



Chief Executive's Department
Civic Centre
HARTLEPOOL

5 December, 2016

Councillors C Akers-Belcher, S Akers-Belcher, Barclay, Beck, Belcher, Black, Buchan, Clark, Cook, Cranney, Fleming, Hall, Hamilton, Harrison, Hind, Hunter, James, Lauderdale, Lawton, Lindridge, Loynes, Martin-Wells, Moore, Dr. Morris, Richardson, Riddle, Robinson, Sirs, Springer, Tempest, Tennant, Thomas and Thompson

Madam or Sir,

You are hereby summoned to attend the COUNCIL meeting to be held on THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2016 at 7.00 p.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool to consider the subjects set out in the attached agenda.

Yours faithfully

G Alexander
Chief Executive

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COUNCIL AGENDA



Thursday 15 December 2016

at 7.00 pm

**in the Council Chamber,
Civic Centre, Hartlepool.**

- (1) To receive apologies from absent Members;
- (2) To receive any declarations of interest from Members;
- (3) To deal with any business required by statute to be done before any other business;
- (4) To approve the minutes of the last meeting of the Council held on 27 October 2016 and the Extraordinary Council held on 24 November 2016 (*to follow*) as the correct record;
- (5) To answer questions from Members of the Council on the minutes of the last meeting of Council;
- (6) To deal with any business required by statute to be done;
- (7) To receive any announcements from the Chair, or the Head of Paid Service;
- (8) To dispose of business (if any) remaining from the last meeting and to receive the report of any Committee to which such business was referred for consideration;
- (9) To consider reports from the Council's Committees and to receive questions and answers on any of those reports;
- (10) To consider any other business specified in the summons to the meeting, and to receive questions and answers on any of those items;

- (11) To consider reports from the Policy Committees:
- (a) proposals in relation to the Council's approved budget and policy framework; and
 - (1) Child and Family Poverty Strategy 2016-2020 – *Children's Services Committee*
 - (2) Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2017/18 – *Finance and Policy Committee*
 - (b) proposals for departures from the approved budget and policy framework;

- (12) To consider motions in the order in which notice has been received;

"We resolve to support the organisation 'Tees Valley of Sanctuary' and their initiative to make the Tees Valley a recognised 'Area of Sanctuary' that welcomes those fleeing violence and persecution in their own countries. We recognise the positive contribution that refugees and people seeking sanctuary bring to Hartlepool and the Tees Valley and we are committed to taking practical steps to welcome and include them in our work as a Council. We resolve to actively seek ways of supporting them wherever and whenever we can. We are also willing to be contacted by the Tees Valley of Sanctuary group with further ideas for how we can turn this pledge into practical action via our Policy Committees, Safer Hartlepool Partnership and Health & Wellbeing Board."

Signed by: Councillors Thomas, C Akers-Belcher, Hunter, Cranney and Barclay.

- (13) To receive the Chief Executive's report and to pass such resolutions thereon as may be deemed necessary;
- (14) To receive questions from and provide answers to the public in relation to matters of which notice has been given under Rule 11;
- (15) To answer questions of Members of the Council under Rule 12;
- a) Questions to the Chairs about recent decisions of Council Committees and Forums without notice under Council Procedure Rule 12.1
 - b) Questions on notice to the Chair of any Committee or Forum under Council Procedure Rule 12.2
 - c) Questions on notice to the Council representatives on the Police and Crime Panel and Cleveland Fire Authority
 - d) Minutes of the meeting held by the Police and Crime Panel held on 8 September 2016.



COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

27 October 2016

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

PRESENT:-

The Ceremonial Mayor (Councillor Cook) presiding:

COUNCILLORS:

C Akers-Belcher	S Akers-Belcher	Barclay
Beck	Belcher	Black
Buchan	Clark	Cranney
Fleming	Hall	Hamilton
Harrison	Hunter	James
Lauderdale	Lawton	Lindridge
Loynes	Martin-Wells	Moore
Dr Morris	Richardson	Riddle
Robinson	Tempest	Tennant
Thomas		

Officers: Gill Alexander, Chief Executive
Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor
Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive
John Morton, Assistant Chief Finance Officer
Sally Robinson, Director of Child and Adult Services
Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager
Ed Turner, Public Relations Officer
Amanda Whitaker, Denise Wimpenny, Democratic Services Team

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Ceremonial Mayor welcomed Councillor Fleming to the meeting, following his election at the recent Headland and Harbour by-election.

47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENT MEMBERS

Councillors Hind, Sirs, Springer and Thompson.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Interests were declared as follows:-

Councillor C Akers-Belcher – Pecuniary interest as Healthwatch Manager, Hartlepool– agenda item 9.3

Councillor S Akers-Belcher – Pecuniary Interest – agenda item 9.3 – Council was informed that dispensation had been granted to permit Councillor S Akers-Belcher to participate in the meeting

Councillor Thomas – Pecuniary Interest – agenda item 9.3

49. BUSINESS REQUIRED BY STATUTE TO BE DONE BEFORE ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

50. MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

The Minutes of Proceedings of the Council held on the 8 September 2016, having been laid before the Council.

RESOLVED - That the minutes be confirmed.

The minutes were thereupon signed by the Chairman.

51. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL ON THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Minute 41 – Appointments to Committees – Councillor Hall advised that following the Council meeting, the Leader of the Labour Group had approached him to advise that he would be removed from the membership of the Children's Services Committee. Councillor Hall advised that the minutes of the meeting were incorrect as they stated that the Labour Group would like to replace him, rather than it being the decision of the Leader of the Labour Group. The Ceremonial Mayor clarified that the agenda item related to questions on the minutes of the previous meeting of the Council and suggested Councillor Hall discuss the issue at the conclusion of the meeting.

Minute 38 (b) – Jacksons Landing Demolition – Councillor Riddle advised Members that following the Council meeting, he had been contacted by a number of members of public wondering how a Jacksons Landing advertisement had appeared on e bay. The Ceremonial Mayor clarified that the agenda item related to questions on the minutes of the previous meeting of the Council.

52. BUSINESS REQUIRED BY STATUTE

None

53. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Ceremonial Mayor expressed his appreciation to those people who had attended the recent Civic Dinner and to those who had donated raffle and tombola prizes for the event.

54. TO DISPOSE OF BUSINESS (IF ANY) REMAINING FROM THE LAST MEETING AND TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF ANY COMMITTEE TO WHICH SUCH BUSINESS WAS REFERRED FOR CONSIDERATION.

None

55. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

1. Local Audit and Accountability Act Update – Report of Audit and Governance Committee

The Chair of Audit and Governance Committee updated Council on progress in relation to the application of the Local Audit and Accountability Act and sought authority for the Council to become an “opted in” Authority in respect of appointing external auditors. Members were advised that in January 2014, the Local Audit and Accountability Act had received Royal Assent. Council was assured that the Audit and Governance Committee was regularly updated on the arrangements in place to ensure that the Council complied with the requirements of the Act.

The report provided an update to Council in relation to the arrangements for appointing external auditors. It had been agreed at the meeting held on 22 September 2016 that the Audit and Governance Committee supported the Council becoming an “opted in” Authority. This was in order to benefit from collective buying power and the removal of the requirement for the Council to undertake its own tendering process to secure future external audit services. Confirmation had been received from Public Sector Audit Appointments on 22nd September 2016 that audit contracts had been extended for one year for principal local government bodies, and would end with the completion of the audit of the 2017/18 accounts. Any new appointment of External Auditor would take effect from 2018/19 onwards.

Council was recommended to support the Audit and Governance Committee's recommendation that the Council becomes an “opted in” Authority giving a firm commitment that the Council will join the scheme during autumn 2016.

The recommendation was agreed by show of hands.

It was confirmed, in the absence of dissent, that this was the unanimous decision of the Council.

2. Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2016-17 – Report of Children's Services Committee

The Chair of Children's Services Committee presented the Council with the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2016/17 prior to the plan being submitted to the National Youth Justice Board.

It was proposed that the Youth Offending Service and broader Youth Justice Partnership focus on key strategic objectives during 2016-17, as detailed in the report. The Plan had identified key risks to future delivery which was detailed in the Plan. The plan had been presented to the Youth Offending Management Board, Safer Hartlepool Partnership and Children's Services Committee. The Plan had been well received at all these meetings and endorsed. The plan had been shared with the Youth Justice Board who had a role to quality assure all Youth Justice Strategic Plans. The Youth Justice Board had given positive feedback for the plan and asked that PREVENT was included within the plan. This had been included in the final copy of the plan which was appended to the report.

Council was recommended to ratify the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2016/17 prior to the plan being submitted to the National Youth Justice Board.

The recommendation was agreed by show of hands.

It was confirmed, in the absence of dissent, that this was the unanimous decision of the Council.

Further to minute 48, Councillors C Akers-Belcher and Thomas left the meeting during consideration of the following item only.

3. Fens, Hartfields and Wynyard Road Medical Practices – Consideration of Referral to the Secretary of State.

Prior to presentation of the report, the Ceremonial Mayor advised Council that the above report had been added to the Council agenda due to the exceptional urgency for Council to consider a referral, given the Committee's recommendations. The Ceremonial Mayor highlighted that the report had been tabled for the attention of Members and the public attending the meeting and a revised agenda had been circulated also, in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

The Chair of Audit and Governance Committee informed Council of the Audit and Governance Committee's views and recommendations following consideration of the consultation outcome in relation to the future of the above GP Practices: The CCG Primary Care Committee had considered the outcome of the Fens, Hartfields and Wynyard Road Medical Practice consultation at its meeting on the 25th October 2016. The decision of the Committee to procure the service through 'one provider on the two sites of Hartfields and Wynyard Road' – resulting in the closure of the Fens Surgery had been formally reported to the Audit and Governance Committee on the 27 October 2016, along with supporting information / evidence in relation to pre-consultation activities, full

consultation report, options, questionnaire feedback, formal responses and options appraisal. A copy of the presentation and report considered by the Audit and Governance Committee were appended to the report.

The Audit and Governance Committee had discussed in detail the outcome of the consultation and the decision of the CCG, and expressed extreme disappointment at their conclusions and recommendations. In considering further action, the Committee had considered the potential for a recommendation to Full Council that this decision be referred to the Secretary of State for Health. The Committee noted that the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Board and Health Scrutiny Regulations) 2013 and accompanying guidance required an Authority to provide clear explanation, reasons and evidence for any referral. The regulations also detailed specific grounds for any referral and these were detailed in the report. Following consideration of the requirements of the Regulations, and the evidence provided by the CCG, the Committee agreed that it wished Full Council to consider referring the decision of the CCG to procure the GP service through 'one provider on the two sites of Hartfields and Wynyard Road' to the Secretary of State for Health. The basis for the referral being that:-

- (a) The authority is not satisfied that consultation on any proposal has been adequate in relation to content or time allowed.

Reasons:-

- i) Inadequate consultation – not all appropriate groups / individuals invited to participate and the results do not accurately represent the views of residents who currently use the Fens Surgery.
 - ii) The option for one provider across all three sites was not offered as part of the consultation and hence the CCG Primary Care Committee was not given the opportunity to consider it.
- (b) The authority considers that the proposal would not be in the interests of the health service in its area.

Reasons:

- i) The negative town wide impact of further reducing the number of GP's available to the residents of Hartlepool.
- ii) Increasing travel and reducing accessibility, especially for older members of the community and those without personal transport.
- iii) Additional stress on existing GP's in Hartlepool as a result of the displacement/ reallocation of patients.

- iv) Negative impact on associated medical services in the Fens area i.e. potential loss of existing pharmacy services as a result of the loss of the surgery.

Council was asked to consider whether there were sufficient grounds to approve the referral to the Secretary of State for Health, as outlined above and if that was the case, whether it wishes to refer on the grounds (with reasons) specified in the report.

Members debated issues arising from the report. The Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee responded to a concern expressed at the meeting regarding the implications of a referral in terms of the other GP practices and confirmed that should the Secretary of State support the referral, he would pass the decision back to the CCG for further consideration. The Chief Solicitor advised Members in terms of the powers available to the Secretary of State when dealing with a referral. Members addressed the specific grounds for referral.

Council agreed that a recorded vote be taken on the Motion.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17.5 of the Constitution, a recorded vote was taken on the Motion:-.

Those in favour:

Councillors S Akers-Belcher, Barclay, Beck, Belcher, Black, Buchan, Clark, Cook, Cranney, Fleming, Hall, Hamilton, Harrison, Hunter, James, Lauderdale, Lawton, Lindridge, Loynes, Martin-Wells, Moore, Morris, Richardson, Riddle, Robinson and Tennant.

Those against:

None.

Those abstaining:

None.

The Motion was carried unanimously.

Councillors C Akers-Belcher and Thomas returned to the meeting and Cllr Tempest joined the meeting.

56. TO CONSIDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS SPECIFIED IN THE SUMMONS OF THE MEETING

- 1. 'Hartlepool Matters' Report – Report of the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board

The Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board presented the 'Hartlepool Matters' Report. Members were reminded that Council on 12th March 2015 had resolved that a Working Group be established with NHS Hartlepool and Stockton on Tees Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to identify health and social care planning priorities to inform the development of a Plan for the delivery of integrated health and social care services across Hartlepool, including the University Hospital of Hartlepool (UHH) site. The importance of an independent Chair for the Working Group had been recognised and the Northern Clinical Senate had formally nominated Professor David Colin-Thomé (OBE) to take up the position. Council had approved the appointment of Professor Colin-Thomé (OBE) as the 'independent' Chair on the 6th August 2015. The Working Group had met on five occasions, between October 2015 and March 2016, with each meeting exploring an agreed theme. A copy of Professor David Colin-Thomé's report had been circulated.

It was noted that Professor David Colin-Thomé had presented his report to the Health and Wellbeing Board at its meeting on the 17th October 2016 and had been referred to Council for consideration.

On moving the following recommendations, the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board expressed appreciation to Professor Colin-Thomé and to the public and interest groups who had contributed to the report:-

- i) That the report entitled 'Hartlepool Matters' be received;
- ii) That an action plan be formulated for the implementation of the report's recommendations, in partnership with the CCG, and that this be monitored through the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- iii) That the implementation of the report's recommendations, and progress against the Action Plan, be monitored through the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The recommendation was agreed by show of hands.

It was confirmed, in the absence of dissent, that this was the unanimous decision of the Council.

2. Further Periodic Review of the Council's Constitution – Report of the Monitoring Officer

Further to minute 37 of the meeting held on 8 September 2016, the Monitoring Officer reminded Council that a comprehensive report detailing representations received by the Monitoring Officer as part of a periodic review of the Council's Constitution had been tabled before Council on the 8th September, 2016. A number of those matters owing to their amendments to Council Procedure Rules had stood adjourned to take effect at the next ordinary meeting of Council under Procedure Rule 24.2 as follows:-

- Council Procedure Rule 10 – Duration of meeting

That a Council meeting commencing at 7pm shall stand adjourned at 9.00pm unless the majority of Members agree otherwise.

- Council Procedure Rule 11 – Questions from the Public

That time allocated for public questions should be 30 minutes subject to the discretion of the Chair to extend.

- Council Procedure Rule 12 – Questions by Members

That the time devoted by Council to Member questions be reduced from 1 hour 30 minutes to the period of 30 minutes, subject to the discretion of the Chair to extend.

- Council Procedure Rule 13 – Motions on Notice

Except for additional motions as agreed by the Chief Executive Officer the number of Motions before an Ordinary meeting of Council should not exceed 3 subject to consultation with the Ceremonial Mayor and in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.1

- That the mover/ proposer in a debate be limited to a period of 5 minutes and any other speech shall not exceed a period of 3 minutes without the consent of the Chair of Council.

Members were reminded that at the Council meeting on the 8th September, it had been a recurring theme of the Monitoring Officer's report that Council needed to look closely at the way it engaged and interacted with its public. It had been resolved that a Constitutional Working Group be formed comprising 11 members based upon political balance which membership should include the Ceremonial Mayor as Chair of the Working Group along with the respective Chairs of the Policy Committees and the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee. The Monitoring Officer reported at the meeting that arrangements had been made for the first meeting of the Working Group to be held on 9 December 2016.

The Monitoring Officer advised that following an earlier 'Public Inquiry' and calls for greater transparency it had been the practice to report upon the relevant expenditure of Members interests, through a quarterly report contained within the Chief Executive's Business Report. Much of the information supplied therein had been replicated from that contained upon the Members 'Register of Interests' form, which by virtue of Section 29 (5) (b) of the Localism Act, 2011 had to be maintained on files by the Monitoring Officer but also displayed on the Council's website. Whilst the reporting of such expenditure was a commendable recommendation coming out from that earlier Public Inquiry such reporting invariably entailed a number of declarations being made at the Council meeting but also clarifications upon that information as contained within the accompanying schedule or matters omitted from that schedule. It was suggested it could be more practicable that such a tabulation of Member's expenditure be reported on the Council's website in unison with a Member's

Register of Interests. This would maintain that necessary degree of transparency and it was suggested also that Officers periodically provided a copy of this schedule for the general information of Members and to allow for any corrections or clarifications, should the same be required.

As a consequence of Councillor Moore advising Council that it had been made known to him that his register of interest pro-forma was not available on the Council's website, it was agreed to ensure Cllr Moore's register of interests was made available together with those of other Members whose interests may have been omitted from the website.

Further to discussions with the Council's Chief Executive Officer and Director of Finance and Policy, it had been recommended that officer delegation related to specific circumstances be provided for within the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, whilst ensuring that financial controls and due consultation are features of these proposals. It was therefore recommended that additional paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 be added to those Procedure Rules, as set out in the report.

Members were advised that at the meeting of the Council's Finance and Policy Committee on 26 September, a number of changes to the present structure of the Chief Executive's Department had been proposed and accepted unanimously by the Committee. Some of those changes had an impact on the Council's Constitution by way of reference to certain chief officers, not only by way of the exercise of officer delegations but also some 'proper officer' functions. Through the resignation of the Council's Assistant Chief Executive, that post had been deleted from the establishment but roles aligned to that post had needed to be re-assigned to other post-holders as detailed in the report. There would also be consequential changes in that the reference to the Chief Finance Officer would now be through the Director of Finance and Policy, as well as additional references to those chief officers reporting to that post-holder namely the Assistant Director (Finance and Customer Services) and Assistant Director (Corporate Services). The required amendments to the Constitution were therefore outlined in the report.

The following recommendations were presented to Members:-

- (i) That Council note that the changes to its Procedure Rules, debated at the last Council meeting, become effective from this meeting and that the Council's Constitution be amended accordingly.
- (ii) That the expenditure relevant to member's interests ceases to be reported through the Chief Executive's Business Report and that this information be recorded on the Council's website with oversight through the Council's Strategic Procurement Manager.
- (iii) That those additional sections 4.6 and 4.7 set out in the report be inserted into the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
- (iv) That Council notes the changes to the officer delegations, following the approval of Finance and Policy Committee to the Chief Executive's restructure proposals.

The recommendation was agreed by show of hands.

It was confirmed, in the absence of dissent, that this was the unanimous decision of the Council.

57. REPORT FROM THE POLICY COMMITTEES

(a) Proposal in relation to the Council's budget and policy framework

None

(b) Proposal for Departure from the Budget and Policy Framework

None

58. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

One Motion had been received, on Notice, as follows:-

Despite an excellent campaign on the issues led by WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality) the Tory Pensions Minister, Richard Harrington has dismissed the campaign stating that he has "no plans to revisit the arrangements".

MAKE FAIR TRANSITIONAL STATE PENSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR 1950'S WOMEN

"Hartlepool Borough Council calls upon the Government to make fair transitional state pension arrangements for all women born on or after 6th April 1951, who have unfairly borne the burden of the increase to the State Pension Age (SPA) with lack of appropriate notification.

Hundreds of thousands of women had significant pension changes imposed on them by the Pensions Acts of 1995 and 2011 with little or no personal notification of the changes. Some women had only two years notice of a six-year increase to their state pension age.

Many women born in the 1950's are living in hardship. Retirement plans have been shattered with devastating consequences. Many of these women are already out of the labour market, caring for elderly relatives, providing childcare for grandchildren, or suffer discrimination in the workplace so struggle to find employment.

Women born in this decade are suffering financially. These women have worked hard, raised families and paid their tax and national insurance with the expectation that they would be financially secure when reaching 60. It is not the pension age itself that is in dispute - it is widely accepted that women and men should retire at the same time.

The issue is that the rise in the women's state pension age has been too rapid and has happened without sufficient notice being given to the women affected, leaving women with no time to make alternative arrangements.

The Council calls upon the Government to reconsider transitional arrangements for women born on or after 6th April 1951, so that women do not live in hardship due to pension changes they were not told about until it was too late to make alternative arrangements.”

Signed: Councillors James, C Akers-Belcher, Cranney, Barclay and Clark.

The Motion was moved by Councillor Harrison and seconded by Councillor Thomas who both set out the background and context to the Motion. Members debated issues arising from the Motion.

The recommendation was agreed by show of hands.

It was confirmed, in the absence of dissent, that this was the unanimous decision of the Council.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

59. RESIGNATION FROM POLITICAL GROUP

The Chief Executive reported that he had been informed that Councillor Hall had submitted his resignation from the Labour Group.

60. BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND – 2018 PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW

The Chief Executive reported that on the 13th September, 2016 the Boundary Commission for England had published its initial proposals for the new parliamentary constituencies with proposals on public display in the reception area of the civic centre for a twelve week period of public consultation. This “2018 Review” wherein the Commission were required to make its final report with recommendations to Parliament in September 2018, followed Parliament's stated intention to reduce the number of constituencies in the United Kingdom from the current 650 to 600. The number of constituencies in England would potentially be reduced from 533 to 501 and in the North East could see a reduction from the present 29 seats to 25.

It was highlighted that Members should already have received the consultation document from the Commission entitled Initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in the North East. It was proposed the creation of a new Parliamentary constituency entitled “Hartlepool and Billingham constituency” which would comprise 9 of the existing 11 wards within Hartlepool Borough with the addition of 4 wards from the present Stockton North

constituency (Billingham North and Central areas). Further, it would also potentially see the creation of an “East Durham constituency” which would accommodate the Hart and De Bruce wards in addition to other specified areas in County Durham. Responses to these initial proposals could be made through the Commission’s dedicated consultation website. It was envisaged that the feedback from these initial proposals would be published sometime early 2017 which would then be followed by a further 4 week public consultation period. After a review of those comments the Commission would proceed with a third period of consultation of 8 weeks with the anticipated submission of the Commission’s final proposals and recommendations to Parliament in September 2018. It was highlighted that this timetable was subject to possible change and that if Parliament were to agree the changes recommended by the Commission, the new constituencies would come into effect for the UK Parliamentary General Election in 2020.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

61. EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

The Chief Executive reported that following discussion with the Ceremonial Mayor, it had been agreed to hold an extraordinary meeting of Council on Thursday 24 November, 2016 at 7.00 pm to consider the draft Order which would confer functions and powers upon the Mayoral Tees Valley Combined Authority and the balance of powers between the Combined Authority and its Mayor. At its meeting on 12 November, 2015, Council had agreed to support the ‘Devolution Deal’ but this was ‘subject to this Council’s approval to and detailed involvement in the formulation of the constitution of the new Combined Authority.’ In unison with the other constituent councils, reports were being brought to each council and the Combined Authority to seek their formal consent to the Order (which in turn would be subject to formal Parliamentary approval) that would regulate the powers and functions of the Mayor and the Combined Authority.

RESOLVED – That the date of the Extraordinary Council meeting be noted.

62. HEADLAND AND HARBOUR BY-ELECTION

The Chief Executive reminded Members that her previous report to Council had noted the resignation of Peter Jackson, as Ward Councillor for Headland and Harbour and that a by-election would be held on Thursday 6 October, 2016. At that election Tim Fleming had been duly elected to serve in the office of Councillor for that Ward until the local government elections in May, 2018. Members were requested to note the election of Tim Fleming as Borough Councillor for the Headland and Harbour Ward.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

63. PUBLIC QUESTION

None

64. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

- a) Questions to the Chairs about recent decisions of Council Committees and Forums without notice under Council Procedure Rule 12.1

Further to minute 51, Councillor Riddle referred to his question earlier in this meeting regarding a Jacksons Landing advertisement on e bay. The Chief Solicitor responded to the question and advised Council of the background to the advertisement and assured Council that the permission of neither the Council nor the Contractor had been granted in the placing of the advertisement. It was highlighted that this had been an unfortunate occurrence and the advertisement had been removed the following day.

- b) Questions on notice to the Chair of any Committee or Forum under Council Procedure Rule 12.2

None

- c) Questions on notice to the Council representatives on the Police and Crime Panel and Cleveland Fire Authority

None

- d) Minutes of the meetings held by the Cleveland Fire Authority and the Police and Crime Panel

The minutes of the meetings held by the Cleveland Fire Authority on 29 July 2016 and the Police and Crime Panel held on 21 July 2016 had been circulated and were noted by Council.

The meeting concluded at 7.50 p.m.

CEREMONIAL MAYOR

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

24 November 2016

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

PRESENT:-

The Ceremonial Mayor (Councillor Cook) presiding:

COUNCILLORS:

C Akers-Belcher	S Akers-Belcher	Barclay
Beck	Belcher	Black
Clark	Cranney	Fleming
Hall	Hamilton	Harrison
Hind	Hunter	James
Lauderdale	Loynes	Martin-Wells
Moore	Dr Morris	Richardson
Riddle	Robinson	Springer
Tennant	Thomas	Thompson

Officers: Gill Alexander, Chief Executive
Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor
Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive
Chris Little, Chief Finance Officer
Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Alastair Rae, Public Relations Manager
Ed Turner, Public Relations Officer
Amanda Whitaker, David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

65. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENT MEMBERS

Councillors Buchan, Lawton, Lindridge, Sirs and Tempest.

66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None.

67. BUSINESS REQUIRED BY STATUTE TO BE DONE BEFORE ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

68. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE – TEES VALLEY COMBINED AUTHORITY – CONSTITUTION, MAYORAL POWER AND FUNCTIONS

The Chief Executive presented a report which sought Council's approval to give consent to the laying of an Order before Parliament that would determine the powers and functions of the Tees Valley Combined Authority, following its establishment as a mayoral combined authority under the Devolution Act. It was highlighted that similar reports were being presented to all five Borough Councils in their capacity as constituent councils in the current cycle of meetings. Provided all five Councils gave their consent, along with the Combined Authority, the Secretary of State would lay the necessary Order before Parliament. It was noted that the meeting of the Combined Authority, which had been scheduled to meet on 25th November 2016, had been delayed pending receipt of the draft Order.

Members were reminded that in October/November 2015, all five Tees Valley authorities had given their approval, (or approval in principle), to the Devolution Deal signed in principle on 23 October 2015. A copy of the Devolution Agreement was appended to the report. As outlined in the agreement, a directly elected Mayor for the Tees Valley would Chair the Combined Authority and, as part of the Tees Valley Cabinet, would exercise the functions associated with a consolidated transport budget and the creation of Mayoral Development Corporations through the devolution of such functions by Central Government. In addition, the Combined Authority working with the Mayor would also exercise the devolved powers detailed in the report.

The report set out progress since the conclusion of the 'Devolution Deal'. The report also outlined the proposed constitutional and governance arrangements, including 'checks and balances' associated with a Tees Valley Combined Authority and to enact the devolution of powers and responsibilities in line with the Tees Valley Devolution Deal. Following an earlier governance review and a proposal from the Tees Valley, Parliament had approved the Tees Valley Combined Authority Order 2016, which had established a Combined Authority for the Tees Valley with effect from 1 April, 2016. Subsequently, the Tees Valley Combined Authority (Election of Mayor) Order 2016, provided for the election of a Mayor to take place on 4 May, 2017, for an initial three year term and a term of office based on four years thereafter. The process required a second Order to be laid before Parliament, making amendments to the original Combined Authority Order to implement the new powers and establish appropriate checks and balances which required the consent of Council (a copy of the Order was appended to the report).

In parallel, Members were advised that the Combined Authority was developing its own Constitution, reflecting the checks and balances agreed locally, in line with the statutory provisions. This had been considered by the Combined Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and at Members' Seminars in each of the five Authorities. The Constitution determined an "embedded" model for a Tees Valley Mayor, in which consensus and collaboration were a foundation of effective decision-making. The Mayor would make proposals but needed to secure the support of the individual councils, with unanimity on key provisions and a requirement for effective

consultation and scrutiny.

Members were reminded that at a meeting of Council held on 12 November 2015, the Devolution Deal had been supported “subject to this Council’s approval to and detailed involvement in the formulation of the Constitution of the new Combined Authority”. Further it had been resolved by Council “that a robust communication strategy is developed prior to the 1st April 2016 to articulate to Hartlepool residents that Hartlepool is not losing any decision making power, but will be part of a new additional body involved in decision making currently undertaken within Central Government”. Members had been involved in considering the Constitution at a Members Seminar which had been held on the 24th June 2016. In addition, the proposed Constitutional arrangements for the Tees Valley Combined Authority were being considered by Council, rather than through executive arrangements which operated in the other Tees Valley authorities.

The Chief Executive presented the following recommendations set out in the report:-

- a) That Council agree to consent being given to the proposed Order (**Appendix B**) being made by the Secretary of State.
- b) That subject to this being agreed, that authority is delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to give the Council’s final consent to the Order being made when requested by the Secretary of State.
- c) That Council considers the content of the draft Mayoral Combined Authority Constitution (**Appendix C**) and provides such comment for the consideration of the Combined Authority as it deems appropriate.

Following presentation of the report, it was commented that while not supporting the imposition of a directly elected Mayor, being part of the Combined Authority would give Hartlepool direct access to the current funding streams and any additional future funding allocated by Central Government. It was highlighted that being a member of the Combined Authority gave Hartlepool a vote but also a veto should that be required.

Other members spoke in opposition to the imposition of the Combined Authority and directly elected Mayor referring back to the campaign and comments made during the referendum in Hartlepool to move away from the elected Mayor model to the current committee system. The view was expressed that the funding currently allocated was unsubstantial and would mean very little to the residents of Hartlepool. There were also questions as to how much the Combined Authority would cost to administer.

Members also considered that the decision processes had been undemocratic and still considered that Hartlepool’s involvement in the Combined Authority should be the subject of a referendum of the town’s people. A Member considered that the costs of such a referendum could have been met had the Council not spent money on specified schemes.

A Member commented that while the principle of the five Tees Valley Authorities working together was a laudable, the imposition of an elected Mayor was not. The Member considered that the checks and balances proposed within the TVCA Constitution should ensure that decision making by the Combined Authority would be largely consensual, though there were still some gaps and one in relation to the imposition of a transport levy was highlighted. The Member considered that all decision making at TVCA that would have a direct impact on the residents of Hartlepool should first be considered by this Council in order to give the Council's representative authority to vote.

An amendment was moved by Councillor Moore:-

“That no transport or other levy be imposed on the residents of Hartlepool by the Combined Authority without that proposal first being submitted to Council for consideration.”

Councillor C Akers Belcher assured Council that any levy would be submitted to Council and seconded the Motion. He acknowledged the concerns of Members in relation to the position of an elected Mayor for the Tees Valley. It was considered, however, that the devolvment of decision making from Central Government to TVCA was an opportunity to transfer decision making from Central Government.

Councillor Black seconded a Motion moved earlier in the meeting, by Councillor Riddle:-

“That Hartlepool's involvement in the Combined Authority should be the subject of a referendum of the residents of the town”

The Chief Solicitor advised that the decision had been made in November 2015 for Hartlepool to be part of the Combined Authority and as such the point at which a referendum could be called, which could only ever be advisory, had passed. The costs of a referendum were also significant and likely in excess of £150,000.

Following further discussion, Members sought clarification from the Chief Solicitor that there was still the option in the future to withdraw from the Combined Authority should the Council choose to do so. The Chief Solicitor confirmed that this was the case with a power for the Council to 'remove' itself from the Combined Authority, but through a defined process, comparable with that which established the Council as a constituent member of the Combined Authority.

A Member expressed concern regarding the 'negativity' of the debate and reiterated earlier comments when the opportunities arising from the process had been highlighted.

During the debate, the proceedings were interrupted by members of the public.

It was moved that the vote be put.

Council agreed that a recorded vote be taken.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17.5 of the Constitution, a recorded vote was taken on the Amendment:-

Those in favour:

Councillors C Akers-Belcher, S Akers-Belcher, Barclay, Beck, Belcher, Black, Clark, Cook, Cranney, Fleming, Hall, Hamilton, Harrison, Hind, Hunter, James, Lauderdale, Loynes, Martin-Wells, Moore, Morris, Richardson, Robinson, Springer, Tennant, Thomas and Thompson.

Those against:

None.

Those abstaining:

Councillor Riddle.

The Motion was carried

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17.5 of the Constitution, a recorded vote was taken on the Substantive Motion:-

Those in favour:

Councillors C Akers-Belcher, S Akers-Belcher, Barclay, Beck, Belcher, Clark, Cook, Cranney, Hamilton, Harrison, Hunter, James, Loynes, Martin-Wells, Morris, Richardson, Robinson and Thomas.

Those against:

Councillors Black, Hall, Lauderdale, Riddle and Thompson.

Those abstaining:

Councillors Fleming, Hind, Moore, Springer and Tennant.

The Substantive Motion was carried

The meeting concluded at 7.55 p.m.

CEREMONIAL MAYOR

COUNCIL

15th December 2016



Report of: Children's Services Committee

Subject: CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY STRATEGY 2016-2020

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Council to approve the updated Child and Family Poverty Strategy 2016 – 2020 (**Appendix A**).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The government's Child Poverty Act 2010 placed new requirements on local authorities and its partners to mitigate the effects of child poverty in their area. A series of key actions were set for local authorities including a duty to co-operate, to undertake a child poverty needs assessment and to produce local child poverty strategies. Hartlepool has produced two strategies since the Act was made law and updated its needs assessment annually.
- 2.2 The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 repealed much of the Child Poverty Act and redefined poverty with a focus on work and educational attainment. The government's latest child poverty strategy is for the period 2014 -2017. In this they set out their intentions to support families into work and increase their earnings, to improve living standards and to prevent poor children becoming poor adults through raising of educational attainment. The goal to end child poverty by 2020 remains their commitment however the way they measure this has changed.

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 Poverty can be defined in many different ways. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation defines poverty as "when a person's resources are not enough to meet their basic needs." The indicator most widely used to measure poverty and to assess progress on 2020 target is:

“Relative poverty: each household’s income, adjusted for family size, is compared to median income. Those with less than 60 per cent of median income are classified as poor. The measure is broadly used by many countries and the European Union. In the UK this information is taken from the Households Below Average Income (HBAI) survey.”

- 3.2 The new Welfare Reform and Work Act has retained the relative poverty measurement and included new reporting obligations:-
- Children living in workless households
 - Children living in long – term workless households
 - Educational attainment of children at end of Key Stage 4
 - Educational attainment of disadvantaged children at end of Key Stage 4
- 3.3 The overall level of child poverty in Hartlepool is currently 31% (Child Poverty Commission, 2015)

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Extensive consultation has taken place over a period of 6 months between January and August 2016. Appendix C of the strategy details the consultation process, the methods used and the stakeholders that participated. This can be summarised as follows –

Stage 1

A strategy planning workshop was held in January 2016. Members of Hartlepool Financial Inclusion Partnership (HFIP) were invited to an initial workshop to scope and draft a strategy. 76 members were invited and 17 attended. Organisations represented included DWP, Guinness Trust, Changing Futures North East, West View Advice and Resource Centre, Cleveland Fire Brigade, The Illegal Money Lending Team, Belle Vue Community and Sports Centre and Trussell Trust Foodbank.

Stage 2

A stakeholder consultation workshop was held in March 2016. Invitations were extended to HFIP, Elected Members, health, the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and schools. 45 people attended. Representation included 13 schools, 4 Elected Members, 7 health staff, 3 housing providers, 2 high street banks and 5 VCS.

The strategy was re-shaped to include feedback from Stage 1 and 2.

Stage 3

Ongoing meetings with Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) to ensure local alignment with their UK poverty strategy and the work they are currently undertaking in Hartlepool via their ‘Action Labs’. Consultation feedback shared and discussed with JRF in fortnightly update meetings. [The new JRF poverty strategy can be found here: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/we-can-solve-poverty-uk>.]

Stage 4

The amended strategy was distributed during the summer for final consultation with an opportunity for comments to be added to each sub-section of the report. Given the holiday period consultation was extended until September 2016. This also aligned with the formal release of the JRF strategy to solve UK poverty.

Stage 5

The strategy was presented to Children's Services Committee and Finance and Policy Committee in September and October 2016 and all comments have been included within the final strategy as attached.

5. KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- 5.1 Hartlepool's key strategic priorities to reduce child and family poverty in Hartlepool are:
- Mitigate the impact of poverty on children and families
 - Build pathways out of poverty for children and young people
 - Create new opportunities for adults to reduce child and family poverty.
- 5.2 The strategy sets out the actions needed to take place to address these priorities as identified with key stakeholders during the consultation period.

6. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There is a risk that the actions set out in the strategy will not have the impact needed on the child poverty level due to external economic factors. However, it is important that the council continue to aspire to the eradication of child poverty and regularly review the action plan to understand progress.
- 6.2 Progress on the strategy will be reported to Children's Services Committee on an annual basis.

7. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 If poverty levels continue to rise then potentially more families will require support from the Local Authority. The impact of the next round of Welfare Reform is expected to further increase demands on services.
- 7.2 Members have allocated reserve funding for Child and Family Poverty. The commitment of this additional funding can support system change to prevent children and young people being affected by poverty in the longer term.

8. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 There are no legal considerations in relation to this report.

9. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 Please see attached pro-forma (**Appendix B**).

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.1 Poverty can affect anyone however research shows us that specific groups of people are more susceptible than others. Their needs must therefore be considered. Groups at risk include:
- Young working age people 18-25
 - Lone parents
 - Large families
 - Children born into families in poverty
 - Those who are disabled and/ or suffer from illness (including mental illness)
 - Those with low educational attainment
 - Those who are unemployed
 - Those who find difficulty in managing their finances
 - Those from minority ethnic backgrounds

11. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 There are no specific staffing considerations in relation to this report.

12. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.1 There are no asset management considerations in relation to this report.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 The Council is asked to ratify the Child and Family Poverty Strategy 2016-2020.

14. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 To ensure a timely response so that more families can be helped at the earliest possible opportunity.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 15.1 The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:
Joseph Rowntree Foundation report:
<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/we-can-solve-poverty-uk>.

16. CONTACT OFFICER

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Hartlepool

Child and Family Poverty Strategy

2016 - 2020

Child and Family Poverty – A Partnership Approach

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1. Context

The government's Child Poverty Act 2010 placed new requirements on local authorities and its partners to reduce and mitigate the effects of child poverty in their area. A series of key actions were set for local authorities including the duty to cooperate, to undertake child poverty needs assessments and to produce local child poverty strategies. Hartlepool has produced two strategies since the Act was made law and updated its needs assessment annually.

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 repealed much of the Child Poverty Act and redefined poverty with a focus on work and educational attainment. The government's latest child poverty strategy is for the period 2014-17. In this they set out their intention to support families into work and increase their earnings, to improve living standards and to prevent poor children becoming poor adults through raising educational attainment. The goal to end child poverty by 2020 remains their firm commitment however the way they will measure it has changed.

Locally, Hartlepool Borough Council remains an active partner within the North East Child Poverty Commission which aims to build public and political support for actions that improve the lives of poor children living in the North East. Hartlepool's child and family poverty strategy compliments the work of the Commission and the Regional Child Poverty officer group. *'Child Poverty in the North East' (The University of York, June 2015)* and *'Child Poverty in the North East' (North East Child Poverty Commission, December 2015)* should be read in conjunction with this strategy as they give clear indications of levels of poverty between 2007 and 2015.

2. Defining poverty

Poverty can be defined in many different ways. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation defines poverty as *'when a person's resources are not enough to meet their basic needs'*.¹ The indicator most widely used to measure poverty and to assess impact on the 2020 target is –

Relative poverty: each household's income, adjusted for family size, is compared to median income. Those with less than 60 per cent of median income are classified as poor. This measure is broadly used by many countries and the European Union. In the UK this information is taken from the Households Below Average Income (HBAI) survey.²

The new Welfare Reform and Work Act has retained the relative poverty measurement and included new reporting obligations -

- children living in workless households
- children living in long-term workless households
- educational attainment of children at the end of Key Stage 4
- educational attainment of disadvantaged children at the end of Key Stage 4.

¹ Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and New Policy Institute, 2015.

² Households Below Average Income Statistics, DWP, 2014.

3. What does child and family poverty look like in Hartlepool?**Poverty rate**

The government's Child Poverty Unit tells us that between 2006 and 2012 poverty rates in Hartlepool increased from 27.9% to 28.1% compared to 20.8% and 18.6% nationally and that 25% of children in Hartlepool live in a workless family compared to 18% in the North East and 14% nationally. The Child Poverty Commission's latest report estimates child poverty in Hartlepool to be 31%. This equates to 5,590 children living in a household that claims an out of work benefit. This places Hartlepool third in the region for the highest levels of poverty after housing costs are taken into account.

Wages

According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) families living on or below £375 per week (couple with two children) *before* housing costs are living in relative poverty.³ According to The Office for National Statistics average earnings in Hartlepool are in the region of £378 per week.

Work

Unemployment claimant rates range from 8.1% in Victoria to 1.1% in Rural West compared to a national average of 3.3% (TVU 2015). On average 4.5% of our young people aged 16 to 19 are NEET (CCIS 2016).

Health

Deprivation can impact negatively on health. Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy tells us that levels of deprivation are higher and life expectancy lower than the national average; life expectancy for men is nine years lower in the town's most deprived areas than the national average. The percentage of women smoking is higher than the national average, our immunisation rates are the lowest in the Tees Valley and 25% of our Y6 children are obese.

Opportunities

Anecdotally, we know from speaking to our children and young people and the relevant adults in their lives that many Hartlepool children are missing out on opportunities that their peers are not. Lack of opportunities can lead to *poverty of experience* and can stifle aspiration. Examples include accessing local groups (eg uniformed organisations such as Brownies), going on school trips, having their friends over for tea, having a birthday party or even going to the beach.

4. Why do we need to end child and family poverty and who is most at risk?

Poverty is a cost that Hartlepool cannot afford. Poverty has an adverse effect on our wider society and our economic success. Research tells us that growing up in poverty has a devastating effect on our children and young people and that in many cases poor children grow up to be poor adults. Poverty reduces a child's sense of

³ Living Standards, Poverty and Inequality in the UK: 2014, Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2014.

worth and can impact on their ability to achieve at school. Links between child poverty and health are clear, not least the likelihood of dying prematurely.

It is estimated that child poverty currently costs the UK government £29 billion a year – this includes the costs of welfare and benefits, loss of tax revenue, the extra costs of services to deal with consequences of poverty and an estimate for loss of earnings. This problem looks avoidable if more families were in work however research also tells us that 56% of households living in poverty are in work. Work therefore needs to pay (the Living Wage), housing needs to be affordable and families need the skills to secure employment with an opportunity for progression. Many people cannot work due to illness, disability and caring responsibilities and these people need to be supported to live with dignity and respect whilst contributing to society in other ways.

Almost anyone can experience poverty however some people are at a greater risk of poverty than others. These include families with children (in particular single people with children and larger families with three or more children); the working age unemployed; disabled (physical and learning) working age adults; working age adults with mental health issues; children with SEND; Black Minority Ethnic Groups; social renters; those living in particular areas in the town. According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation for the first time ever ‘age’ can be a determining factor in poverty – pensioners are less likely to be in poverty however young people aged 18-25 are more likely to be in poverty – largely due to changes to welfare and benefit entitlement.

5. What is the vision for Hartlepool?

Hartlepool Borough Council fully supports the government’s ambition to reduce and ultimately eradicate child poverty by 2020. The council acknowledges that realistically speaking there is very little time left to secure real change to children and young people’s lives if they are to be lifted out of poverty in the next few years.

However, our plan to reduce and eradicate poverty is built upon a foundation that enables families break out of intergenerational cycles of deprivation using a family centred approach, ensuring all children and families have support at the earliest possible stage to prevent families reaching crisis. We aim to prevent poor children becoming poor adults through improved educational attainment and better opportunities for all.

As a council we can do this by ensuring –

- Council services have children and families at heart – A Better Childhood in Hartlepool will see systemic change in the way the Council delivers its children and young people’s services
- Our educators are Good or Outstanding – and are supported where appropriate to strive for excellence
- We work in partnership with key agencies and organisations – this includes Health, Emergency Services, the Private sector and organisations in the Voluntary and Community sectors

- We pay The Living Wage as a minimum to our employees and encourage other employers to do the same
- We continue to deliver Council Tax Support helping those on no/ low income
- Discretionary Housing Payments are targeted at those that need them most supporting residents to live in sustainable tenancies that meet their personal circumstances
- Local Welfare Support continues to be available each year offering help to those both in and out of work that find themselves in financial crisis
- Front facing council staff have a basic understanding of welfare and benefits and are able to support or signpost families to maximise their income and get financial help when it is most needed.

6. The need for a partnership approach

Child Poverty is everybody's business and Hartlepool Borough Council and partners are wholly committed to achieving an end to poverty by 2020. This is a significant undertaking and the only way this will happen will be through a partnership approach. All services need to work together.

7. Joseph Rowntree Foundation

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) is a social policy research and development charity that funds a UK-wide research and development programme. It seeks to understand the root causes of social problems, to identify ways of overcoming them, and to show how social needs can be met in practice. JRF works by funding research and taking forward the lessons learned, engaging with policy-makers and practitioners to develop better solutions. JRF works in partnership with the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT) to provide housing, care homes, retirement and supported housing, and demonstrates new approaches in these areas.

In Hartlepool JRF has a presence at Hartfields Retirement Village and is currently undertaking 'Action Lab' work to support community driven approaches to tackling poverty in Hartlepool. Appendix C is one such piece of work and includes 'conversations' with Hartlepool residents about their thoughts of the town.

In September 2016 JRF published 'We can solve poverty in the UK'. Their strategy, aimed at government, business, communities and citizens, offers an insight into how together we can solve poverty. It calls upon everyone to take ownership and action in order to overcome 'shameful' levels of poverty across the UK. Its key priorities align well with those identified in Hartlepool's strategy and can be summarised as follows –

- Boosting income and reducing costs
- Delivering an effective benefits system
- Improving education standards and raising skills
- Strengthening families and communities
- Promoting long term economic growth.

8. Outcomes and priorities

Hartlepool's has identified three key strategic priorities to reduce child and family poverty. They are -

- Mitigate the impact of poverty on children and families
- Build pathways out of poverty for children and young people
- Create new opportunities for adults to reduce child and family poverty.

In addition Hartlepool wants to be sure that no child goes hungry, particularly during school holidays when they are not able to access a Free School Meal.

9. Principles

These priorities are underpinned by a series of key principles that should be adopted by all partners working with families -

- The safeguarding of children is paramount
- Families will be encouraged to seek help early
- One worker, one assessment and one plan
- Workers will own and intervene and acknowledge the need to cut across their own professional boundaries for the benefit of the child
- Relationships will be a new focus with the aim of strengthening ties and increasing efficacy of actions
- Parenting remains a critical factor and will continue to be at the heart of the strategy
- The workforce will be solution focussed and will encourage ownership of goals and actions within the family
- Families will be partners with the workers that are in place to support them
- All workers will make judgements based on guidance and procedures but grounded in seeing the world through the child's eyes
- Children and young people's voices will be heard in the development of services and in any support offered.

10. How will we deliver our strategic priorities?

In order to deliver our strategic priorities, we will rigorously deliver upon the action plan as set out in Appendix D. In addition, we will –

- Ensure Elected Members have an understanding of poverty in their ward area and support their local community to offer solutions
- Tackle public misconceptions of poverty; work with the media (including the local newspaper and via social networks) to dispel myths that surround worklessness and benefit reliance
- Support schools to poverty proof the school day ensuring children are not identifiable or 'singled out' due to family low income; ensure low income children are able to access the same opportunities as their peers.

Consultation with young people and with service providers across the town has helped identify the following key actions. Full detail of the consultation process can be found in Appendix B.

11. Mitigate the impact of poverty on children and families

The Institute of Fiscal Studies predicts a total of 800,000 children living in poverty by 2020⁴. This growth can be directly linked to changes in welfare and benefit entitlement enacted in the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the new Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. In real terms new legislation has seen families in Hartlepool £42 million worse off through reforms such as the benefit cap, changes to disability related benefits, council tax benefit, housing allowances and the under occupation charge⁵. With further reform planned we need to -

Early help

- Make sure residents know where they can go in times of crisis but also to seek early help when they need it
- Focus on relationships and couple support with an understanding that families are stronger when they work together
- Offer long term, intensive support for complex cases where it is needed.

Money management

- Ensure people are getting the benefits they are entitled to
- Help people make good use of the money they receive, take an active approach to money management including savings, planning for crisis and for the future
- Know where to get low cost credit and where to get money advice if needed
- Keep a close eye on the cost of living and use this information to inform the development of family services.

Skills, training and work

- Encourage those that can to work
- Support those at risk of 'in work' poverty to access benefits and entitlements
- Improve adult skills increasing their work opportunities
- Ensure children that are entitled to a Free School Meal are identified automatically and an award made
- Make maximum use of e.g. Pupil Premium reducing the gap between those that are more disadvantaged than others.

Housing and homes

- Work with social housing providers and support them in a moral duty to ensure they help families at risk
- Support new tenants to manage their tenancy with checks on affordability and ongoing support with money prioritization and management
- Support families in rent arrears to take positive action on their tenancy with the aim of preventing eviction and homelessness – work with landlords to ensure early notification of families at risk of rent arrears
- Target fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency – make full use of replacement boiler schemes and energy efficiency programmes.

12. Build pathways out of poverty for children and young people

Poverty is about more than just money. It is disadvantage, hardship and lack of opportunity. Children and young people need to be supported from pre-birth through

⁴ Child and Working Age Poverty from 2010 to 2020, Institute of Fiscal Studies, 2011.

⁵ The Impact of Welfare Reform in the North East, Association of North East Councils, 2013.

their early years and throughout their statutory education. Young people need to have choices moving forward. We need to reduce the gap between levels of attainment of children and young people who receive a free school meal and those who do not. We must -

Care, education and learning

- Support eligible children to take up their free early education and childcare place with high quality providers
- Ensure our schools offer education that meets the needs of a child growing up in the 21st century
- Support education providers to make effective use of Pupil Premium narrowing the gap in attainment where appropriate
- Ensure pathways for SEND children are clear and that learning and work expectations of children and young people with SEND are high
- Ensure children are taught about money, money management, savings, credit and debt. Support them to develop practical skills that will go on to help them in adult working life
- Ensure our secondary school and post 16 learning providers offer information, advice and guidance to young people helping them make informed choices about their future
- Improve transition arrangements from formal education providers to service providers such as Adult Education and other Training Providers ensuring young people are clear on training pathways available to them
- Ensure our post-16 providers offer education that meets the needs of young people enabling them to acquire skills necessary to join the workforce
- Encourage an appetite and love for learning that supports children and young people to continue to learn throughout their adult life.

Work focus

- Ensure Apprenticeships are available, offer excellent work based learning opportunities and include high quality accredited training that will help meet future work needs
- Ensure advice on self-employment, enterprise and commerce is available across all age groups and abilities
- Identify skill shortages across employment sectors and share this information with young people enabling them to make informed choices about their future career opportunities.

Participation, positive role models

- Encourage children and young people to participate in organisations and activities that support them to develop skills and acquire experiences that will go on to help them in adult life
- Encourage volunteering to develop skills and experience and help them take ownership within their community
- Ensure adults that engage with children and young people - through childcare, education, volunteering – are of a high quality, are well trained, motivated and enthusiastic role models

- Support parents to display positive attitudes to education and to share this with their children.

13. Create new opportunities for adults to reduce child and family poverty.

Research shows that the best route out of poverty for families is parental employment and therefore raising family income. Increasing the overall employment rate is a key aim of the strategy and supporting adults to enter into sustainable work will be achieved in the following ways –

Young people and work

- Tees Valley Pathways & Routeways Youth Employment Initiative Programme. Delivered through a consortium of 28 Delivery Partners including the five Local Authorities, Colleges and organisations from the Public, Private and Voluntary Sector, the programme will support 960 young people aged 15 to 29 years old who are unemployed with over 400 progressing into sustained education, employment, training or self-employment
- The Hartlepool Youth Investment Project brings together all partners such as schools, colleges, Jobcentre Plus and critically employers to improve the employability and entrepreneurial skills of young people. Through the combined efforts of partners, the youth unemployment rate has reduced to its current rate of 3.8%
- HBC will support the delivery of the Careers & Enterprise Company by Tees Valley Unlimited and Groundwork. This will ensure that young people develop the knowledge, skills and abilities that employers demand through the creation of innovative programmes

Adults, skills and work

- Ensure that Hartlepool's 'vision' for growth creates job opportunities for working age adults in Hartlepool; adults to be offered training opportunities to fill identified skills gaps ensuring local people are able to access local jobs
- Ensure adults have the skills and easy access to digital services allowing them to engage with public sector agencies (e.g. DWP) to claim benefits they are entitled to and to search and apply for jobs
- Adult Education, Hartlepool Working Solutions and National Careers Service have established a universal Information, Advice and Guidance offer and over the next year will deliver IAG to 400 unemployed adults across Hartlepool
- Hartlepool Working Solutions delivers the Supporting Working Age Adults Project including employability skills, impartial IAG, job search facilities and employment route ways. Over the next year, the project will support 300 unemployed adults into further training and 100 into employment.

Employers

- Work with employers to implement The Living Wage and encourage them to move away from zero hour contracts ensuring low skilled workers are paid a fair and regular wage
- The Economic Regeneration Team has established a Hartlepool Employer Core

Offer in partnership with National Careers Service, Jobcentre Plus, National Apprenticeship Service and Adult Education. This will promote the combined range of services to businesses including apprenticeships, traineeships etc. Through this, Adult Education will undertake a Training Needs Analysis on 100 companies with 400 employees accessing learning provision

- Hartlepool Adult Education will respond to the new Employer Levy by working with businesses to create apprenticeships and traineeships. Over the next year, Adult Education will create 100 new apprenticeships in partnership with companies. This will be aligned to the Government drive to increase apprenticeships to 3 million by 2020.

Supporting people to get work and to stay in work

- Ensure transport in the town meets the needs of those that work both in and out of the borough; transport must be affordable, flexible and able to meet diverse working patterns
- Work with childcare providers to ensure childcare is available, flexible and suitable to meet the needs of a diverse employment sector
- Support those that are working part time to gain 'full employment' where appropriate
- Challenge public perception that there are 'no jobs for people'
- Volunteer Hartlepool is part of Hartlepool Borough Council's Adult Education Team and promotes volunteering to residents, businesses and other organisations across the town.
- Hartlepool Borough Council is the lead on the Tees Valley Combined Authority Education, Employment and Skills Board. This will support residents to access the 25,000 replacement and 120,000 new jobs created in the Tees Valley over the next decade in growth sectors such as Advanced Manufacturing
- Hartlepool Adult Education is embedding entrepreneurship and enterprise activities in all provision ensuring residents have key skills such as communication, leadership and teamwork which employers demand. This will also ensure that people view enterprise as a viable career option and through this the Hartlepool Self Employment Rate will increase to 10% by 2021
- Ensure volunteers receive training and access to a volunteering placement based on their interests, skills and ambitions. Over the next year, Volunteer Hartlepool will register 100 new volunteers who will be supported to progress into training and employment.

Health and disability

- Ensure intensive support is available to adults with mental health problems and substance use issues who are struggling
- The Promoting Change, Transforming Lives Project has commenced at Waverley Allotments through £400,000 of funding from the Big Lottery Fund. The project will be delivered over the next five years supporting people with mental health and/or learning difficulties. There will be 100 disadvantaged people accessing the provision each year alongside 18 adults supported into employment, 20 onto a work placement and 20 into further learning
- The Mental Health Pilot will continue to be delivered over the next year supporting a minimum of 100 adults to access skills provision and qualifications

which will help adults recover from mild to moderate mental health problems. This project will be delivered by Adult Education in partnership with MIND and Hartlepool Working Solutions

- The Hartlepool Employment Link Team is based with Economic Regeneration and supports vulnerable adults who have a learning difficulty and/or mental health problem.

14. Food Poverty and Holiday Hunger

In 2015/16 there were 2,148 primary children a day eligible for a free meal, uptake of primary free meals was 82% (approx 1761 children). There were 804 a day eligible in secondary schools, uptake of secondary free meals was 74% (approx 595 children). Overall uptake of schools meals stands at 72% in primary schools and 63% in secondary schools.

There is growing concern that some children who would normally receive a free school meal during term time do not have access to this provision during school holidays and may be under-nourished. This concern is corroborated with national information from The Trussell Trust which has seen an increase in the use of foodbanks when schools are closed together with information from the voluntary sector which indicates that children and young people accessing holiday scheme activities do so in order to get free packed lunches and snacks.

Research shows that children living in poverty dropped further behind their better off peers when schools were closed and they did not have access to free school meals. They were often physically and mentally unprepared for learning when they returned to school⁶. We need to –

Workforce skills

- Ensure workers across town know what provision is available for hungry residents and their families
- Remove any stigma attached to Free School Meals and accessing foodbanks
- Ensure crisis payments for Local Welfare Support are fair and consistent and that vouchers are available for a wide selection of supermarkets and stores.

Nutrition and health

- Promote breast feeding as an important start in life and a low cost way of feeding a young child
- Support parents and carers to develop cooking skills and how to buy and prepare food on a budget.

Food via the VCS

- Explore Fare Share as an option for free/ low cost food and encourage voluntary sector agencies to access the scheme
- Ensure breakfast clubs operating across the town are accessing free cereal from Kelloggs
- Work with Greggs and encourage partners to register to collect and distribute free food at the end of the working day

⁶ Food Poverty: School Holidays and Wider Impact, Northern Housing Association, 2015.

- Continue to support the local Trussell Trust foodbank through Local Welfare Support and refer those that are most in need to the service.

VCS support

- Support the voluntary sector to identify funding opportunities for out of school provision targeting summer holidays and those in greatest need.

15. Monitoring progress and success

Moving forward the government must now report annually on progress towards full employment; this includes an apprenticeships target. In addition the government must report on –

- Children who live in households whose equivalised net income for the relevant financial year is less than 60% of median equivalised net income for that financial year ('relative poverty')
- Children living in workless households in England
- Children living in long-term workless households in England
- The educational attainment of children in England at the end of Key Stage 4
- The educational attainment of disadvantaged children in England at the end of Key Stage 4.

In order to show impact on child and family poverty, Hartlepool will need to see an improvement in the following key areas -

Measurement	Definition and source	Hartlepool's position in 2016
Number of children living in relative poverty	Relative poverty is measured using the DWPs 'Households Below Average Income' survey and is produced using a three year average. Most up to date figures are for the period 2011/12 – 2013/14.	31%
Number of children living in workless households claiming JSA	Number of children living in workless households is derived from Office for National Statistics data and includes households claiming JSA with children aged 16 years and under (or 18 years and under if in education). .	23.28%
Number of children living in long term workless households	Long term worklessness has been defined in the Act as children who live in households whose equivalised net income has been less than 60% of the median equivalised net household income in at least 3 of the last 4 'survey periods'.	New measurement – 'survey period' not yet known
Attainment of children at end of Key Stage 4	Measurement to be confirmed. Likely to be Attainment 8 and Progress 8 measures [Previously measured by % of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and Maths (level 2 equivalent): Source 2015 GCSE pupil file]	TBC [previous measurement 53.40%]

Gap between children eligible for FSM and the rest at end of KS4	See above. Measurement to be confirmed. [See above – previous source 2015 GCSE pupil file]	TBC [30.9%]

Locally we can expect to see demonstrable impact on child and family poverty in the next 12 months in the following key areas –

- A Better Childhood in Hartlepool will see integrated teams focused on improving relationships across families, strengthening their resilience so they are more equipped to deal with crisis. Teams will include local authority and health staff and will aspire to include police, housing providers and mental health
- A public and voluntary sector workforce that is equipped with basic practical knowledge on welfare, benefits, income maximisation and money management with a clear understanding of where families need to go for help. This is being led by Hartlepool Financial Inclusion Partnership and is multi agency in its support
- Responsive council services that meet the needs of local residents and react real time to welfare reform – eg Council Tax Support Scheme, Discretionary Housing Payments, Local Welfare Support, Housing advice and early action on rent arrears and potential evictions
- 100% take up of early years entitlement by eligible children with children taking their placements in Good or Outstanding settings.

16. Tackling child poverty – actions for 2016 to 2020

We need to take a long term look at child and family poverty reduction with an understanding that strategic change will take time to have an impact. As part of this Hartlepool Borough Council and partners need to share ownership of the problem and work together to achieve tangible and sustainable impact.

The key priorities remain -

- Mitigate the impact of poverty on children and families
- Build pathways out of poverty for children and young people
- Create new opportunities for adults to reduce child and family poverty.

We will ensure that no Hartlepool child goes hungry, particularly during school holidays when they are not eligible for a Free School Meal.

The plan in Appendix C sets out broad actions for the period 2016-20.

17. What are the resource implications for tackling child poverty in Hartlepool?

Resources are tight however there is an understanding and an appetite from all partners to make a difference to children's lives. The need to work together has been agreed by all the key service providers and agencies and partners are linked in to collaborative projects with families at their heart.

18. Conclusion

Hartlepool continues to face a challenging time with continued national austerity measures in place to tackle the budget deficit. This has seen an overall reduction in the Local Authority's budget and this together with new legislation such as the Welfare Reform Act and the Welfare and Work Bill have impacted on funding for residents. Welfare Reform in a town with already high levels of disadvantage has a particularly severe 'bite'. Whilst welfare reform is not the sole driver of child and family poverty it is an exacerbating factor. Collaborative work between partners is the only way to tackle child and family poverty and to see an improvement on those measures outlined above.

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Appendix A – Local Needs Assessment

Data	Source	Burn Valley	De Bruce	Fens & Rossmere	Foggy Furze	Hart	Headland & Harbour	Jesmond	Manor House	Rural West	Seaton	Victoria
Total Population Estimates (2013)	NOMIS	9320	8651	7887	9311	8165	6527	9295	9904	8685	8269	6576
Population 0-15 Year Olds Estimate (2013)	NOMIS	1814	1790	1269	1757	1726	1222	1973	2300	1290	1450	1058
Population of 16-19 year olds Estimate	NCCIS	554	434	359	475	443	311	441	567	420	372	292
Unemployment Claimant Rate (2015)	TVU	5.6%	5.2%	2.3%	3.8%	1.1%	6.2%	4.9%	7.3%	1.1%	1.9%	8.1%
Pupils Receiving Free School Meals (Jan 2015)	January 2015 School Census	300	504	89	336	73	327	426	651	37	186	419
% 16 17 18 19 year olds NEET (Jan 2016)	NCCIS	4.79%	4.6%	1.7%	4.79%	2.1%	6.41%	3.35%	6.63%	0%	1.89%	7.64%
Qualifications 5+ GCSE's A-C Including English and Maths (2014)	2015 GCSE pupil file	51.7%	48.3%	67.0%	56.8%	66.0%	24.1%	44.7%	49.3%	56.3%	66.1%	48.9%
Gap between FSM children and the rest at KS4	2015 GCSE pupil file	27.0%	24.8%	24.4%	42.1%	5.1%	10.04%	29.8%	23.5%	46.0%	28.6%	37.1%

Appendix B - Child and Family Poverty Action Plan

Objective	Key actions	Timescale	Lead Officer/ department/ team / service provider
Mitigate the impact of poverty on children and families	<u>JRF Action Lab –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing for young people and those that have been looked after Community safety/ neighbourliness project 	September 2016	JRF/ VCS
	<u>Skills, work and employment –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage those that can to work Support those at risk of 'in work' poverty to access benefits and entitlements Improve adult skills increasing their work opportunities 	September 2016	PT/PW
	<u>Money, budgeting and debt –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep a close eye on the cost of living and use this information to inform what financial support is offered to families Closely monitor the impact of Universal Credit on families as they move to monthly payments and take responsibility for paying their own rent Help people access affordable essential services (e.g. food, energy, childcare) and make good use of the income they receive Take an active approach to money management, savings, planning for crisis and saving for the future Know where to get low cost credit and where to get money advice if needed 	March 2017	PT
	<u>Benefits and entitlements -</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure people are getting the benefits they are entitled to Ensure children that are entitled to a Free School Meal are identified 	March 2017	PT

	<p>automatically by the council and an award is made</p> <p><u>Education –</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure eligible children are taking up their free early education and childcare entitlement enabling the parent to train or work and the child to reach important early learning goals • Ensure all our education providers are of the very highest standard • Ensure that all children and young people are encouraged to reach their potential – making maximum use of e.g. Pupil Premium reducing the gap between those that are more disadvantaged than others <p><u>Housing -</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with social housing providers and support them in a moral duty to ensure they help families at risk • Support families in rent arrears to take positive action on their tenancy with the aim of preventing eviction and homelessness • Target landlords that neglect properties or who own empty properties • Find creative uses for derelict/ empty buildings • Target fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency <p><u>Family relationships and resilience -</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on relationships and couple support with an understanding that families are stronger when they work together • Make sure residents know where they can go in times of crisis but also to seek early help when they need it • Offer long term, intensive support for complex cases where it is needed 	<p>March 2017</p> <p>March 2017</p> <p>March 2017</p>	<p>PT</p> <p>NJ</p> <p>DS</p>
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Objective	Key actions	Timescale	Lead Officer/ department/ team / service provider
Build pathways out of poverty for children and young people	<u>Education –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support eligible children to take up their free early education and childcare place with a high quality early years provider Ensure our schools are at least Good and preferably Outstanding offering education that meets the needs of a child growing up in the 21st century Ensure our post-16 education providers offer education that meets the needs of young people enabling them to acquire the skills necessary to join the workforce Support education providers to make effective use of Pupil Premium narrowing the gap in attainment where appropriate Ensure pathways for SEND children are clear and that learning and work expectations of children and young people with SEND are high Encourage an appetite and love for learning that supports children and young people to continue to learn throughout their adult life 	March 2017	MP
	<u>Transition –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure our secondary school and post 16 learning providers offer information, advice and guidance to young people helping them make informed choices about their future Improve transition arrangements from formal education providers to service providers such as Adult Education and other Training Providers ensuring young people are clear on training pathways available to them Ensure Apprenticeships are available, offer excellent work based learning 	March 2017	MP/ PW

	<p>opportunities and include high quality accredited training that will help meet future work needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure advice on self-employment, enterprise and commerce is available across all age groups and abilities • Identify skill shortages across employment sectors and share this information with young people enabling them to make informed choices about their future career opportunities <p><u>Skills, work and employment –</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure children are taught about money, money management, savings, credit and debt. Support them to develop practical skills that will go on to help them in adult working life <p><u>Community ethos and citizenship –</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage children and young people to participate in organisations and activities that support them to develop skills and acquire experiences that will go on to help them in adult life • Encourage volunteering to develop skills and experience and help them take ownership within their community • Ensure adults that engage with children and young are of a high quality, are well trained, motivated and enthusiastic role models • Support parents to display positive attitudes to education and to share this with their child/ren 	<p>March 2017</p> <p>March 2017</p>	<p>MP</p> <p>DS/MP</p>
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Objective	Key actions	Timescale	Lead Officer/ department/ team / service provider
Create new opportunities for adults to reduce child and family poverty.	<p><u>JRF Action Lab –</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poolie Time Bank – a website dedicated to volunteering in Hartlepool with rewards for those that are able to commit their time free to support their local community <p><u>Skills, work and employment –</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that Hartlepool’s ‘vision’ for growth creates job opportunities for working age adults in Hartlepool Ensure young people leaving education are ready and able to work Ensure adults are offered training opportunities to fill identified skills gap areas ensuring local people are able to access local jobs Where there has been a loss of traditional employment sector skills look to replace this with new skills that meet the needs of a modern day workforce Promote self-employment, enterprise and commerce as a means to self-sufficiency and full employment Ensure adults have appropriate skills and easy access to digital services allowing them to engage with public sector agencies (e.g. DWP) to claim benefits they are entitled to and to search and apply for jobs <p><u>Partnerships –</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strong links between education providers and employment advisory services to ensure young people receive appropriate information, advice and guidance Ensure Adult Education and other training providers are linked up with schools to ensure seamless transition for young people into other areas of training and 	<p>September 2016</p> <p>June 2017</p> <p>June 2017</p>	<p>JRF/ VCS</p> <p>PW/ MP</p> <p>PW</p>

	<p>learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work directly with employers to construct bespoke employability programmes that lead to work trials, work placements, volunteering and ultimately employment • Effective engagement with employers to understand future skill needs and to support with Workforce Development • Apprenticeship campaigns direct with employers <p><u>Transport –</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with providers to ensure transport in the town meets the needs of those that work both in and out of the borough • Ensure transport is affordable, flexible and able to meet diverse working patterns 	September 2017	DO
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Objective	Key actions	Timescale	Lead Officer/ department/ team / service provider
Ensure no child goes hungry, particularly during school holidays when they are not able to access a Free School Meal.	<u>Workforce –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure workers across town know what provision is available for hungry residents and their families 	March 2017	PT
	<u>Poverty proofing –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove any stigma attached to Free School Meals and accessing foodbanks Ensure crisis payments for Local Welfare Support are fair and consistent and are made available to the public as sensitively as possible 	March 2017	PT
	<u>Partnerships –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the voluntary sector to identify funding opportunities for out of school provision specifically targeting summer holidays and those in greatest need Continue to support the local Trussell Trust foodbank through Local Welfare Support and refer those that are most in need to the service 	March 2017	PT
	<u>Health –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote breast feeding as an important start in life and a low cost way of feeding a young child Support parents and carers to develop cooking skills and how to buy and prepare food on a budget 	September 2017	CJ
	<u>Food –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore Fare Share as an option for free/ low cost food and encourage 	March 2017	SC

	<p>voluntary sector agencies to access the scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure breakfast clubs operating across the town are accessing free cereal from Kelloggs • Work with Greggs and encourage partners to register to collect and distribute free food at the end of the working day 		
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Appendix C – Consultation processStage 1

Strategy planning workshop held on 28.01.16. Members of Hartlepool Financial Inclusion Partnership (HFIP) invited to an initial workshop to scope and draft a strategy. 76 members invited, 17 attended. Organisations represented included DWP, Guinness Trust, Changing Futures North East, West View Advice and Resource Centre, Cleveland Fire Brigade, Illegal Money Lending Team, Belle Vue Community and Sports Centre and Trussell Trust Foodbank.

Stage 2

Stakeholder consultation workshop held 24.03.2016. Invitations extended to HFIP, Elected Members, health, voluntary and community sector and schools. 45 people attended. Representation included 13 schools, 4 Elected Members, 7 health staff, 3 housing providers, 2 banks and 5 VCS.

Stage3

Strategy re-shaped to ensure alignment with Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) together with their UK poverty strategy and the work they are currently undertaking in Hartlepool via their 'Action Labs'. Draft shared and discussed with JRF in fortnightly update meetings. The JRF poverty strategy can be found here:

<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/we-can-solve-poverty-uk>.

Stage 4

Strategy distributed for final consultation with opportunity for comments added to each sub-section of the report. Given the summer holiday period consultation was extended until 09.09.2016. This also aligned with the formal release of the JRF strategy to solve UK poverty.

Summary

The table below shows those organisations who responded and/or participated during the consultation process.

Belle Vue Community and Sports and Youth Centre	Hartlepool Foodbank (Trussell Trust)	Eldon Grove Academy
Guinness Trust	One Stop Shop	Changing Futures North East
HBC Teams including: Education, Learning and Skills Hartlepool Working Solutions Housing Advice Team Housing Strategy Community Safety Team	Elected Members	Children's Centres Parent Volunteers
Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School	Rossmere Primary School	St. Helen's Primary School
Joseph Rowntree	Department for Work and	Public Health

Foundation	Pensions	
Lloyds Bank	Lynnfield Primary School	Hartlepool College of Further Education
North East Child Poverty Commission/LGA	North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust	Santander
St. John Vianney Roman Catholic Primary School	Ward Jackson Primary School	Kingsley Primary School
Thirteen	CAMHS	Brougham Primary School
West View Advice and Resource Centre	Cleveland Fire Brigade	The Illegal Money Lending Team
West View Primary School	Hartlepool Families First	St. Aidan's Church of England Primary School
West View Project	Harbour	Rift House Primary School

Appendix D - what are young people telling us?

Youth Workers from Hartlepool's One Stop Shop spent time with their service users talking about poverty. 11 young people aged 16-17 years were involved.

What is poverty -

- Not being able to afford the basic things in life: food, water, clothes, shelter and medicine.
- Having nothing to call your own.
- Having nowhere to live.
- Having no money.
- Poverty is having nothing to help you have a good start in life –so things get worse.
- Poverty is not just about being unable to afford things, it's about not being able to live or cope with life and things get worse and worse.

What causes poverty?

- Poverty can be caused by lots of things.
- You can be born into poverty – parents are poor so you are poor.
- It can happen because your parents split up.
- Drug and alcohol abuse.
- People who live in violent relationships.
- End of work due to companies going bust or courses coming to an end.
- No jobs for young people to help themselves.
- Young people who didn't get good results at school.
- "Not all people in poverty are bad people!"

How does poverty affect you?

- It can be scary.
- Can cause people to change from lovely human beings to someone who doesn't care about anything or anyone.
- Young people do what they need to survive.
- It can make you feel angry and get really mad – sometimes violent.
- It can take away confidence – and you think things will never get any better.
- You feel stuck in hole that you can't see a way out of.
- People in poverty can turn to drugs and alcohol as a way to escape.
- Things can wind up worse and debts can mount up.
- People turn to crime to feed themselves or get money for other things like alcohol or drugs.
- Can't go to interviews for a job or course because of the cost of clothes and travel.
- Makes you hungry.

What can young people do to help themselves out of poverty?

- Go to college or do training to get qualifications and do things with your life.
- Try and get a job.
- Listen to workers as they are only trying to help.
- Self-refer to services such as "Know Your Money".
- Don't waste money on things like drugs, alcohol and gambling.

- Set a budget and plan ahead. Make sure bills are paid and then plan meals and shopping.
- Stay at home with parents if possible.
- Don't 'kick off' and get angry it makes things worse.
- GET HELP!!!

What can services do to improve the way they help young people in poverty?

- Have a central place we can go to take time out or get support.
- Talk to us like young adults rather than children. Stop patronising us.
- Help with confidence.
- Meet appointments on time, don't keep people waiting.
- Help with finding work or training so we can get ourselves out of poverty.
- Teach us how to budget in school.
- Don't pass us about to different services.
- Have more jobs available.
- Help parents get jobs.

Appendix E 'Hartlepool Conversations'

Joseph Rowntree Foundation is in the process of undertaking local action against poverty in Hartlepool. In June 2016 they 'recruited' a team of local researchers to find out what is important to people in Hartlepool. Their report 'Hartlepool Conversations' can be found at www.hartlepoolactionlab.org.

Key priorities and ideas for improvement from residents included (but are not limited to) -

- Access to transport throughout the North East, subsidised where possible for those that need it
- Address perceived geographic barriers between wards in the town prevent Hartlepool residents from forming strong community cohesion (north/ south divide in the town)
- High business rates could be addressed by the Council to attract more enterprise within the town
- Money and the feeling that some residents do not have enough to participate positively in their local communities
- Incentives to establish and attract new businesses into empty shops
- Realistic training opportunities and apprenticeships for young people
- More volunteering opportunities for all
- Cost of accessing Adult Education opportunities is a barrier for some
- Lack of access to training, education and work for non-English speakers
- Middleton Grange Shopping Centre to work with partners to create more affordable retail units delivering jobs for local people and the opportunity of business enterprise
- Good quality, affordable housing that is well maintained by responsible landlords
- Build relationships with the media, particularly Hartlepool Mail to prevent negative comments relating to worklessness and 'lack of jobs'
- Build a feeling of community pride and ownership.

POVERTY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. Is this decision a Budget & Policy Framework or Key Decision? YES If YES please answer question 2 below				
2. Will there be an impact of the decision requested in respect of Child and Family Poverty? YES / NO If YES please complete the matrix below				
GROUP	POSITIVE IMPACT	NEGATIVE IMPACT	NO IMPACT	REASON & EVIDENCE
Young working people aged 18 - 21	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed
Those who are disabled or suffer from illness / mental illness	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed
Those with low educational attainment	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed
Those who are unemployed	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed
Those who are underemployed	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed
Children born into families in poverty	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed
Those who find difficulty in managing their finances	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed
Lone parents	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed
Those from minority ethnic backgrounds	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed
Poverty is measured in different ways. Will the policy / decision have an impact on child and family poverty and in what way?				
Poverty Measure (examples of poverty measures appended overleaf)	POSITIVE IMPACT	NEGATIVE IMPACT	NO IMPACT	REASON & EVIDENCE
All measures should be addressed through the strategy as these are outcomes being measured	Yes			Strategy objectives are linked to improvement in all these areas

POVERTY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Overall impact of Policy / Decision			
NO IMPACT / NO CHANGE	Positive impact	ADJUST / CHANGE POLICY / SERVICE	
ADVERSE IMPACT BUT CONTINUE		STOP / REMOVE POLICY / SERVICE	
Examples of Indicators that impact of Child and Family Poverty.			
Economic			
Children in Low Income Families (%)			
Children in Working Households (%)			
Overall employment rate (%)			
Proportion of young people who are NEET			
Adults with Learning difficulties in employment			
Education			
Free School meals attainment gap (key stage 2 and key stage 4)			
Gap in progression to higher education FSM / Non FSM			
Achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils (key stage 2 and key stage 4)			
Housing			
Average time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council tax benefit claims			
Number of affordable homes built			
Health			
Prevalence of underweight children in reception year			
Prevalence of obese children in reception year			
Prevalence of underweight children in year 6			
Prevalence of obese children in reception year 6			
Life expectancy			

COUNCIL

15 December 2016



Report of: Finance and Policy Committee

Subject: LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT
SCHEME 2017/18

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present details of the final proposals for the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18 as part of the Budget and Policy Framework.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The agenda papers for this meeting include a copy of the report considered by Finance and Policy Committee on 2nd December 2016 to assist familiarisation by Members of the issues and financial risks associated with the operation of the Local Council Tax Support scheme.
- 2.2 The former national Council Tax Benefit scheme was abolished on 31st March 2013 and local authorities are required by Government to establish their own Local Council Tax Support Schemes (LCTS). For 2013/14 the Government reduced its funding nationally to operate these new local schemes by 10% (over 13% in Hartlepool).
- 2.3 From 2014/15, the Government ceased making a specific grant for LCTS schemes but instead mainstreamed the grant paid to support LCTS schemes within the Core Revenue Grant paid to Councils. However, the Government's financial settlement for 2014/15 and successive years have included significant ongoing cuts in Revenue Grant funding.
- 2.4 Sustainability and affordability are key principles that underpin the operation of the LCTS scheme. The report to Finance and Policy Committee of 2nd December 2016, set out financial analysis which confirmed that a 2017/18 LCTS scheme that maintains a level of award cut at 12% (the same as in 2016/17) is viable.

- 2.5 The other four Tees Valley Authorities have all implemented LCTS cuts of 20% since 2013/14 and it is understood these arrangements will continue in 2017/18.
- 2.6 As highlighted in paragraph 9.7 of the Finance and Policy Committee report (**Appendix 1**) the Council's LCTS schemes have provided significant support for households compared to a 20% scheme. If a 12% cut is maintained for 2017/18, the support over the period 2013/14 – 2017/18 will be:
- Band A £496.00
 - Band B £577.00

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The proposal put forward by Finance and Policy Committee is to maintain the 2017/18 LCTS scheme award cut at 12% the same level as in 2016/17. The proposed 12% LCTS cut for 2017/18 is viable and avoids an increase in the Council Tax liability of low income working age households at a time when households are adjusting to the ongoing impacts of the wider national welfare reforms.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Council are recommended to:
- i) Approve the continuation, for the fourth year, of a 12% LCTS scheme in 2017/18.
 - ii) Approve the continuation in 2017/18 of the existing LCTS scheme Principles detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the Finance and Policy Committee report.
 - iii) Approve the passporting of about £4,000 of the 2017/18 Core Revenue Grant to Parish Councils in accordance with national regulations.
 - iv) Note that the approved Local Council Tax Support Scheme will be subject to close monitoring and annual review.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 5.1 Local Council Tax Support 2017/18 – Finance and Policy Committee 2nd December 2016 as attached Appendix 1.

6. CONTACT OFFICER

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Finance & Policy Committee

2nd December 2016



Report of: Chief Finance Officer

Subject: LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT 2017/18

1. TYPE OF DECISION / APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Budget and Policy Framework Decision.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purposes of the report are to:

- i) Update Members on the operation of the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme and the scheme's future financial risks associated with the Government's national welfare reforms;
- ii) set out a proposed LCTS scheme for 2017/18;
- iii) Provide details of an "Independent Review of Local Council Tax Support Schemes" commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Previous reports informed Members that the Coalition Government abolished the national Council Tax Benefit scheme on 31st March 2013 and replaced it with a requirement for Councils to determine and operate their own LCTS schemes. Once a LCTS scheme has been set for a financial year it cannot be altered for that year.
- 3.2 This was a fundamental change to the Welfare State which transferred responsibility for Council Tax support from the national Government to individual Councils. Previous reports to Members have set out three key issues arising from this change:-
 - (i) Funding transferred by the Government for 2013/14 LCTS schemes was cut overall by 10% nationally. However, when account was taken of the value of awards, the initial grant cut for Hartlepool for 2013/14 was 13.4%;

- (ii) Councils are required to fully protect low income Pensioners eligible for LCTS support, which means the initial funding cut falls on working age households and effectively built a 20% reduction for this group into the system;
 - (iii) Since April 2014 Central Government funding for LCTS is no longer provided as a separate grant allocation but has been included in the annual Core Revenue Grant allocation for individual Councils. This means Councils face having to implement higher reductions in LCTS support for working age households, as pensioners remain fully protected, or limit the LCTS cut by implementing higher General Fund budget cuts.
- 3.3 These issues have a fundamental impact on the affordability and sustainability of LCTS schemes for Councils. It would have been much clearer for Councils and the public, if funding for LCTS schemes continued to be paid as a specific grant. The new arrangements have a significantly greater impact on Councils which are more dependent on Government Grant and have higher levels of deprivation.
- 3.4 Previous Medium Term Financial Strategy reports have highlighted the implications of this change and the difficult policy decision individual Councils must now make on the use of the Core Revenue Grant. This is a choice between supporting services and providing LCTS support to low income households.
- 3.5 The Council had recognised the impact of these changes before they were implemented and allocated one off resources. They also earmarked additional council tax yield through the Council Tax Base associated with policy changes to Council Tax discounts and exemptions to help mitigate the impact on low income working age households. As a result of this action the Council has been able to avoid implementing LCTS cuts of 20% over the last four years and has limited the reduction in support to:
- 8.5% in 2013/14;
 - 12% in 2014/15;
 - 12% in 2015/16;
 - 12% in 2016/17.
- 3.6 Details of the number of households and the value of support they have received in Hartlepool, as compared to a 20% LCTS scheme are provided in section 7. All other Tees Valley councils have operated LCTS schemes involving cuts of 20% since April 2013.
- 3.7 Members have been advised that nationally significantly higher cuts in LCTS support are likely to be required in future years, as Councils will find it increasingly difficult to balance supporting LCTS schemes and General Fund services if Central Government grant cuts continue. This

trend is emerging as set out in a recent report by the New Policy Institute (NPI). The NPI report identifies that for 2016/17, 39 councils have either increased the level of LCTS cut or have moved to introducing a minimum payment towards Council Tax from working age households. For 2016/17, the NPI report has identified that:

- a 20% LCTS cut is the most common
- 67 councils have LCTS schemes with cuts greater than 20%
- 11 councils have LCTS schemes with cuts greater than 30%

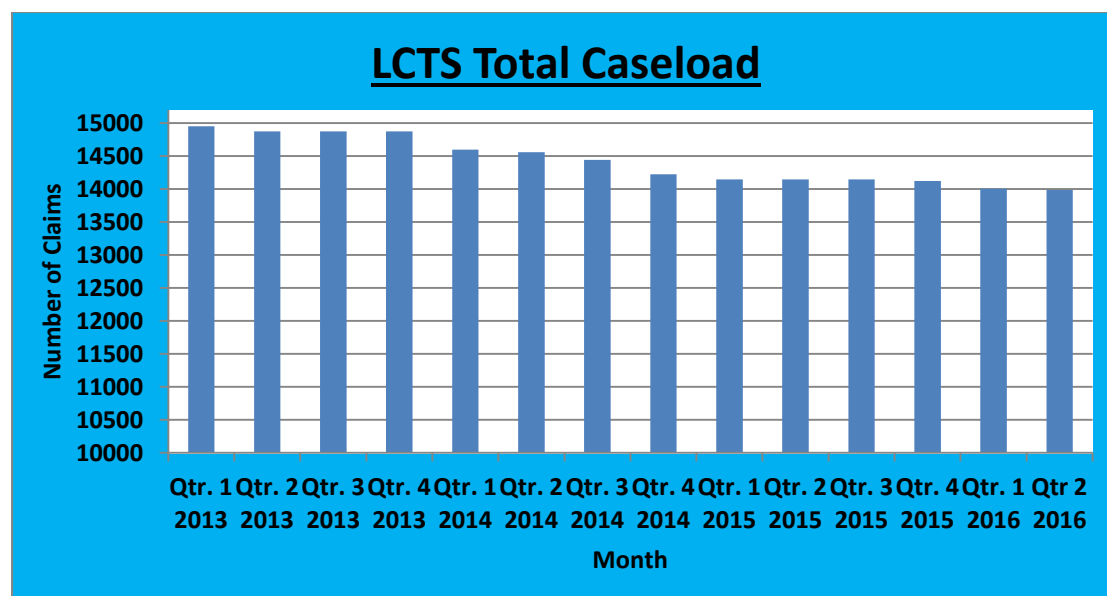
4. 2016/17 and future years LCTS financial modelling

4.1 The actual cost of the Council's LCTS scheme is determined by a range of external factors including, the total number of households accessing support, the balance of claimants between pensionable age and working age and the particular financial circumstances of individual claimants as Council Tax support continues to be means tested support. The Council now has four years experience of operating a LCTS scheme covering:

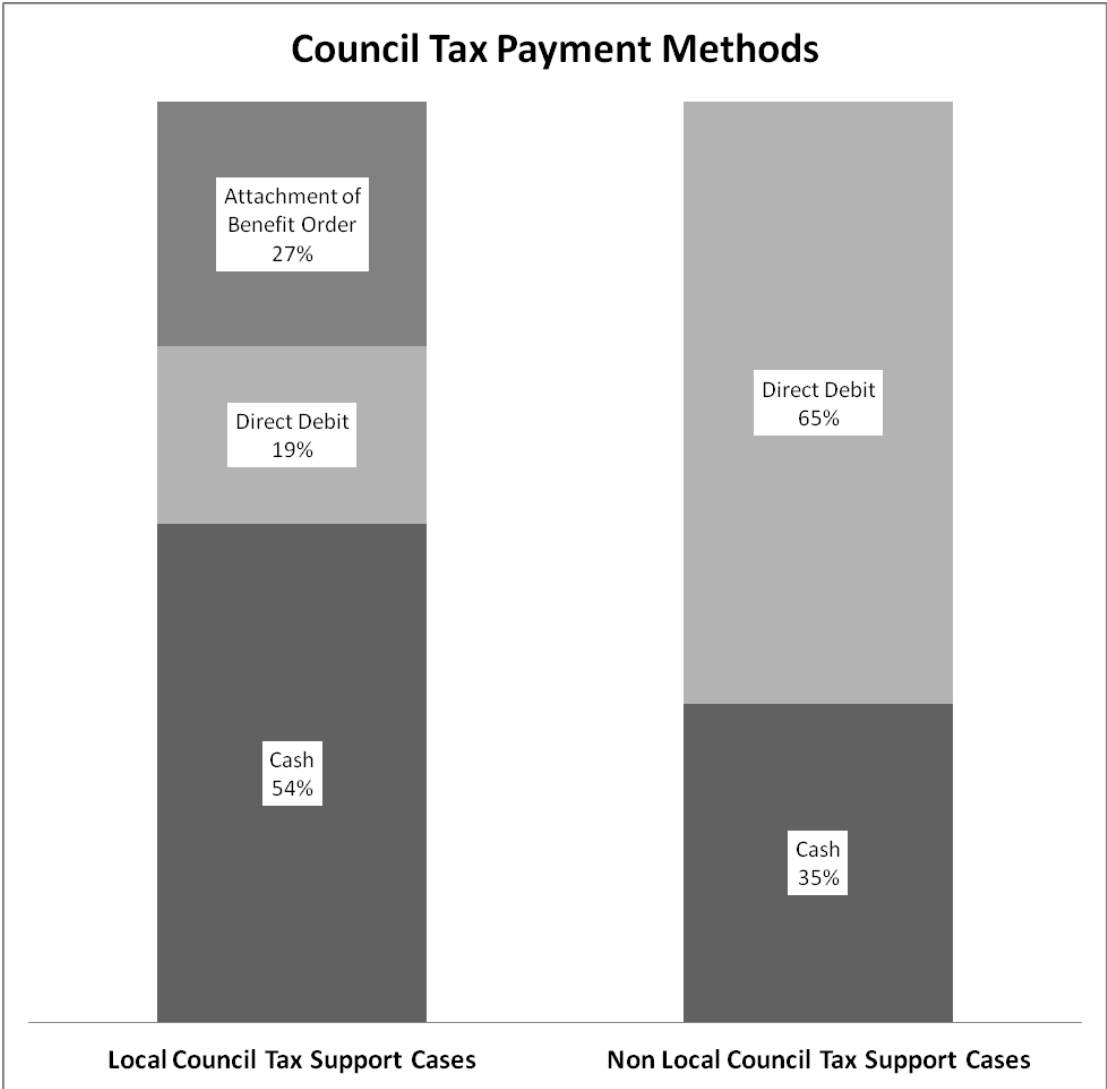
- 2013/14, 2014/15, 2015/16 – both estimated costs and outturn costs;
- 2016/17 – estimated costs

4.2 On the basis of this experience, the LCTS financial model has been updated to reflect changes in the key cost drivers – i.e. claimant numbers and Council Tax collection levels, as detailed in the following paragraphs.

4.3 **Claimant numbers** - Since June 2013, there has been a gradual reduction in the numbers of households receiving LCTS covering both Pensioner Households (a protected group under LCTS) and Working Age Households.

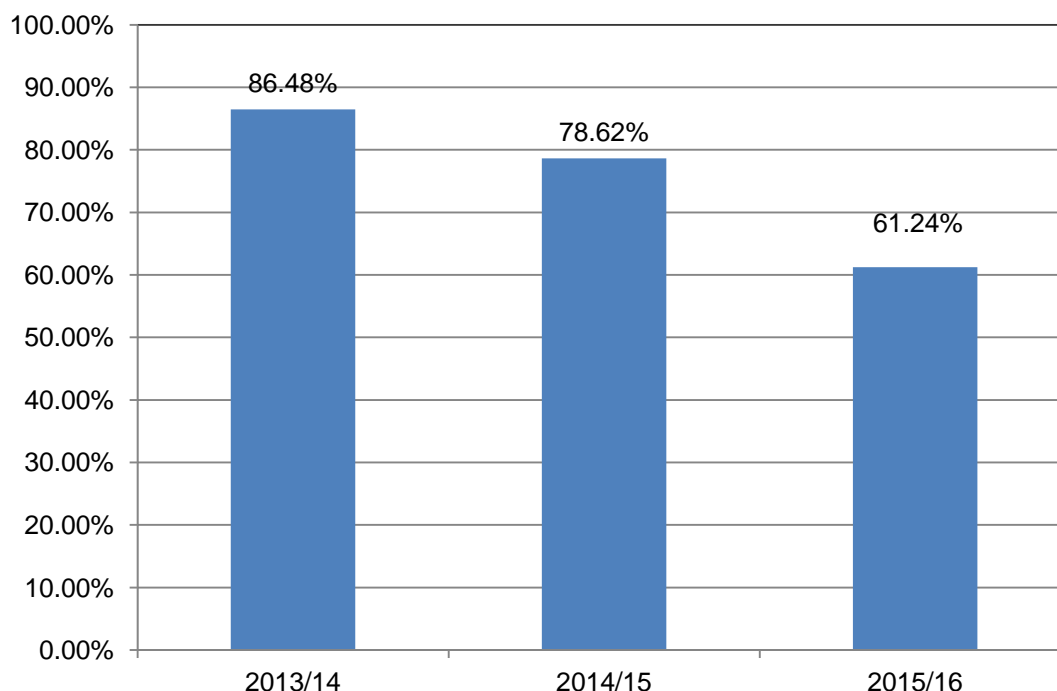


- 4.4 This trend was reflected in the 2016/17 LCTS scheme modelling. An updated assessment of caseload trends has been completed and further reductions in claimant numbers are anticipated for future years and these have been factored into scheme forecasts. However, as well as global economic volatilities, there are economic and employment uncertainties following the decision to leave the European Union, which may impact in the medium term. In addition, the LCTS scheme will in future years be impacted by further national welfare reforms.
- 4.5 **Collection Levels** – in Hartlepool, the operation of the LCTS scheme means that in 2016/17 about 5,800 working age households have received a Council Tax Bill who would have been exempt under Council Tax Benefit; and a further 2,600 working age households have received a higher Council Tax Bill. Robust and proportionate arrangements for collecting Council Tax from LCTS households are embedded within the Council's recovery arrangements to reflect the financial circumstances of households, whilst balancing the needs of the Council to collect this income to pay for services.
- 4.6 Collecting Council Tax from LCTS households is more difficult and resource intensive, as these households are significantly less likely to pay by Direct Debt and make payments in different ways, as highlighted in the following graphs.



4.7 The Council monitors particularly closely levels of collection from those households, who prior to April 2013, received full Council Tax Benefit. The graph below shows that collection of Council Tax from these households is positive, albeit there is the anticipated time lags in securing collection. This positive position has been reflected in the revised scheme forecasts for 2017/18 onwards

**Levels of Council Tax Collection for Working Age LCTS Households
formerly receiving 100% Council Tax Benefit prior to April 2013
Position as at 31st August 2016**



5. 2017/18 and future years LCTS Scheme Financial Modelling

- 5.1 Modelling the LCTS scheme costs beyond the forthcoming financial year is complex and challenging owing to the many variables affecting scheme costs, including the total number of claimants, both pensioner households and working age households, individual claimants' financial circumstances and eligibility for support. In addition, there is a growing lobby proposing that pensioners should no longer receive the same levels of LCTS that they would have received under the former Council Tax Benefit scheme. This issue is covered in more detail in section 8.
- 5.2 Against this uncertain background, the LCTS scheme forecasts for 2017/18 and future years have been updated to reflect experience of operating the LCTS scheme to date and the latest caseload forecasts. These scheme cost forecasts are based on annual Council Tax increases of 3.9% (including the 2% social care precept) for 2017/18 to 2019/20. The proposed future national welfare reforms will suppress household incomes and thereby increase LCTS entitlements, as LCTS awards are based on means tested calculations. However, there remains ongoing uncertainty regarding the timing and scope of these further reforms.

5.3 As previously reported to Members, a LCTS Risk Reserve had been established to support the LCTS scheme and to provide one-off funding to manage the risk of an unexpected in-year increase LCTS costs arising from increased caseloads. A review of the LCTS Risk Reserve was included within the corporate review of reserves reported to this Committee on 31st October. It has previously been recommended that a reserve of £0.3m should be retained to manage in-year financial risks. This remains the recommended level and equates to about 3% of the Council's share of the annual scheme cost

5.4 In summary, the updated financial forecasts for the LCTS scheme for the period 2017/18 to 2019/20 are based on the following planning assumptions:

Planning assumptions underpinning LCTS forecasts for 2017/18 to 2019/20

- i) The actual grant cuts for 2017/18 to 2019/20 being in line with the existing planning assumptions and the multi-year settlement offer from DCLG;
 - ii) The existing Working Age caseload continuing to incrementally reduce;
 - iii) The retention of an un-committed LCTS Risk Reserve of £0.3m to manage LCTS financial risks to provide a slightly longer lead time for the Council to respond to changes in forecasts ;
 - iv) Council Tax increases of 3.9% (including the 2% social care precept) in each of the years 2017/18 to 2019/20;
 - v) LCTS entitlements continue to reduce linked to the impacts of DWP counter fraud and error initiatives ;
 - vi) Increased LCTS awards cost impacts are consistent with planned future national Welfare Reforms.
- 5.5 Regular reviews of these factors will continue to be undertaken to assess the implications of any changes in these planning assumptions which are inevitable and unavoidable, as the majority of factors are outside the Council's direct control.
- 5.6 There is a direct inter- relationship between the LCTS scheme, the level of cut in LCTS awards, adjustments for forecast non collection of Council Tax from LCTS households and the Council Tax Base calculation. The

Council Tax Base calculation is also significantly impacted by future housing growth within the Borough.

- 5.7. The following table summarises how the value of LCTS awards is forecast to increase over the period of the MTFS (based on sustaining a 12% LCTS cut). This has been factored into the MTFS Tax Base forecasts reported separately to Members.

Forecast Cost of LCTS Awards
2016/17 to 2019/20

	16/17 £m	17/18 £m	18/19 £m	19/20 £m
Cost of LCTS Support	12.46	12.86	13.04	13.28
Working Age Contribution 12%	0.90	0.94	0.98	1.02
Net Cost of LCTS Awards	<u>11.56</u>	<u>11.92</u>	<u>12.06</u>	<u>12.26</u>

- 5.8 Continuing with a 12% LCTS cut for 2017/18 would avoid an increase in the Council Tax liability of low income working age households at a time when households will be adjusting to the Government's ongoing welfare savings programme. This level of LCTS support will also increase the likelihood of the Council maintaining high levels of Council Tax collection in 2017/18.

6. 2017/18 LCTS Scheme Principles

- 6.1 In common with LCTS schemes established by many other Councils, the Hartlepool LCTS scheme has been centred on a number of core principles for the period 2013/14 to 2016/17. For 2017/18, it is proposed that the existing scheme principles should continue to be applied, as they are clear, fair and have been generally supported in previous consultation, as follows:

A - Every working age household should pay something towards Council Tax

All Working age claimants will have their LCTS entitlements recalculated and reduced to ensure an affordable and sustainable scheme.

B - Everyone in the Household should contribute appropriately

Hartlepool will implement Central Government changes to the value of non dependant adult deductions from Council Tax Support entitlements.

C - The LCTS scheme should encourage work

Claimants will be allowed to keep more of their earnings before they are taken into account in the LCTS award calculation. The Hartlepool LCTS scheme increases earnings disregards by £5 per week; to £10, £15 and £30 for single person, couple and single parent households respectively.

D - Streamline / Simplify the LCTS Scheme

The Hartlepool LCTS scheme will continue to remove 2nd Adult Rebate, and restrict backdating of LCTS to a maximum of 4 weeks.

E - Retain War Widows / War Pensions Local disregards framework

Under the national CTB regulations Local Authorities are required to disregard the first £10 per week of War Pension Scheme and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments. In addition Local Authorities have the discretion to top up the disregard to the full amount. Hartlepool have historically applied the discretionary top up and this continues to apply in the Council's LCTS scheme.

- 6.2 In relation to Parish Councils, the national regulations require Billing Authorities (ie. Hartlepool Borough Council) to pass on an element of the Council Tax Support Grant received to individual Parish Councils. For some Local Authorities with a large number of Parish Councils levying relatively high Parish Council Tax precepts this may be a significant issue. This is not the case for Hartlepool as the total share of the grant for all Parish Councils is estimated at around £4,000 for 2017/18.
- 6.3. LCTS entitlements are determined using a complex means tested calculation. Many Councils are intending to apply within their LCTS schemes those changes being applied by the DWP to the national Housing Benefit scheme. It is proposed that Hartlepool should “mirror” in its LCTS scheme, those calculation changes made to the Housing Benefit scheme. This “mirroring” promotes consistency and simplifies administrative processes.

7. FINANCIAL / ADMINISTRATION RISKS

- 7.1. The proposals detailed in this report are based on the current forecast grant cuts for 2017/18 to 2019/20 and the multi-year grant settlement data provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government. If the future settlement funding profile and the Council's Tax Base projections are significantly different to current forecasts, the

ability of the Council to sustain a scheme involving a 12% LCTS cut will need to be re-evaluated.

- 7.2. There is also a financial risk from the measures outlined by the former Chancellor in the July 2015 Budget to achieve a further £12bn of Welfare Reform reductions by 2019/20. The changes to the Welfare Benefits and the National Living Wage will have an impact on the cost of the LCTS, the former will increase costs, the latter may reduce costs. Financial modelling of these impacts is difficult because of the range of variables including the timing of changes by the Government. It is anticipated there will be a net increase in LCTS scheme costs and this has been factored into the Scheme cost estimates. There remain risks surrounding the scope and timing of these future welfare changes.
- 7.3. The scope of the DWP's Universal Credit (UC) initiative continues to expand and all councils are now live with UC. Nationally, as at October 2016 there are 338,000 working age people on UC and the DWP forecast that numbers will grow significantly over the next 2 years. Under UC where a household has a housing support entitlement ie housing benefit, in most scenario's this support will be paid monthly by the DWP within UC and will no longer be paid by councils. These households will continue to have a LCTS entitlement but the administration of LCTS will become more challenging covering the claim process and validating financial information to support the current income based means tested calculations.
- 7.4. There are current economies and efficiencies in administering LCTS as many of the underlying principles mirror the national Housing Benefit scheme and funding is provided annually by the DWP to councils to administer Housing Benefit. Many claims for support are dual, covering both Housing Benefit and LCTS and the process and calculations of entitlement are undertaken together. However, it is predicted that at a future date the DWP will reduce the Housing Benefit administration grant it pays to Councils, as working age cases move to UC. It should be noted that there are no national plans at this stage to move pension age housing benefit away from Councils and some working age claimants in specific types of accommodation are likely to continue to receive Housing Benefit from councils.
- 7.5. In future, Councils will face the challenge of administering LCTS against a background of reduced central government administration funding. The Council is developing a plan to address this challenge by devising more streamlined processes for claiming and assessing entitlements. Details covering the potential shape and cost of a new type of LCTS scheme that the Council will need to implement in the medium term will be reported to Members at a future date. This will reflect Members objective to maintain future LCTS support at a 12% contribution for working age LCTS claimants.

8 NATIONAL INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEMES

- 8.1. An independent review of Local Council Tax Support Schemes was launched in December 2015 on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) chaired by Eric Ollerenshaw OBE. The terms of reference of the review were to consider:
- the efficiency, fairness, transparency and effectiveness of different LCTS schemes;
 - the impact of LCTS schemes on the localism agenda;
 - Whether or not LCTS schemes should be brought within Universal Credit.
- 8.2. The overarching review conclusion, is that Council's have implemented LCTS schemes effectively and professionally, all Councils having LCTS schemes operational by April 2013, impressive considering the tight deadlines and late announcements from Government. **Key conclusions from the review are detailed in the following paragraphs.**
- 8.3. Efficiency, Fairness, Transparency and Effectiveness
- The review concluded that collecting Council Tax from LCTS working age recipients is more time consuming and costly compared with normal Council Tax collection. In Hartlepool, members recognised this issue and agreed to the appointment of a Revenues member of staff on a fixed term contract and 2 modern apprentices to assist with this additional recovery workload responsibility.
- 8.4. The review identified nationally significant proportions of LCTS recipients with Council Tax arrears from previous years and some Councils facing an accumulation of arrears that are unlikely to be paid off. Analysis as set out at section 4.7 indicates this is less of an issue in Hartlepool, reflecting effective recovery arrangements and the impact of Members approving schemes that have minimised the cuts to LCTS awards and thereby minimised Council Tax bills for less well off working age households.
- 8.5. The review highlighted that the national LCTS scheme for pensioners (protected group) has led to an additional cost burden on low income working age households. In Hartlepool, various LCTS reports to members have emphasised this fundamental unfairness. The review recommends that the Government should consider localising at least part of the LCTS scheme for pensioners, thereby allowing Councils to decide how much support they wish to provide for all low income residents. Furthermore, that the Government should consider granting

more local flexibility over nationally set council tax discounts such as single person discount. Whilst these flexibilities would be welcome they carry associated reputational, political and financial risks.

- 8.6. The review has confirmed that since 2014/15 it has not been possible for Councils to identify how much funding Government is providing for LCTS schemes. This issue has been referenced in various LCTS reports to members at Hartlepool which have emphasised the difficult choices faced by members between cuts to the General Fund budget or higher levels of cuts to LCTS awards.

8.7 Localism

In terms of the impact of LCTS schemes on localism, the review recognises that Councils have had to work within the parameters of budgets, decision making deadlines and the Government set scheme for pensioners which have constrained LCTS schemes.

8.8 Universal Credit

Whilst the review acknowledges that there may have been a strong argument for putting the successor of Council Tax Benefit into Universal Credit in 2012/13, this is no longer a viable option. The review concludes that it would be extremely difficult for the Government to integrate 326 different local schemes into Universal Credit. Furthermore the review identifies that such a move could have dire consequences on Council Tax collection rates impacting on council finances. These conclusions are consistent with observations made by the Council to the Review Team.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 As reported previously, the replacement of the national Council Tax Benefit scheme with Local Council Tax Support schemes determined by individual Councils and a 10% national funding cut transferred a significant new financial risk to Councils. The requirement to protect low income pensioners means the whole of the funding cut falls on low income working age households, which effectively results in an in-built 20% LCTS scheme cut for this group. The national change continues to have a greater impact on Councils serving more deprived communities, including Hartlepool.
- 9.2 The Council had recognised the risk from the Council Tax Benefit scheme abolition. Accordingly, the Council had set aside one-off resources and also earmarked additional council tax yield through the Council Tax Base associated with policy changes to Council Tax discounts and exemptions to manage the impact of this unprecedented transfer of responsibility for an element of Welfare Support from Central Government to Local Government. This approach enabled the Council to

limit the cut in Local Council Tax Support to 8.5% in 2013/14 and 12% in 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17.

- 9.3 If the Council had not taken this pro-active multi-year strategy, a 20% LCTS would have had to be implemented in 2013/14. This is the level of cut implemented by the other Tees Valley Councils since LCTS was introduced in 2013/14.
- 9.4 Following the Government's decision to mainstream the Local Council Tax Support grant within the main revenue grant allocation from 2014/15 individual Councils now face a difficult choice over the use of the overall grant. This is particularly challenging for Hartlepool as further significant grant cuts are forecast over the next three years requiring the Council to identify significant further budget cuts.
- 9.5. Against this background, Members need to determine a LCTS scheme for 2017/18 that is financially viable and balanced providing for sustainability in future year's schemes.
- 9.6 Updated financial modelling indicates that the 2017/18 LCTS scheme reduction should be able to be maintained at 12%, the same level as 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17. This is predicated on the actual grant cut for 2017/18 being consistent with the indicative data provided in the DCLG multi-year settlement offer and a range of forecast scheme cost pressures and savings linked to welfare reforms, economic factors and fraud / error initiatives.
- 9.7. On the basis, of sustaining a 12% LCTS cut for 2017/18, the Council's locally approved LCTS scheme will have provided the following financial support to low income working age households compared to annual LCTS cuts of 20% over the 5 years up to March 2018. All other Tees Valley councils have operated LCTS schemes involving cuts of 20% since April 2013. This position is summarised overleaf:

Impact of Hartlepool's actual 2013/14 to 2016/17 LCTS scheme and proposed 2017/18 LCTS cut compared to annual cuts of 20%.

	Band A	Band B
Council Tax Liability with a 20% LCTS cut in 2013/14, to 2017/18.	£ 1,140	£ 1,330
Council Tax Liability with <u>HBC phased LCTS cuts</u> of 8.5 % in 13/14 and 12% in 14/15, 15/16, 16/17 & 17/18.	£ 644	£ 753
Cumulative Support to Households 2013/14 to 2017/18	£ 496	£ 577
Number of Households Supported (i.e. who	5230	415

previously received 100% Council Tax Benefit)		
Percentage of LCTS Households (i.e. who previously received 100% Council Tax Benefit)	90%	7%

- 9.8 It is currently anticipated that a 12% LCTS scheme should be sustainable in 2018/19 and 2019/20 for working age households.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1. An Impact Assessment covering LCTS has been reviewed and is included as Appendix A.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 It is recommended that Members:

- i. Note the future financial and administrative risks associated with the LCTS scheme;
- ii. Approve a 2017/18 LCTS scheme involving a cut of 12% to be referred to full Council in December 2016.

12. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 To update Finance and Policy Committee on latest available data on the LCTS scheme costs and the future financial risks associated with the funding settlement and the Government's national welfare reforms.
- 12.2. To enable Members to agree a LCTS scheme for 2017/18 to refer to full Council.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/18 to 2019/20 report - Finance and Policy Committee 20th June 2016.

14. CONTACT OFFICER

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APPENDIX A

Department	Division	Section	Owner/Officer
Chief Executives	Finance	Revenues & Benefits	John Morton
Function/ Service	Local Council Tax Support Scheme 17/18, Universal 12% reduction in LCTS Awards (excl. low income pensioners).		
Information Available	HBC data on caseload / awards, financial modelling of local scheme options savings, CLG full EIA, Family Resources Survey data, Census 2011, DWP		
Relevance <i>Identify which strands are relevant to the area you are reviewing or changing</i>	Age		
	<p>The Government considered the position of low income pensioners associated with the abolition of Council Tax Benefit and the introduction of LCTS. The Government determined that unlike most other groups, pensioners cannot reasonably be expected to seek paid employment to increase their income. Therefore the Government determined that as a specific vulnerable group, low income pensioners should be protected from any reduction in support as a result of this reform. The Government has not changed its position on this core principle for 2017/18.</p> <p>In Hartlepool 5,647 low income pensioners account for 40% of all LCTS claimants and the Council is required by Government to continue to protect this group.</p>		
	Disability		
	<p>It is difficult to quantify accurately either the number of disabled people living in Hartlepool or the number of households in receipt of LCTS and where an individual in that household is receiving a disability related benefit.</p> <p>Broad modelling analysis indicates that to protect those households from the LCTS scheme cut where individuals are in receipt of a Disability Premium would cost about £260,000 pa or would increase the level of LCTS cut on non protected groups to 16%.</p> <p>The 2017/18 Hartlepool LCTS scheme continues with the core equity Principle that every working age household should pay something to towards Council Tax and that the level of cut should be equal. The Council endeavours to minimise the impact of LCTS but the LCTS scheme does not provide for protection / detriment for any specific working age group.</p>		
	Race / Gender / Gender Re-assignment		
	<p>The Government does not believe 'that this nationally driven policy change will disproportionately affect any particular gender or ethnicity'. The Government has not changed its position on this core principle for 2017/18. However both nationally and locally, there are almost twice as many female as male council tax benefit claimants, reflecting the number of single female claimants with child dependants.</p>		

	Only 2.3% of Hartlepool's population are non-white. It is not known how many of this group claim LCTS, as data within the LCTS system is incomplete for this group (claimants often do not complete this section of the application form). The 2017 / 18 Hartlepool LCTS scheme does not provide for protection / detriment for any specific working age group			
	Religion			
	No effect			
	Sexual Orientation			
	No effect			
	Marriage & Civil Partnership			
	No effect			
	Pregnancy & Maternity			
	No effect			
Information Gaps	Nil.			
What is the Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every working age household will pay some Council Tax• Other non dependant adults in the household will be expected to contribute to council tax• The scheme will encourage work• The 2017/18 LCTS scheme will continue to be based on the key features of the former CTB scheme and will “mirror” 2017/18 Housing Benefit regulation changes• A universal 12% reduction in the value of the award will be made for all working age low income households.• Low income pensioner households are protected in line with Central Government Policy.• The 2017/18 LCTS scheme will continue to comply with the Armed Forces Covenant.• The 2017/18 LCTS scheme will continue to fully disregard child maintenance when assessing LCTS awards. This is consistent with national Housing Benefit regulations.			
Addressing the impact	1. No Major Change - The proposal is robust there is no potential for discrimination across working age claimants. (The council has no choice on the protection of low income pensioners). The maintenance in the level of cuts to LCTS awards for 2017/18 at 12% reflects funding issues and is after the Council committing resources to support the scheme. The 2017/18 Hartlepool scheme continues to provide no protection/ detriment for any specific working age group and is centred on equality of impact.			
Actions				
The 2017/18 LCTS scheme has been developed with the aim of removing any potential for discrimination.				
Action identified	Responsible Officer	By When	How will this be evaluated?	
Scheme Principles review	Liz Cook Principal Benefits Officer	Oct 17	Peer review by Chief Executive’s Department Diversity Lead officer.	

COUNCIL
15 December 2016



Report of: Chief Executive

Subject: BUSINESS REPORT

1. 'GROUP CONSOLIDATION' OF THIRTEEN

- 1.1 Thirteen Group currently provides services to its partners which own and manage 34,000 homes across the North East, Housing Hartlepool are one of these partners. Thirteen Group have proposed to simplify the group structure by consolidating Housing Hartlepool and the other three registered providers in the group to form a single registered provider operating across all the current operating areas by April 2017.
- 1.2 The proposed change to the group structure will seek to deliver efficiencies in service provision to off-set some of the impact of Government policies such as the 1% cut in social rents each year for the next four years, extension of the Right to Buy provisions to all housing association tenants and limits to rent payable on new tenancies after 1st April 2016. Further, the proposal aims to reduce bureaucracy and duplication which currently exists as a result of operating four separate subsidiary Registered Provider Partner Companies such as staffing and resourcing four individual Boards. Thirteen have projected that savings in this area could be in the region of £500k per annum.
- 1.3 In addition to the efficiencies generated Thirteen aim to release capacity by consolidating assets and increasing investment in the provision and development of social housing. It is anticipated that Thirteen will generate a further £300million investment potential as a result of the proposals. Utilising the additional funds through investment specifically in Hartlepool (set out within the Hartlepool Delivery Plan) this allows for development in partnership with the Borough Council. Thirteen have committed to investment in homes of £25m over 5 years (£235m over 30 year lifespan of investment). In addition to this there is commitment to the continuation of the development programme which includes the £6 million scheme at Raby Gardens for the provision of 64 homes. Thirteen also aim to work with the Council's Neighbourhood Investment Programmes to coordinate investment such as environmental improvements and also make improvement to services in areas such as care and support services and other community

COUNCIL

15 December 2016



Report of: Chief Executive

Subject: BUSINESS REPORT

1. CONFIRMATION OF THE MULTI-YEAR SETTLEMENT OFFER

- 1.1 On the 7th July 2016 Council considered a report on the Government's multi-year settlement offer. The report advised Members that the Chief Finance Officer and Corporate Management Team had recommended that the Council's funding allocations for the period up to 2019/20 will best be protected by signing up to the multi-year settlement for 2017/18 to 2019/20. This advice was based on the clear indication from the Secretary of State and DCLG that they argued hard with the Treasury for a 4-year settlement for Local Authorities, as requested by the sector. The advice also reflects the anticipation that most authorities would seek a 4-year settlement on the basis of this providing certainty and being the 'best' deal local authorities will get from the Government.
- 1.2 Council approved the recommendation of the Finance and Policy Committee to apply for a multi-year financial settlement covering the period up to 2019/20. On the 16th November a letter was received from the Marcus Jones MP, Minister for Local Government, confirming that the Council is now on the multi-year settlement. As copy of the letter is attached at **Appendix 1** and confirms that 97% of authorities applied for a multi-year settlement.
- 1.3 As indicated previously the multi-year settlement provides certainty of the Government funding allocations up to 2019/20, although as reported previously the Government's approach confirms funding cuts for Local Authorities for a further three year up to 2019/20. For Hartlepool this means that by 2019/20 Government funding will be £ 9.8m less than in 2016/17, which is a reduction of 38%.
- 1.4 The Minister's letter also states "I hope you will continue to engage in future consultations on the settlement, the Fair Funding review and 100% business rates retention". As Members will be aware the Council always responds to consultations, via the Finance and Policy Committee, to put forward Hartlepool's case for a fair financial settlement and will continue to do so.

2. SPECIAL URGENCY DECISIONS

Council is informed that that there were no special urgency decisions taken in the period August – October 2016.

3. MOTION – RESPONSE FROM MINISTER FOR PENSIONS

As agreed at the meeting of Council on 27th October 2016, a letter was sent to the Minister for Pensions calling for the Government to reconsider transitional arrangements for women born on or after 6th April 1951.

I attach, as **Appendix 2**, a copy of the response received from the Minister.



Department for
Communities and
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Councillor C Akers-Belcher
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16 November 2016

Dear Cllr. Christopher Akers-Belcher

CONFIRMATION OF THE MULTI-YEAR SETTLEMENT OFFER

Thank you for accepting the multi-year settlement offer, and for publishing your efficiency plan or other supporting documents.

This letter confirms that your authority is now formally on the multi-year settlement. You can expect to receive the allocations published as part of the 2016-17 local government finance settlement in 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20. The Government will also need to take account of future events such as the transfer of functions to local government, transfers of responsibility for functions between local authorities, mergers between authorities and any other unforeseen events. However, barring exceptional circumstances and subject to the normal statutory consultation process for the local government finance settlement, the Government expects these to be the amounts presented to Parliament each year.

97% of councils applied, showing the understandable need for the sector to secure greater certainty at a time of significant reform. I am interested in the progress you make so please continue to feedback thoughts on how the process of applying for the offer went, how you intend to use your efficiency plan in the future, achievements you make in delivering your plan, or any barriers you face to implementation.

But this is all just the first step as we move towards a self-sufficient local government. There are still significant decisions to be made on how we transition to this new system. We will only be able to achieve this by working with you, and I hope you will continue to engage in future consultations on the settlement, the Fair Funding Review and 100% business rates retention.

MARCUS JONES MP



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Our ref: POS(3)4066/1035

11 November 2016

Dear Councillor Cook

Thank you for your letter of 3 November about women's State Pension age.

The gradual equalisation of State Pension age at 65 for both men and women was first set out in the Pensions Act 1995 (and the increase to 66 set out in the Pensions Act 2007) following our obligations under a directive from the European Union on gender discrimination. Rather than simply increase State Pension age overnight, rises were introduced incrementally by various governments – Conservative, Labour and the Coalition Government.

People living healthier, longer lives, however, also meant that the Coalition Government could not ignore the pressure that this placed on the State Pension system and, in 2011, brought about State Pension age equalisation and the rise to 66 sooner. Our European counterparts such as Germany, Denmark, and Greece have already equalised State Pension age for men and women – much earlier than us.

The Department for Work and Pensions wrote to all those individuals affected, informing them of the change to their State Pension age. We have also legislated for a regular review of State Pension age, the first of which will conclude next year and take into account the latest life expectancy data. Independent analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies has shown us that the rise in women's State Pension age has been accompanied by increased employment for the women in this group.

Even after equalising women's State Pension age with men's, women will spend on average around two years more in receipt of their State Pension because of their longer life expectancy. Women reaching 65 in 2018 are expected to live until 88.9 years whilst the figure for men is 86.7 years.

Crucially, the equalisation of State Pension age brought the average proportion of time spent in retirement by men and women more in line with one another, with women spending slightly longer in retirement due to a higher life expectancy. Without equalisation, women would spend on average 41 per cent of their adult lives in retirement, compared to men at 31 per cent.

It should be noted that estimates provided to the Work and Pensions Select Committee in February showed that the costs of undoing current legislation for women are greater than £77 billion up to 2020/21, and that costs would continue to build after that point.

It is also important to note that parliamentary process was fully followed during the passing of the Pensions Act 2011. This change occurred following a public Call for Evidence and extensive debates in Parliament. As you might be aware, a substantial concession worth over £1 billion was made, meaning that no individual will face an increase to their State Pension age of more than 18 months, relative to the Pensions Act 1995 timetable. There are no plans to make further transitional arrangements for this group.

Furthermore it is important to point out that women who have had their State Pension age increased will have the same eligibility to working-age in work, out of work and disability benefits as a man with the same date of birth. Those who are not in work can make initial enquiries about what support may be available to them by calling the Department's claim line on 0800 055 6688, or by checking the information on claiming benefits on the Government website at www.gov.uk.

In addition, the Government has reformed the State Pension system to make clearer what people can expect from the State when they retire.

From April this year, we have introduced a simpler State Pension that will give people a clear picture of what the State will provide so that they can build their own savings. The new State Pension will let people know exactly how much they earn for each qualifying year and, furthermore, it will be above the level of the basic means test in Pension Credit, helping to support private saving and, will give 650,000 women reaching State Pension age, in the first ten years, an increase on average of £416 a year due to the new State Pension valuation.

Automatic enrolment will also complement the new State Pension by helping to ensure that as many people as possible can build a private pension on top of the amount they receive from the State. This will give around 11 million people the opportunity to save into a workplace pension and we expect this to lead to 10 million people newly saving or saving more.

The combination of the new State Pension, automatic enrolment, the protection of benefits and giving people power over their pension pots will ensure pensioners and future pensioners have security in retirement whilst making pensions sustainable for decades to come.

I hope this helps to explain the position.

Yours ever

Richard Harrington

**RICHARD HARRINGTON MP
MINISTER FOR PENSIONS**

Cleveland Police and Crime Panel

A meeting of Cleveland Police and Crime Panel was held on Thursday, 8th September, 2016.

Present: Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E (Chairman),

Cllr Charles Rooney, Cllr David Coupe, Cllr Gillian Corr (sub for Cllr Ken Dixon), Cllr Linda Lewis, Cllr Billy Ayre, Cllr Alec Brown, Cllr Chris Jones, Gwen Duncan, Chu Chu Nwajobi, Cllr David Wilburn

Officers: Graham Birtle, David Bond, Michael Henderson (SBC)

Also in attendance: Barry Coppinger (PCC), Simon Nickless (Cleveland Police), Simon Dennis Michael Porter, Joanne Hodgkinson (PCC's Office)

Apologies: Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Jim Lindridge, Cllr Dave Hunter, Matthew Vickers

1 Evacuation Procedure/Mobile Phones

The Chairman presented Evacuation procedures.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

4 Members' Questions to the Police and Crime Commissioner

There were no questions.

5 Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan

Members were provided with the latest draft of the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan.

It was explained that the Plan was still a work in progress but should be finalised in the next couple of weeks and would then be published. The Commissioner invited members to provide him with comments either during, or outside, the meeting.

When the Plan was finalised copies would be sent to Members.

RESOLVED that

1. Members provide any comments about the Plan directly to the Commissioner.

2. A final copy of the Plan be emailed to members.

6 Citizens in Policing

Members received a report that provided an update regarding the progress of the Cleveland Police Volunteers Programme and the Special Constabulary following the previous report presented in September 2015.

Discussion on the report could be summarised as follows:

A query relating to highlighting vacancies was raised and it was explained that discussions were on going with voluntary sector organisations in this regard. It was suggested that vacancies could be promoted and shared on Cleveland Connect and it was noted that this would be considered by the Commissioner's office.

RESOLVED that the report and discussion be noted.

7 Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/17

Member considered a report relating to the Panel's Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/17.

The Panel had previously agreed that the work programme would include Overall Budget Strategy and Shared Services. Members considered other possible topics and agreed that the programme would also include a review into the unlawful use of off-road motor cycles throughout the Force Area. Three Task and Finish Groups would be established to deal with each review topic.

It was also noted that the focus of the shared services review, perhaps, needed to be wider and it was agreed that discussion around the scope of that review and the off-road motorcycles review would take place with the Commissioner's Office and the Police Force, outside the meeting.

It was noted that the terms of office of the Panel's two Non Political Independent Members (NPIM) would come to an end in December, therefore, it was agreed that the allocation of NPIM representation on the Task and Finish Groups would be considered in this context, at a later date .

Hartlepool Borough Council membership of the Groups would be established outside the Panel's meeting.

Notwithstanding the position relating to NPIM representation, Members agreed the membership of the Task and Finish Groups as follows:

Overall Budget Strategy - Councillors Rooney, Wilburn, Brown and a Hartlepool member.

Shared Services - Councillors Coupe, Jones, Vickers and a Hartlepool member.

Off Road Motor cycles - Councillors Lewis, Stephenson, Ayre, and a Hartlepool member.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be agreed as detailed above.

8 Police and Crime Commissioner - Performance Quarter 1 2016/2017

Members considered a summary of performance against the Police and Crime Plan.

The Commissioner requested that Members consider if there were any areas of activity that he needed to be focusing on in his scrutiny role of the Force and any current areas where more work needed to be done.

Discussion on the report could be summarised as follows:-

- the Commissioner would bring a report relating to the Criminal Justice Board, to a future meeting.
- Commissioned services - The Victim Care and Advice Service was up and running and it was suggested that the Commissioner should bring a report on this to a future meeting of the Panel, when the service had developed further.
- It was also suggested that the message about the cuts and how they were affecting how services were being delivered needed to be better, more fully, articulated to the public.
- Members reported that residents felt that getting through to an operator on 101 was taking too long and there was a perception that this added to the cost of calls. Residents often terminated calls before getting through to operators.
- Members raised a number of concerns that related to the new Neighbourhood Policing arrangements and the restructure of Teams at the Force. These concerns included:-
 - Police attendance at Community Council meetings.
 - some confusion relating to the new ways of working, particularly in terms of the how the Red/Amber/Green scheme and shift system worked. Also, were the shift patterns family friendly?
 - the escalation of incidents e.g. PCSOs to Police Officers.
 - a lack of continuity of officers operating in wards/communities e.g. regular staff changes and a lower profile were a barrier to building relationships and knowledge of an area.

The Commissioner and Police's response to the Neighbourhood Policing issues raised could be summarised as follows:

- calls to Cleveland Police had increased from approx. 800 per day in 2012, to 1200 currently (300 calls were 999 and 900 were 101 call). During the same period the Police budget had reduced by a quarter with staff reductions of around 430 police officers, 50 PCSOs and 50 staff. Given this context the Commissioner explained that it was important that he and the Chief Constable made the resources available work as efficiently as possible, having regard to risk and vulnerability.
- the Force had considered it important to bring the Vulnerability teams together at an early stage. This process, coupled with staff leave, over the holiday period, would have resulted in some gaps. The implementation of all the changes was still in progress, but the Vulnerability Teams were in place.
- the Force's presence at, and engagement with, Community Councils was being considered with a view to finding an accepted and consistent approach across the area.
- the Sector Teams should ensure that responses to public contact were more timely.
- whilst there may be Sector wide priorities, there would also be specific priorities for certain parts of each sector, e.g particular streets or even one street.
- there were processes in place for the escalation of incidents and TDCC Nickless indicated that he would look at the particular issue raised by a member at the meeting, where escalation seemed not to have happened.
- new shift patterns had been developed by staff and would continue to be remodelled. The shift patterns ensured that more staff were at work during periods of peak demand.

The Red/Amber/Green system relied on deprivation data and information from other agencies, as well as crime information. Some areas had longer term trends and it would take longer to resolve issues in these areas.

In response to issues raised about the 101 service Members noted that:-

- the cost of a 101 call was 15p regardless of the length of time of the call.
- the Force was now undertaking a more robust risk assessment of calls it received. Assessments were now taking 5 minutes instead of 2 minutes but this was the most appropriate approach and was in line with national guidelines. This had created significant capacity implications for the 101 service. The Force was considering how this capacity issue could be met and had been looking at a number of opportunities to streamline processes. The Force would have to consider using additional staff if the process changes did not address the capacity issue.

- it was indicated that further information relating to the on going work on the 101 service could be brought to the Panel. The Force agreed to look into the possibility of the cost of 101 calls being detailed on the recorded message at the beginning of calls.

Further discussion on the performance report related to sickness levels and members were reminded of the considerable amount of work that had been done in this area and the consequent improvement in the figures.

The Commissioner assured the Panel that he would continue to monitor all of the issues raised by the Panel, through his scrutiny processes.

RESOLVED that:

1. the report be noted.
2. the Commissioner brings reports on the Criminal Justice Board and the Victim Care and Advice Service to a future meeting(s).
3. further updates on the 101 service be provided to the Panel at future meetings.

9 Programme of Engagement for Police and Crime Commissioner

Members considered a report that provided an update in relation to meetings attended by the Commissioner from July 2016 to September 2016.

The Commissioner reiterated his willingness to attend community events.

Reference was made to a cultural awareness event which was part of the Everyone Matters programme.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

10 Decision of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Members considered a report that provided an update on decisions made by the Police and Crime Commissioner for the period July to August 2016.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

11 Forward Plan

Members considered the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

12 Public Questions

There were no public questions.