decision

That the report be noted.

110. Council Plan 2015/16 – Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department Proposals *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Non-Key Decision.

Purpose of report

To provide the opportunity for the Regeneration Services Committee to consider the proposals for inclusion in the 2015/16 Council Plan that fall under the remit of the Committee for the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Assistant Director, Regeneration reported that as in previous years detailed proposals were being considered by each of the Policy Committees throughout February in respect of their areas of responsibility. A report would be prepared for Finance and Policy Committee on the 23rd March detailing the comments/observations of each of the Committees along with a full draft of the 2015/16 Council Plan.

The report set out the details of the outcomes that had been included in the Outcome Framework within Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department that fell under the remit of the Regeneration Services Committee and how these will be delivered in 2015/16.

Appendix A to the report provided detail on the proposed actions identified by the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department to deliver the outcomes that fall under the remit of the Regeneration Services Committee. Performance Indicators (PIs) that would be monitored throughout the year in order to measure progress were also included alongside a number of key risks.

Decision

That the proposed outcome templates, as reported, be approved for inclusion in the 2015/16 Council Plan and that they be included in the overall plan reported to Finance and Policy Committee on 23rd March 2014.

111. Culture and Information Services Quarterly Report – October-December 2014 *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

None – the report was for the Committee's information only.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to inform and update members on the work of the Culture and Information Services Section for the period 1st October – 31st December 2014.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Head of Culture and Information reported on the programmes and initiatives during the period October-December 2014 within the Culture and Information Services.

The Officer highlighted the Summer Read Medal Ceremonies where over 360 children attended the annual events at branch libraries. In addition over 400 attended the Central Library's Summer Read and Arts Award presentations which, for the first time, were held in the Council Chamber of the Civic Centre. The events around the WWI Commemorations had also been very successful. The bombardment memorial events on the Headland had drawn significant numbers of visitors as had the exhibition at Hartlepool Museum.

Members referred to the Bombardment Memorial event which had been a very poignant remembrance of the events of 16 December 1914. The Chair commented that there had been some negativity surrounding the organisation of the events on 16 December but there had been none in relation to the day itself, which had proved to be very successful and reflected the hard work officers had put into arranging a suitable memorial for those that had lost their lives 100 years ago.

Decision

That the report be noted.

112. Update on the Empty Property Purchasing Scheme *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

None – the report was for the Committee's information only.

Purpose of report

To outline progress in implementing the Council's Empty Property

Purchasing Scheme.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Head of Housing reported on the implementation of the Empty Property Purchasing Scheme which had brought 100 long term empty homes back into use. The Council had purchased all 100 properties, the purchase of the 100th property being completed in October 2014. A full evaluation of Phase 1 of the programme was timetabled to commence once all the properties refurbishments had been completed by 31st March 2015. The aim would be to produce an evaluation report in late spring, early summer 2015.

Members welcomed the report and commented that they would wish to see further additions to the Council's stock. Members questioned if all the properties would be completed by the end of the financial year. The Head of Housing stated that all refurbishments would be completed by 31 March but not all properties would be let by that date. The next potential round of acquisitions would commence in the new financial year. Agreement had been sought from the Housing and Communities Agency to commence a new scheme of purchases. The Assistant Director indicated that while the current programme had largely been delivered through the government scheme, the Authority could be more ambitious if Members wished to expand the housing stock it held.

Decision

That the report be noted.

113. Strategic Financial Management Report – As at 31 December 2014 (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods, Director of Public Health and Chief Finance Officer*)

Type of decision

None – the report was for the Committee's information only.

Purpose of report

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

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The latest report submitted to the Finance and Policy Committee on 30th January 2015 advised Members that there will be an overall underspend in the current year. This position reflects action taken by the Corporate Management Team to achieve underspends to help address the significant financial challenges facing the Council over the next few years and to fund one-off commitments not provided for in the approved 2014/15 budget as these items were not known at the time.

The Regeneration Services Committee has responsibility for services managed by the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and the Director of Public Health. Budgets were managed at a Departmental level and a summary of the Departmental position for both Directors areas of responsibility was set out in the report. Details of the Capital Budget positions were also reported.

Decision

That the report be noted.

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

Type of decision

None – the report was for the Committee's information only.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report is to update members about the work of the Adult Education service for the current academic year.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Learning and Skills Manager reported on the activities of the Adult Education service from the beginning of the academic year 2014-2015 until the end of the first term. While tuition fees for courses were increased slightly for 2014-2015 the service had been monitoring the numbers participating to see if this has made a difference to the enrolments. To date it seems it has not made a significant difference to enrolments. Enrolments were currently at 2327 with 1455 enrolled as part of the Tees Valley Workforce Skills project, a European Social Fund (ESF) funded project delivered in partnership with the other Tees Valley local authorities.

The Learning and Skills Manager highlighted that the service was working with the Health and Safety team to deliver a Working Safely course to unemployed adults. When the learners had achieved this certificate they were referred to the Economic Development team who give them access to the Construction Safety Certificate. This was the minimum requirement to enable individuals to gain employment in construction industry and 56 had attained this qualification through the service.

The first term of the academic year has just ended and while it was not possible to determine the full picture of the enrolments for whole year it was expected that the number of learners recruited would be less than last year as there had been a 27% decrease in the allocation for the Adult Skills budget. The first electronic return had been submitted to the Skills Funding Agency in December and this showed that the Council had achieved 69% of its allocation for Adult Skills to date. In the last academic year i.e. 2013-2014 the Council had only achieved 50% of its allocation at this time.

Decision

That the report be noted.

115. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Vice-Chairman referred to the Industrial Communities Alliance meeting on 19 March 2015 which was being hosted by the Council. The Vice-Chair considered that this would be an excellent opportunity to promote Hartlepool and the masterplan to a national audience. The Assistant Director, Regeneration indicated that he understood the event would be held at the Historic Quay and officers would use the opportunity to promote the Masterplan.

The meeting concluded at 4.25 pm

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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