

REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

28 August 2015

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Kevin Cranney (In the Chair)

Councillors: Alan Clark, Rob Cook, Jim Lindridge and Paul Thompson.

Also Present:

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2 (ii), Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher was in attendance for Councillor Stephen Akers-Belcher

Edwin Jeffries, Secretary of the Joint Trade Unions

Officers: Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health
David Worthington, Head of Culture and Information
Rob Smith, Principal Regeneration Officer
Lynda Igoe, Principal Housing Advice Officer
Nigel Johnson, Head of Housing
Dale Clarke, Estates and Regeneration Manager
Sylvia Pinkney, Head of Public Protection
Antony Steinberg, Economic Regeneration Manager
Andy Carter, Planning Services Manager
Fiona Stanforth, Planning Policy Officer
Maggie Heaps, Learning and Skills Manager
Garry Hutchinson, Building Control Manager
Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

33. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Stephen Aker-Belcher and George Morris.

34. Declarations of Interest

None at this point in the meeting. However, personal interests were

declared later in the meeting (Minutes 41 and 52 refer)

35. Minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2015

Received.

36. Savings Programme 2016/17 – Public Health Department *(Director of Public Health)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To identify proposals for the delivery of savings in relation to Public Health core revenue funded services for consideration as part of the 2016/17 budget process.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Director of Public Health presented the report which included the proposals for delivery of savings in Public Health as part of the 2016/17 budget process, the risks associated with the proposals and the considerations which had been taken into account in developing them.

The report included a breakdown of expenditure as well as details of outcomes/outputs. The proposed contribution from Public Health for 2016/17 was £79,000 which had been identified from Sport and Recreation and Public Protection service areas. Details of how the savings would be achieved were provided as detailed in the report. Members were referred to the risk implications, financial as well as staffing considerations, as set out in the report.

With regard to the proposal to cease provision of the out of hours noise service, the Head of Service responded to concerns raised by Members in relation to the impact of the proposals. A Member sought clarification on the take-up figures in terms of level and type of inquiries/complaints. The Head of Service advised that whilst the precise numbers were not to hand, the figures were consistent with previous years. Details of the type of complaints received were provided and included domestic noise issues and mainly related to residents having parties particularly in the summer months or as a result of people congregating in the streets after leaving pubs/takeaways during the early hours.

The Secretary of the Joint Trade Unions raised concerns in relation to the impact of the proposals. Whilst the Committee reluctantly agreed to the savings proposals, it was acknowledged that savings had to be achieved. It

was highlighted that whilst the Council carried the burden of managing out of hours noise problems, the majority of which were police matters, the need to liaise with the police in terms of support was highlighted.

Decision

- (i) The Committee reluctantly agreed the savings proposals relating to Public Health.
- (ii) That the contents of the report and comments of Members, as outlined above, be noted and be utilised to formulate a response to be presented to Finance and Policy Committee.

37. Library Service Review 2015 (*Assistant Director, Regeneration*)

Type of decision

Key decision tests (i) and (ii) apply – Forward Plan Ref No RN23/14

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the findings of the Library Service Review and to make recommendations in relation to the outcome and implementation of the review in 2016/17.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

Prior to presentation of the report the Head of Culture and Information referred Members to minor amendments to the recommendations in the report as a result of amendments to paragraph numbers, a copy of which was tabled at the meeting.

The report provided background information to the decision taken to undertake a Library Service Review in anticipation of the need for future savings. The Library Service consulted with a wide range of stakeholders using a number of consultation methods, details of which were included in the report. The key findings from the consultation had provided a range of options and associated project savings for Members' consideration, details of which were outlined. Options included closure of individual branch libraries and a reduction in opening hours across the branch network. The option to close individual branch libraries was not recommended, the reasons for which were provided. The option to reduce opening hours across the branch network was recommended and would enable the Library Service to maintain the full range of library services it currently offered in branch libraries whilst making significant savings, details of which were included in the report.

The review considered other options as a means of generating savings/ income including not introducing E-book services and cancel on-line resources attaining low levels of use, introduce volunteering opportunities from 2016/17 and an increase in various fees and charges. If Members approved the Library Service Review, proposed budget savings for 2016/17 of approximately £91,000 could be achieved.

During the discussion that followed, whilst the promotion of volunteering opportunities was supported in principle, some concerns were raised regarding the potential impact on employed staff as a result as well as the implications of the proposal to introduce refreshment provision within libraries. In response, the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods provided assurances that the intention was to avoid any compulsory redundancies, utilise volunteers as an additional resource and to fill in any gaps as a result of early retirement or reduction in hours requests. In terms of the catering proposals, Members were advised that catering provision may not be suitable in all branch libraries and would be carefully considered. A view was expressed that further discussions around the use of volunteers was needed.

Reference was made to the 1,555 responses and Members were pleased to note the high response rate to the consultation, that savings could be achieved without the need to close branch libraries and that the review would feed into community hub work streams. The benefits and value of the library service were also emphasised.

Decision

- (i) That the opening hours across the branch network, in line with Section 5.3.2 of the report be agreed.
- (ii) The Committee agreed not to introduce E-book services and cancel on-line resources attaining low levels of use as per section 5.5.3 of the report.
- (iii) That volunteering opportunities for 2016/17, as outlined in section 5.5.5 of the report be further explored prior to introduction of the proposals.
- (iv) That the fees and charges, as set out in the report, be agreed.
- (v) That the changes to loan period and entitlements, as outlined in the report, be agreed.
- (vi) That the development of Community hubs be supported and that the findings of the review consultation exercise be fed into the Community hub workstream.

38. Savings Programme 2016/17 – Regeneration Division *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To identify proposals for the delivery of savings in respect of the Regeneration Division for consideration as part of the 2016/17 budget process.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods presented the report which included the proposals for delivery of savings in the Regeneration Division as part of the 2016/17 budget process, the risks associated with the proposals and the considerations which had been taken into account in developing them.

The report included a breakdown of expenditure as well as details of outcomes/outputs. The proposed contribution from the Regeneration Services Division was £268K against the overall Regeneration and Neighbourhoods departmental savings for 2016/17 of £1,181,000. Details of how the savings would be achieved were provided as detailed in the report. Members were referred to the risk implications, financial as well as staffing considerations, as set out in the report.

A lengthy discussion ensued during which officers responded to queries raised which included clarification on the long term plans for Oaksway Industrial Estate and corporate stationary arrangements.

A Member requested further information in relation to planning services enforcement figures in terms of which wards/areas were affected and during what period.

In response to a query raised as to why the target had not been achieved in relation to engagement with children aged 0-19 through library delivered literacy and learning activities, the Director agreed to explore this issue and provide clarification under separate cover following the meeting.

The Committee was pleased to note a significant decrease in youth unemployment from 17% in September 2012 to 4.9% in May 2015 and requested that thanks and congratulations be conveyed on behalf of the Committee to the Economic Regeneration Team in relation to this excellent achievement.

Decision

- (i) The Committee reluctantly agreed the savings proposals relating to the Regeneration Services Division.
- (ii) That the contents of the report and comments of Members, as outlined above, be noted and be utilised to formulate a response to be presented to Finance and Policy Committee.
- (iii) That information requested by Members in relation to planning enforcement figures and details as to why the target had not been achieved in relation to engagement with children aged 0-19 through library delivered literacy and learning activities, be provided under separate cover following the meeting.

39. Seaton Carew Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To seek endorsement of the Seaton Carew Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (see Appendix 1) from the Regeneration Services Committee and to request permission to submit the SPD to full Council for adoption.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

Members were advised on the background and purpose to the development of the Seaton Carew Masterplan SPD. A public consultation on the Plan had been held between March and May 2015, the outcome of which was set out in the report.

The main changes and amendments to the SPD as a result of the consultation included reflecting concern about the adverse impact caused by the Longscar Building, strengthening the section on conservation, reflecting the need for and benefits of 'constructive conservation and recognising the importance of bathing water quality to Seaton Carew. Natural England had been consulted and did not have any significant concerns with the Habitat Regulations Assessment.

During the discussion that followed presentation of the report officers responded to issues raised by Members in relation to the current position on the Longscar Building. A Member shared with the Committee a number of complaints received from residents regarding car parking problems in Seaton Carew which included drivers parking inappropriately/irresponsibly and the dangers/risks as a result. These issues had been reported separately to the Parking Services Manager. It was suggested that the shortage of parking provision on Seaton front be explored as part of the capital programme and budget setting arrangements for this year.

In response to some concerns regarding the number of trucks carrying waste through Seaton Carew and a request for clarification as to whether an alternative route could be enforced, the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods outlined the difficulties in imposing weight or restrictions given the potential detrimental impact on waste businesses in the area. However, it was highlighted that there was an option for this issue to be referred to the Neighbourhood Services Committee for consideration should Members feel appropriate.

Decision

- (i) That the Seaton Carew Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) be approved for submission to full Council for adoption.
- (ii) That the shortage of parking provision on Seaton front as well as the issue of irresponsible parking be explored as part of the capital programme and budget setting arrangements for the current year.
- (iii) The issue of imposing weight or time restrictions on Seaton front be referred to Neighbourhood Services Committee for consideration.

40. Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework – General Exception Provisions apply

Purpose of report

To seek endorsement of the preparation of additional evidence relating to the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) from the Regeneration Services Committee.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report included background information on the purpose of the Supplementary Planning Document. Since the publication of the 2015 Hartlepool Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Hartlepool's affordable housing need had been identified as 144 affordable housing units per year. This represented an affordable need of 44% when considered against the overall annual target of 325 dwellings.

In order to ensure the SPD was robust an Affordable Housing Economic Viability Assessment (AHEVA) on the deliverability of affordable housing would be prepared and sit alongside the SHMA and inform the overall delivery of the objectively assessed housing need. In undertaking the AHEVA officers would seek to establish an affordable housing target. Initial suggestions had suggested that the target may eventually be between 10 and 20%.

Decision

The Committee endorsed the preparation of additional evidence relating to the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

41. Review of Community Centres *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

Key decision tests (i) and (ii) apply – Forward Plan Ref No RN22/14

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the findings of the Community Centre Review and to make recommendations in relation to the outcome and implementation of the review in 2016/17.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Head of Culture and Information provided background information to the decision taken to undertake a review of Community Centres for consideration as part of the 16/17 budget. Consultation had taken place with a wide range of stakeholders, the key findings from which were included in the report.

After consideration of the findings of the review of community centres and in order to achieve budgetary savings for the 2016/17 financial year a number of options were available for the Council to consider. However, in light of

the development of Community Hubs, which aimed to integrate services, prevent and/or reduce service demand whilst improving outcomes and reducing cost, it was proposed the findings of this review be fed into the overall Community Hub Workstream currently being led by the Director of Public Health.

With regard to the financial implications, it was highlighted that £80,000 of temporary funding had been allocated to support Community Centre revenue spending in 2015/16 as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. There was currently no funding to keep the community centres open in 2016/17. It was recommended that the Finance and Policy Committee be asked to provide the necessary one-off resources of £80,000 to retain these facilities in 16/17 from either the 2015/16 outturn and/or the review of existing reserves.

At this point in the meeting Councillor C Akers-Belcher declared a personal interest in this item of business as a volunteer at Rift House Community Centre.

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods provided feedback from the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee earlier that day during which Members had expressed support for community centres remaining in their communities.

The Head of Culture and Information responded to queries raised in relation to the review. Clarification was provided on the findings of the review and feedback from the consultation arrangements.

Members noted that the recommendations had been designed to provide time to complete an assessment of the feasibility of developing Community Hubs.

Decision

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the report and temporary funding and agreed to receive a further report on Community Hubs.
- (ii) That the Finance and Policy Committee be requested to consider the provision of one-off funding of £80,000 from either the 2015/16 outturn or reserves review to fund the costs of running community centres in 2016/17.

42. Innovation and Skills Quarter: Project Management Plan *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

Key decision test (i) – Forward Plan Ref No RN12/15

Purpose of report

- (i) To approve the Project Initiation Document (PID) for the Hartlepool Innovation and Skills Quarter (ISQ).
- (ii) The PID outlined the project management arrangements required to successfully deliver the project including the allocation of resources and timescales.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report outlined the background and funding arrangements for the development of the Innovation and Skills Quarter. A PID, attached at Appendix 1, had been prepared for the ISQ which defined all major aspects of the project and would form the basis for its successful management.

The next steps in the development of the project included a public consultation exercise with residents and businesses within the Church Street area. The results of the public consultation would help to inform the development of the designs. Officers were currently in discussions with Historic England in terms of buildings at risk within Church Street. All enforcement options were currently being explored including the use of Compulsory Purchase powers should this be necessary. It was intended that the project would be achieved within the set budget of £7,350,000 from a number of sources, details of which were set out in the report.

A Member commented on the potential traffic problems as a result of development works of this type and emphasised the need to consider traffic management issues to alleviate such issues in advance of the commencement of works in Hartlepool.

Members welcomed the development and the Chair took the opportunity on behalf of Members to thank officers for their hard work and progress to date.

Decision

That the Project Initiation Document for the Hartlepool Innovation and Skills Quarter be approved.

43. Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2015/16 *(Director of Public Health)*

Type of decision

Non-key decision

Purpose of report

To consider the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan for 2015/16.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Head of Public Protection reported that the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan for 2015/2016, set out as an appendix to the report, detailed the Service priorities for 2015/16 and highlighted how the priorities would be addressed. As at 1 April 2015, 96.1% of businesses in the borough were “broadly compliant” with food safety requirements, a slight reduction from 96.7% the previous year. During 2014/15 there had been no hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices. However, three voluntary closures had been agreed. Details of the various initiatives that the team planned to carry out during 15/16 were provided and included a Takeaways Project, Campylobacter Awareness Campaign, Allergy Awareness Campaign and a Hand Washing Campaign.

With regard to food hygiene standards a Member commented on the potential reasons for the reduction in standards and questioned whether training had not been an issue. In response, the Head of Public Protection advised that training was not an issue in terms of the premises where voluntary closures had been agreed. Assurances were provided that the Council worked with any premises in need of support. A Member requested a breakdown of ratings of premises by category be made available to Members.

The Committee welcomed the Takeaways Project and acknowledged the potential benefits noting the impact that access to unhealthy food was having on the rising rates of obesity and health inequalities. The importance of supporting takeaways with implementing changes in food labelling was highlighted. In response to a request for clarification regarding funding opportunities, Members were advised that additional funding was sought where the criteria allowed.

A Member requested a breakdown of ratings of premises by category to which the Head of Public Protection agreed to provide a copy to the Members’ Room.

Decision

That the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan for 2015/16 be approved.

44. Hartlepool Mail Photographic Collection *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

Non-key decision

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the Committee of the donation by Johnston Press of the Hartlepool Mail Photographic Collection to the Museum of Hartlepool and to gain approval to seek external funding for the long term preservation and the improvement of public access to this collection,.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

Members were advised on the background together with details of the donation by Johnston Press of the Hartlepool Mail Photographic Collection to the Museum of Hartlepool. Both reproduction and copyright ownership relating to the physical images within the donation were therefore transferred into the ownership of the Council. This ownership allowed the Council to seek external funding for the long term preservation and public access of the collection. Initial work would focus on documenting and conserving the items before moving on to the public projects which interpreted and digitised the images. The work would take approximately five years and would initially require external funding in the region of £100,000 for the essential documentation and conservation stage.

Decision

- (i) The Committee acknowledged the significance of the donation of this collection and formally thanked Johnston Press for placing these items in the public trust.
- (ii) That the Culture and Information Section be authorised to proceed with seeking external funding for both the conservation and long-term public access of the collection.
- (iii) That the proposal to formalise working in partnership with the Hartlepool Mail under a “Fair Use” agreement be approved.

45. Addition of Names to War Memorials *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

Non-key decision

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the Regeneration Services Committee about public requests for the addition of names omitted from the Hartlepool Borough War Memorials, and to propose a scheme that could rectify these omissions.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Head of Culture and Information reported on the background to the proposal to develop a scheme to ensure that names omitted from the Hartlepool Borough War Memorials could be rectified. It was proposed that the Council worked with descendents and communities to identify the true number of eligible individuals omitted and undertake a scheme to recognise these individuals by physically adding their names to the War Memorials.

A specific criteria for a name to be added would need to be established, details of which were provided. A new Memorial Committee would seek and collate all submissions from the public, validate individual cases against the criteria and then compile an accurate list of names which should be added. If approved, this scheme would open in 2016 and complete its work by 2018. Members were referred to the financial and legal considerations of the proposals.

It was suggested that the membership of the Memorial Committee should include the Council's Armed Forces Champion.

Decision

- (i) The Committee approved the proposals and granted authority to commence work on this scheme.
- (ii) That the membership of the Memorial Committee include the Council's Armed Forces Champion.

46. Social Lettings Agency: Business Name *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

Non-key decision

Purpose of report

To present to Committee the business name proposed for the Council's

Social Lettings Agency.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

It was reported that following approval by the Finance and Policy Committee of a Business Case for setting up a Social Lettings Agency, a new service to be offered by the Housing Services Team, the Agency required a name and strong brand identity in order to establish a professional and commercial high street lettings agency that would be marketed to both landlords who had already approached the Council requesting lettings and management services.

Officers had been involved in proposing names and taglines for the new service. The most popular name of the Social Lettings Agency was detailed in a confidential appendix attached to the report. **This appendix contained exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) (para 3) namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).**

A Member stated that he wished to further pursue information contained within the confidential appendix. In view of this, it was agreed that discussions be held in private session. Details of discussions were set out in the exempt section of the minutes.

47. 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 during the discussion on the previous item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of 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).

46. Social Lettings Agency: Business Name *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Details of discussions were set out in the exempt section of the minutes.

Decision

The decision was set out in the exempt section of the minutes.

Prior to consideration of the following item of business the meeting returned to open session.

48. Selective Licensing Consultation (*Assistant Director, Regeneration*)

Type of decision

Non-key decision

Purpose of report

To consider and agree the resources required to carry out research, data analysis and subsequent consultation necessary in order to determine whether a third designation for Selective Licensing should be made in Hartlepool.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Principal Housing Advice Officer presented the report which provided background information to the Committee's request in January 2015 that a third Selective Licensing designation be explored.

Members were advised that with effect from 1 April 2015, a new General Approval came into force requiring local authorities to obtain confirmation from the Secretary of State for any selective licensing scheme which covered more than 20% of their geographical area or would affect more than 20% of privately rented homes. This must take into account any existing schemes already in force. Details of the conditions applying to selective licensing, the criteria for making a selective licensing designation as well as consultation requirements were provided, as set out in the report.

The Committee was referred to the financial considerations included in the report.

In the discussion that followed Members considered the financial implications of pursuing this issue. It was acknowledged that addressing the forecast deficit for the next three years would be extremely challenging and any expenditure commitments needed to be carefully considered. Given the current financial situation, Members were of the view that funding of £54,000 was a commitment that the Council could not afford.

The Chair referred to his involvement in the Selective Licensing Consultation Steering Group and suggested that as opposed to undertaking further consultation in the usual way, a Steering Group be established and utilised as a consultation mechanism for residents to feed in any issues in

relation to Selective Licensing to Elected Members.

Decision

- (i) That the impact of the second designation be closely monitored and assessed before further consideration was given to a third phase of Selective Licensing within the town.
- (ii) That a Selective Licensing Steering Group be established and utilised as a consultation mechanism for residents to feed in any issues in relation to Selective Licensing to Elected Members.

49. Strategic Financial Management Report – as at 30 June 2015 *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods, Director of Public Health and Chief Finance Officer)*

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

The report informed Members of the 2015/16 Forecast General Fund Outturn; 2015/16 Capital Programme Monitoring, and provided details for the specific budget areas that the Committee was responsible for.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report provided the background and financial reporting arrangements for 2015/16 as well as the General Fund budget outturn information in relation to the Regeneration Services Committee.

As recently reported to the Finance and Policy Committee, Members were advised that there would be a forecast net underspend in the current year of between £669,000 and £889,000.

Details of the overall budget position for services managed by the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and the Director of Public Health was summarised in a table included in the report which included the reasons for the forecast outturn. Further details of specific budget areas was set out at Appendix A. Members were provided with details of recommended reserves together with planned capital expenditure, as set out in the report.

Decision

That the contents of the report be noted.

50. ESF Additional Funding Opportunities (*Assistant Director, Regeneration*)

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the forthcoming opportunity to seek additional funding from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) European Social Fund (ESF) for the delivery of four additional projects.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Learning and Skills Manager reported on the background to the notification by the SFA of their intention to invite tenders from providers for additional new ESF funded projects. To date there were no details of the amount of funding available or the likely specifications of the tenders. Further information would be provided once the tenders had been released.

Decision

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That a further report be submitted to the Regeneration Services Committee once the tenders had been released.
- (iii) That the Chair and Vice-Chair of this Committee be consulted on any proposed tenders.

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

Type of decision

For information

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 Head of Public Protection gave an update on performance and an outline of the work undertaken during 14/15 by the Commercial Services, Environmental Protection and Trading Standards and Licensing teams in the Public Protection service as detailed in the report. Members were referred to the outcome of various reactive work which included positive outcomes in relation to cowboy builders and mis-sold solar panels.

A Member queried the reasons why the majority of work carried out by the team was during Quarter 4. The Head of Public Protection indicated that whilst attempts were made to ensure workloads were balanced, risk ratings determined when inspections needed to be carried out. The Head of Public Protection provided clarification in response to queries raised by Members in relation to the statistics referred to in the report. A discussion followed in relation to the importance of managing pest control problems. The Chair requested that additional pest control information be provided highlighting hot spot areas by ward.

Decision

- (i) That the contents of the report and progress made across the key areas of the Public Protection Service be noted.
- (ii) That pest control information be provided under separate cover following the meeting highlighting hot spot areas by ward.

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

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

To update Members about the work of the Adult Education Service.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report provided an update on the activities of the Adult Education Service from the beginning of the academic year 2014-2015 until the end of July 2015. Details of key achievements were provided as a comparator with the previous year.

With regard to other key outcomes, the service was reassessed against the

Matrix standards for Information Advice and Guidance. The service passed the standards required and now had the Matrix quality mark. The service had recently updated its ICT facilities to include wireless internet access and the use of mobile tablet devices which made it easier for learners to access on line learning.

In the discussion that followed the Learning and Skills Manager responded to issues raised arising from the report.

Members debated volunteering opportunities and the need to provide information on how opportunities of this type could be accessed was highlighted. It was noted that a request had been made of the Council's Community Development Team to liaise with HVDA in this regard. **At this point in the meeting Councillor C Akers-Belcher declared a personal interest as an employee of HVDA.** It was highlighted that HVDA had recently received a small grant to facilitate open volunteering.

The Learning and Skills Manager advised that there was a facility for organisations to advertise volunteering opportunities on the Council's site and changes could be made to facilitate this. A Member commented on the importance of liaising with the Council's Press Office when considering such issues to ensure that there was a managed and corporate approach to the Council's marketing, communications and publicity arrangements.

Decision

That the contents of the report and comments of Members be noted.

53. Quarterly Building Control Report April – June 2015 (Assistant Director, Regeneration)

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

To update the Regeneration Services Committee regarding the key areas of the Building Control Service including the fee earning and statutory enforcement activity, for the first quarter of 2015/16.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Building Control Manager updated the Committee on progress and performance of the fee earning element of the Building Control Service and

the provision of the statutory enforcement element for the first quarter of 2015/16. It was highlighted that market share for the first quarter was 84%, a small increase on the same period last year which remained well above the current national average of around 60%. Overall fee income was up by £5,000 and an approval rate of 86.7% was up on the same period last year. The service also maintained an overall very good / good rating whilst managing an increase in unauthorised work and enforcement.

Decision

That the contents of the report and progress made across key areas of the Building Control Service be noted.

54. Culture and Information Services Report January – June 2015 *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

To inform and update Members on the work of the Culture and Information Services Section for the period 1 January to 30 June 2015.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report outlined the work of the Culture and Information Services across the Borough. These services were provided at venues including: Burbank Community Centre; Central Library; Hartlepool Art Gallery; Hartlepool Maritime Experience; Headland Library; Museum of Hartlepool; Owton Manor Community Centre and Library; Seaton Community Centre; Seaton Library; Masefield Centre; Town Hall Theatre and Throston Library.

The report highlighted some of the key achievements and work streams in terms of services provided, progress made over the last six months and usage figures. These included library led activities, library enquiries, arts and outreach work, events as well as museum and library collections.

The Chair reminded Members that there was an opportunity for Committee Members to observe some of the services/facilities on Monday 7 September 2015.

Decision

That the contents of the report and progress made across key areas of delivery within the Culture and Information Service be noted.

The meeting concluded at 4.25 pm.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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