

REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

17 July 2015

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

Present:

Councillor: Kevin Cranney (In the Chair)

Councillors: Stephen Akers-Belcher, Alan Clark, Rob Cook, Jim Lindridge and Paul Thompson

Officers: Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration
Nigel Johnson, Head of Housing
Sarah Scarr, Heritage and Countryside Manager
Antony Steinberg, Economic Regeneration Manager
Dale Clark, Estates and Regeneration Manager
Pat Usher, Head of Sport and Recreation
Tracy Rowe, Community Regeneration Officer
Steve Hilton, Public Relations Officer
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

10. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor George Morris.

11. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Paul Thompson declared a personal interest in minute 15.

12. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2015

Received.

13. Sport and Physical Activity Initiative and Services – Progress Report *(Director of Public Health)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To inform and update Members on the work of the Sport and Physical Activity Team which is part of Hartlepool Borough Council's Sport and Recreation Service. This area of work includes Summerhill Outdoor Activity Centre and Country Park, the Outdoor Activities Service, GP Referral Programme, Learn to Swim (including Primary School Lessons) and all targeted work aimed at increasing participation in sport and physical activity.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Head of Sport and Recreation presented the very detailed and comprehensive report which included statistics for 2015/16 on the take up of the activities undertaken by the Sport and Physical Activity Team including:

- Learn to swim programme;
- Summerhill and the Outdoor Activities Team;
- GP Referral Scheme;
- Community Sport Activation Fund (CSAF) Programme;
- Walks Programme;
- Disability Sport Provision;
- Sportivate;
- Together Project;
- Looked After Children;
- Orienteering;
- Football Development;
- Club Development, Action Groups and National Governing Bodies of Sport;
- Coach and Volunteer Development; and
- Satellite Clubs.

Members congratulated the Officers on the excellent work undertaken in relation to the provision and subsequent take up of sports related activities. A Member sought clarification on the breakdown of communities accessing these activities on a ward by ward basis to ascertain if the services were meeting the needs of residents across the town. The Head of Sport and Recreation confirmed that the take up of services on a ward by ward basis could be collated from the performance monitoring data already collected and would be circulated to Members. It was highlighted by a Member that neighbouring Ward Councillors and local residents had commented that the circular pathway can be somewhat challenging for people and questioned whether there were any plans to improve this pathway. The Head of Sport and Recreation indicated she was aware of this issue and was exploring the potential to utilise Section 106 funding from local developments to improve this area.

A Member questioned the feasibility of achieving 100% attendance on the Learn to Swim Programme. The Head of Sport and Recreation responded that 100% take-up was always an aspiration, however, it was a difficult balance as there was a need to ensure that enough qualified instructors were employed to expand the programme as demand increased and that if 100% was achieved, there would be no flexibility to cope with any more demand.

In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Sport and Recreation confirmed that all local football clubs would be supported as they were an important component to ensure sport was available for residents. The Member was asked to pass on any information related to a specific case to the Head of Sport and Recreation outside of the meeting for further investigation.

A Member sought clarification on the potential future income estimates that could be generated from Summerhill. The Head of Sport and Recreation indicated that the net cost of Summerhill had reduced over the last three years through increased marketing and promotion and subsequent increased footfall and income resulting in a reduction in the cost to the Council. Further work had been undertaken on the holiday activity provision and there were increased opportunities for the residents of the town to take part in activities at Summerhill. It was acknowledged that there was still more to be done and a Business Development Manager had recently been appointed to explore more income generation areas including at Summerhill.

A Member noted that the work undertaken as part of the EDAN Type 2 Diabetes Prevention Programme had been widely recognised and clarification was sought on the potential to develop a specific Cancer Rehabilitation exercise scheme locally. The Head of Sport and Recreation confirmed that pilots for this had already been in operation and there were new sessions due to commence this summer and feedback on this would be provided to Members.

A member of the public questioned whether there were any plans to introduce the use of a specialised bicycle to ensure disabled people could achieve full access to Summerhill. The Head of Sport and Recreation indicated that this would be explored further along with the potential to secure grant funding for this.

Clarification was sought by a Member on the utilisation of the community building at Grayfields recreation ground. The Head of Sport and Recreation confirmed that the building was used a lot including the changing accommodation, community room and small kitchen facility. However, it was suggested that there was potential to increase the use of this facility during the day and this would be explored further.

Decision

- 1) That the contents of the report were noted which highlighted the positive work and physical activity initiatives provided by the Council's Sport and Recreation Service.
- 2) That a breakdown of the utilisation of the different services provided by the Sports and Recreation Service on a ward by ward basis be provided to Members.
- 3) That feedback on the pilots already undertaken to develop specific Cancer Rehabilitation exercise scheme be provided to Members.
- 4) That the potential to provide an adapted bicycle for disabled people to utilise at Summerhill be explored further.
- 5) That the potential to increase usage of the community building at Grayfields recreation ground during the day be explored.

14. Quarterly Housing Report – January-March 2014/15 (Assistant Director, Regeneration)

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To update Members about the progress across key areas of Housing Services relating to empty homes, enforcement activity, Selective Licensing, Disabled Facilities Grants, housing allocations and housing advice and homelessness prevention during the fourth quarter of 2014/15. In addition, the report provided an annual update on progress with Warm Up North and also outlined the ongoing activity with regards to Housing Management Services and review of Housing Strategies.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Head of Housing presented the report which provided a comprehensive update for each of the service areas within the responsibility of Housing as noted above. A Member referred to the reference to Disabled Facilities Grants only being valid for six months and questioned the reapplication process. The Head of Housing confirmed that the six months validity was prescribed by the Government and indicated that Council's processes included a review of all Disabled Facilities Grants on a six monthly basis to ascertain if the applicant had any further requirements as opposed to a re-application for the Grant. In response to further questions from Members on the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants, the Head of Housing confirmed that the budget for these Grants was supported with underspend from other budgets. A Member requested that a report be presented to a

future meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee exploring a solution to need to 'top up' the budget from underspends as this appeared to be an ongoing issue, to ensure demand was met and ensure the flow of funding was in the correct place. The Head of Housing clarified that Disabled Facilities Grant funding provided by the Government increased slightly year on year.

In response to clarification sought by Members on the Warm Up North initiative, the Assistant Director, Regeneration indicated that information on this would be circulated to Members on how residents access this funding. In addition, a Member requested a breakdown of the energy efficiency measures installed in 2014/15 on a ward by ward basis along with a breakdown by age group of people applying and how they were prioritised.

A discussion ensued on the Empty Homes Strategy and how this provided solutions to bringing empty homes which had proved problematic and unsightly for local residents back into use through the utilisation of Compulsory Purchase Orders and refurbishment. The Head of Housing highlighted that the Empty Homes Strategy had proved very successful with only 15 properties left to let out of 100 properties purchased and improved in what had been very challenging timescales. In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Housing indicated that all properties were offered for rent at 80% of the average market rent which was fixed for five years with a review of the tenancy agreement undertaken in year four.

A Member sought clarification on the timescales involved in disabled adaptations to properties and the Head of Housing confirmed he would circulate a breakdown of these figures.

The Chair questioned the progress on the creation of a Selective Licensing Steering Group. The Head of Housing confirmed that this was included within the Action Plan currently being implemented adding that he would forward a copy of the Action Plan to the Chair to provide an update on progress.

Decision

- 1) The report was noted along with the progress made across key areas of the Housing Services.
- 2) That information on the application process for Warm Up North be circulated to Members.
- 3) That a report be submitted to the Finance and Policy Committee to enable Members to consider the budget provision for Disabled Facilities Grants and how this was historically subsidised by budgetary underspends from elsewhere to ensure the flow of funding was where it was needed.
- 4) That a breakdown of the timescales involved in the provision of disabled adaptations be circulated to Members.
- 5) That a breakdown of Warm Up North funding awards on a ward by

ward basis be circulated to Members including the age groups of applicants and how applications were prioritised.

- 6) That the action plan showing the progress on implementing selective licensing and the creation of a steering group be circulated to the Chair as an update.

15. Youth Employment Initiative *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the Committee that an application had been submitted to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to deliver the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI).

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report provided the background to the creation of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and the programme deliverables. It was highlighted that the Council had been approached by a number of partners to act as the Accountable Body to submit bids to the Open Calls for Youth Employment Initiative as part of a Tees Valley Consortium. It was noted that the Council had secured the full match funding requirements of £7.2m through this partnership approach. The Human Resource implications were outlined in the report and it was noted that this would be revisited when confirmation of the level of funding was received.

The Committee congratulated the Team on the excellent work undertaken in leading this bid for funding on behalf of the Tees Valley. In response to a question from the Chair, the Economic Regeneration Manager confirmed that the funding would be matched to need and there was enough resource to make a big impact on the local market.

Decision

The content of the report was noted with further updates to be provided to future meetings of the Committee.

16. Economic Regeneration Quarterly Update Including Grant Outturn 2014/15 *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To update Members on the work of the Economic Regeneration Team (ERT). The report also provides the grant outturn for 2014/15 (see confidential Appendix 1). **This appendix 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 information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).**

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Economic Regeneration Manager presented the report which provided the service delivery of the Economic Regeneration Team and detailed the key activities undertaken in the following areas:

- Overarching Activity;
- Hartlepool Enterprise Hub;
- Partnership Working;
- Hartlepool Enterprise Centre;
- Grant Support;
- Business Registrations per 10,000 of Population;
- New Business Survival Rate – 1 year;
- Tourism; and
- Hartlepool Working Solutions.

The outturn performance indicators were listed in the report and included £498,897 external funding defrayed across the whole service.

The Team were congratulated on their performance highlighting that youth unemployment had reduced to 4.5% and young people were being encouraged to look at self-employment and enterprise initiatives. The Economic Regeneration Manager echoed Members comments adding that the continued success demonstrated the excellent partnership arrangements in place.

Decision

Members noted the content of the report and that further update reports will be submitted to future meetings of the Committee.

17. Quarterly Report for Heritage and Countryside – April-June 2015 *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To update Members on performance and progress across the key areas of Heritage and Countryside Services for the fourth quarter of 2014/15.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Heritage and Countryside Manager presented the report which provided the background and service provision responsibilities of the Heritage and Countryside Service. Further detailed information was provided on the following areas:

- Countryside Wardens;
- Rights of Way and Local Access Forum;
- Ecology;
- Built Heritage; and
- Tees Archaeology.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Heritage and Countryside Manager indicated she would circulate further information on the number of volunteers who were actively involved in the Heritage and Countryside Service. A Member highlighted the ongoing problem with deliberate fires in the seaton dunes area and confirmed that the Seaton Ward Councillors had offered financial support to initiatives to deal with this issue. The Heritage and Countryside Manager confirmed that work was ongoing with Natural England to raise awareness in schools of the issues around the setting of deliberate fires.

Members noted there were a lot of local volunteer groups who do fantastic work around the town including the Friends of Seaton Park and the Friends of Hartlepool Wild Green Spaces and this work should be recognised.

A Member referred to the work commissioned by Historic England with a Maritime Archaeology Consultant to develop a pilot project to assess the

importance of shipwrecks off the local coastline and suggested that signage be installed to highlight where sites of specific interest were located.

Decision

- 1) The contents of the report were noted along with the progress made across key areas of the Heritage and Countryside Team.
- 2) That the provision of signage to highlight sites of specific interest relating to shipwrecks off the coast of Hartlepool be explored.

18. Coastal Community Teams *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To update Members on potential funding available to “Coastal Community Teams” to enable them to be established, support development of a plan and/or progress initial priorities.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report provided the background to the creation of a Coastal Community Team and the potential funding available. It was noted that the team should be a cross section of the local community together with representation from the Local Authority. Due to the time constraints in the bidding process, in terms of developing a Coastal Community Team, a subgroup of the Economic Forum had been created which provided representation from the necessary cross section of the local community. It was noted that the Hartlepool Regeneration Masterplan provided the strategic framework within which the Team will operate and from which priorities will be determined. The Economic Regeneration Manager informed Members that since the report had been written, Hartlepool had been awarded 10k for the Headland and Harbour and 10k for the Seaton areas with the potential to bid for further funding available.

The Chair commended the Teams for the development and submission of the successful bids.

Decision

That the content of the report was noted and that further updates would be submitted to future meetings of this Committee.

19. Quarterly Update Report for Planning Services – January-March 2015 *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To update Members on performance and progress across the key areas of Planning Services for the fourth quarter of 2014/2015.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Assistant Director, Regeneration presented the detailed report which provided Members with the background to the provision of Development Control and Planning Policy. In relation to Development Control, a number of performance monitoring statistics were included and it was highlighted that the overall income for 2014/15 was £837,985 compared to 2013/14 which was £372,837 which shows a significant increase in fees received. Members were informed that the Planning Policy team had completed the public consultation on the first stage of the new Local Plan and were now working on the main evidence base of documents that underpin the Local Plan.

A Member congratulated Officers in both teams as they worked together really well. A discussion ensued on the Government's announcement for the potential to develop brown field land. The Assistant Director, Regeneration commented that this announcement was in line with the Government's general direction of the relaxation of planning powers and the removal of control from Local Authorities. There were other issues included within the Government's announcements and Officers were currently working through them to ascertain the impact on the Council.

A Member requested an update report on the Council's Tree Strategy and see if any progress had been made to increasing the number of trees in the town. The Assistant Director, Regeneration indicated that an update report on the action plan would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

It was highlighted by a Member that there may be a reduction in staffing in the Enforcement section of Planning Services. The Assistant Director, Regeneration indicated that enforcement responsibilities will be dispersed among other Officers. It was suggested that Members be informed who to contact about any future enforcement issues. The Assistant Director, Regeneration Services indicated he would email Members but that they could contact any Officers within Planning Services and the matter would

be progressed.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director, Regeneration confirmed that work was ongoing with the development of the Local Plan.

Decision

- 1) That the content of the report was noted along with the progress made across the key areas of the Planning Services Team.
- 2) That the Assistant Director, Regeneration would email Members with an update list of contact Officers within the Planning Services Section for the reporting of enforcement issues.

20. North Linear Park Project *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To notify Members of the proposal to submit a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant application based on the area around the former Hartlepool to Haswell railway line.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Heritage and Countryside Manager presented a report which provided the background to the submission of the bid for HLF funding. It was noted that the application was for an initial grant to support the development of the project including an audit of the historic environment. A further application would then be made within a year and examples of the types of project that would be run in that phase were listed in the report.

In response to a question from a member, the former Mayor of Hartlepool, Councillor Stephen Akers-Belcher commented on the coastal pathway from the Headland to Crimdon which he had undertaken as part of a fund raising walk. Councillor Akers-Belcher noted that the pathway was challenging to walk along in parts, especially around the golf course. However, one of the main issues that arose during the fund raising walk was the lack of public convenience facilities and he hoped that this would be taken into account as part of the long term strategy for the area as well as further planting of trees to increase the local wildlife in the area.

A Member referred to the Hart to Haswell walkway which was well used but

there was a problem with dog fouling along the walkway. It was also suggested that additional benches could be placed along the walkway but the main problem was that there were no facilities there and any improvements to the walkway would be welcomed.

Decision

Members noted the proposal to submit an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund in August 2015 for a development grant to support the development of a project based around the Hartlepool to Haswell Railway

21. The Moving Forward Project *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To inform Members of additional funding acquired from the Skills Funding Agency to deliver a Community Learning Mental Health pilot project.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Assistant Director, Regeneration presented the report which provided a the background to the provision of additional funding to deliver the pilot project. The funding would be available over two academic years (2014-2016) and was for a maximum of £80,000. It was highlighted that the funding would be used to provide a staff training programme for staff involved with the project and support the delivery of activities to support those adults with a mild mental health need to participate in learning activities.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director, Regeneration confirmed that the bid for funding had been developed with advice and guidance from MIND, who were a key partner, and the Child and Adult Services Department and it was noted that a further £15m could be available if the pilot scheme was successful. It was highlighted that around 15 partners were involved in the project.

Decision

The contents of the report were noted.

22. Estates and Regeneration Update Report – December 2014-June 2015 *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To update Members about progress across key areas of the Estates and Regeneration Section relating to capital receipts and property management together with progress in relation to the masterplan, other regeneration initiatives and capital investment and funding bids.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Estates and Regeneration Manager presented a detailed report which included progress updates on the areas noted above. In response to a question from a Member, the Estates and Regeneration Manager confirmed that work was ongoing with the Friarage Manor site.

A Member commended Officers for the work they had undertaken in progressing and securing the Manor House site and requested that he be kept updated with progress.

The Estates and Regeneration Manager responded to a number of questions from Members with updates. The Assistant Director, Regeneration confirmed that there had been a change in Government policy had resulted in some wind turbine projects being unviable. The applications for the wind turbines were currently with the National Planning Unit for consultation.

In relation to the Longscar site in Seaton Carew, the Assistant Director, Regeneration, Members were informed that negotiations with the current owners were continuing, with the Compulsory Purchase Order progressing alongside. In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director, Regeneration confirmed that an enhanced MOT provision for commercial vehicles had commenced in the Council's Depot which had recently relocated to the Tofts Farm Industrial Estate site. The Assistant Director, Regeneration clarified that whilst the Pupil Referral Unit was not on the current list of schools to be improved as part of the Priority Schools Building Programme Phase 1, it was high on a list of priorities for the Chief Executive and a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

Decision

- 1) The contents of the report were noted including the range, depth and recent achievements across all the key areas of the Estates and Regeneration Service.
- 2) The achievements in the period December – June 2015 were noted.

23. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

The meeting concluded at 11.49 am

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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