

REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

29 January 2016

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

Present:

Councillor Kevin Cranney (In the Chair)

Councillors: Alan Clark and Jim Lindridge

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2 (ii), Councillor Jim Ainslie was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Stephen Akers-Belcher.

Officers: Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration
Joanne Burnley, Principal Environmental Health Officer
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

85. Tees Valley Culture Group (Verbal Update) *(Head of Culture, Stockton Borough Council)*

The Committee were informed that the representative from Stockton Borough Council was unable to attend today's meeting, this report was therefore deferred for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee.

86. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stephen Akers-Belcher, Rob Cook, George Morris and Paul Thompson.

87. Declarations of Interest

None.

88. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2015

Received.

89. Council Plan 2016/17 – Proposals for Consideration

(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and Director of Public Health)

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To provide the opportunity for the Committee to consider the proposals that fall under the remit of the Committee for inclusion in the 2016/17 Council Plan.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report outlined the proposals for inclusion within the 2016/17 Council Plan that fell under the remit of the Regeneration Services Committee. As in previous years, detailed proposals were being considered by each of the Policy Committees throughout January and February in respect of their areas of responsibility with any comments/observations being reported to the Finance and Policy Committee on 14 March. The Council Plan was scheduled to be presented to Council for agreement on 17 March.

The Chair commented that the targets within the Council Plan should be ambitious yet realistic, which would assist the identification of any outside influences that may result in the targets not being achieved.

The Assistant Director, Regeneration presented the individual indicators to the Committee and the following discussion ensued.

NI 171 – New business registration rate – the proportion of new business registration per 10,000 resident population (aged 16+)

It was recognised that the registration rate for new businesses was not something the Council had control over, however it was suggested that, as the current performance of this indicator was at 64, the proposed target for 2016/17 and 2017/18 should be increased to 60. The Assistant Director, Regeneration confirmed that the 5 year business survival rate in Hartlepool was higher than the Tees Valley and national averages. In addition to this, Queens Meadow was the most successful enterprise zone across the Tees Valley and had generated around £500m worth of investment.

In view of the level of detailed consideration of the Council Plan, the Chair suggested that this item be adjourned and that item 5.1 be considered to enable the Officer presenting that the report to return to their normal duties.

This discussion was adjourned to enable consideration of the following report and would be reconvened later in the meeting.

90. The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Regulations 2015 *(Assistant Director, Regeneration)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (ii) applies – Forward Plan Reference No RN 24/15.

Purpose of report

To update Members on new legislation which had been introduced to protect tenants living in privately rented accommodation. The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 require landlords to fit smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in their properties or face a penalty for non-compliance. The regulations require local housing authorities to publish a statement of principles which it proposed to follow in determining the amount of a penalty charge; this report sets out the proposed levy of penalty charge and sought approval to adopt the changing structure.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report provided the background to the implementation of the above Regulations which came into force on 1 October 2015. It was proposed that the enforcement of the regulations would be undertaken by Housing Services staff and a proposed Statement of Principles which included the levy of penalty charge was included in the report. It was also proposed that a reduction of 50% should be made (in the case of a first offence only), if the penalty was paid within 14 days.

A Member sought clarification on what support was available to tenants to ensure they were fully aware of the risks involved in not having smoke/carbon monoxide alarms. The Principal Environmental Health Officer that Housing Officers would engage with the tenant and where appropriate liaise with Cleveland Fire Authority who would undertake a home fire safety visit as the key aim of these regulations was to protect tenants. In response to a question from a Member, the Principal Environmental Health Officer indicated that initially there was no intention for Housing Officers to proactively check if privately rented/owned properties had appropriate alarms in place, however Cleveland Fire Authority had a safety programme to visit properties in the town and do a free fire safety check. It was recognised however, that as part of the Selective Licensing Scheme, it was a duty of the licence to ensure properties did have appropriate alarms in place and in full working order.

A discussion ensued on the level of penalty charges proposed in the report

was too lenient as this affected the health and wellbeing on residents. The Principal Environmental Health Officer informed Members that the levy of penalty charges had been discussed and agreed as a consistent approach by all partners in the north east region. A number of alternative options were discussed including a press campaign and the Assistant Director, Regeneration indicated that Officers would explore those options along with the associated implications. It was suggested that delegated authority be given to the Chair of the Committee in conjunction with the Assistant Director, Regeneration to finalise the levy of penalty charges to be enforced.

In response to clarification sought by a Member, the Principal Environmental Health Officer indicated that notice of a penalty charge would be served on the landlord or owner of the property with the managing agent informed.

Decision

- 1) That the Statement of Principles be adopted with the finalised levy of penalty charges along with the implementation of those charges be agreed through delegated authority to the Chair in conjunction with the Assistant Director, Regeneration.
- 2) That the enforcement of the regulations be undertaken by Housing Services Officers and be incorporated into the inspections of privately rented accommodation already carried out.

The following item was reconvened from earlier in the meeting.

89. Council Plan 2016/17 – Proposals for Consideration

(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and Director of Public Health)

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

RND P085 – Business stock (Business units in Hartlepool per 10,000 resident population (aged 16+))

In response to a query from a Member, the Assistant Director, Regeneration confirmed that current performance for this indicator was approximately 329. In view of this, it was suggested that the proposed target for 2016/17 and 2017/18 should be 330.

RND P089 – Value of funding attracted to support regeneration delivery

It was suggested by Members that the proposed target for 2016/17 and 2017/18 be increased to £2m

NI151 – Overall employment rate

Members indicated they wished this target to be increased. The Assistant Director, Regeneration informed Members that whilst the national average for the overall employment rate was 73%, Hartlepool was a deprived area. With this in mind, Members suggested that the proposed target for 2016/17 be increased to 65% and the proposed target for 2017/18 be increased to 66%.

RPD P054 – Youth Unemployment Rate (Hartlepool) the proportion of economically active 18-24 year olds who are unemployed

It was suggested that the proposed targets for both 2016/17 and 2017/18 be reduced to 3%.

RND P092 – Visitor numbers

It was suggested that the proposed target for 2016/17 be increased to 3.8m and for 2017/18 be increased to 3.9m.

RND R095a – Number of social media followers (Twitter/Facebook)

Members considered that this target should be significantly more ambitious and suggested it be increased to 5,000 for 2016/17 and 6,000 for 2017/18.

ACS P107b – Number of school visits to Hartlepool Maritime Experience (National Museum for Royal Navy – Hartlepool)

It was suggested that this indicator be removed from the Council Plan.

ACS PO53 – Number of learners participating in community learning programmes

The Chair highlighted that the recently appointed Learning and Skills Manager was working with Ofsted to improve the number of learners participating in community learning programmes.

ACS PO59 – Overall average attendances at Mill House, Brierton and Headland Leisure Centres

A Member queried by the average attendances were reducing across 2016/17 and 2017/18. The Assistant Director, Regeneration indicated he would obtain clarification on that and circulate it to the Committee. Members had concerns that the service provided at the Leisure Centres needed to be commercially viable with increasing targets or they may be at risk in the future. In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director, Regeneration indicated he would explore the practicalities of monitoring the age profile of users to the Centres.

PHD – 2.26 – Number of hours spent volunteering within the Sport and Recreation Service

It was suggested by Members that this indicator would clearer if it was measured in the number of individual volunteers engaged rather than the number of volunteers hours utilised. The Assistant Director, Regeneration indicated may be a national measure that has to be taken in hours. However, there was always the opportunity to include an additional local indicator that would measure the number of individual volunteers engaged. Members were aware of an Adult Education Volunteer Bureau and it was suggested that this should be expanded promoted on a wider basis.

ACS P108b – Overall attendances at the Borough Hall

A discussion ensued on the current structural survey work and ongoing operation of the Borough Hall. Members suggested that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee to update Members on the ongoing structural survey work and current operation of the Borough Hall.

NI 157a – Processing of planning applications within target: Major Applications

NI 157b – Processing of planning applications within target: Minor Applications

NI 157c – Processing of planning applications within target: Other Applications

The Assistant Director, Regeneration confirmed that the above were all national indicators and suggested that it may be useful to collect a local indicator to compare like for like performance. Members suggested that the proposed target for a local indicator for 2016/17 and 2017/18 should be set at 90%.

NI 155 – Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)

It was noted that the proposed target for the above and associated local indicators for 2017/18 would be set based on the baseline information from 2015/16 and with 2016/17 increasing to 56 and increasing to 82 for 2017/18.

LAA H P001 – Number of private dwellings empty for over 6 months and brought back into use

It was suggested that the proposed target for 2016/17 and 2017/18 should be more ambitious and be set at 68 for each year respectively.

ACS P106a – Number of people visiting Hartlepool Art Gallery, Museum of Hartlepool

During the discussions on this section, Members indicated that these targets should be more ambitious and suggested that 2016/17 be set at

220,000 and that this be increased the same again, up to 225,000 for 2017/18.

ACS P107a – Number of school visits to Hartlepool Art Gallery, Museum of Hartlepool

It was suggested that the proposed targets should be more ambitious and be increased for 2016/17 to 13,500 and to 14,500 for 2017/18.

ACS P108a – Number of people visiting Town Hall Theatre

As above, Members thought these targets should be more ambitious and be increased to 52,000 for 2016/17 and by the same again up to 53,000 for 2017/18.

Action - Engage with children and young adults to support their learning and literacy needs, through a programme of activities and events

A discussion ensued on how the library service were exploring better ways of interacting and community, including closer working with local schools.

As Members gave detailed consideration to the content of the Council Plan and had suggested a number of amendments to the proposed targets for 2016/17 and 2017/18, including those from the Public Health Department, the Assistant Director, Regeneration indicated he would contact the Director of Public Health and would feed back any implications of the proposed amendments to the Chair of the Committee prior to finalising them. The Committee gave the Chair the delegated authority to approve the final amendments in conjunction with the Assistant Director, Regeneration and the Director of Public Health for inclusion in the report to be submitted to the Finance and Policy Committee in March.

Decision

- 1) The Assistant Director, Regeneration to liaise with the Director of Public Health and consider the implications of the proposed amendments to the targets for 2016/17 and 2017/18 within the Council Plan as suggested by the Committee and noted above.
- 2) That delegated authority be given to the Chair of the Committee in conjunction with the Assistant Director, Regeneration and the Director of Public Health to finalise the proposed targets prior to submission to Finance and Policy Committee in March.

91. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chair updated Members that an application had been submitted to secure funding from the Building Better Opportunities Fund, however this had been unsuccessful.

The meeting concluded at 11.15 am

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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