

REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

5 March 2018

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

Present:

Councillor: Kevin Cranney (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rob Cook, Jim Lindridge, Brenda Loynes and Leisa Smith

Officers: Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Andrew Carter, Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration
Patrick Wilson, Learning and Skills Manager
Linda Igoe, Principal Housing Advice Officer
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

63. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stephen Akers-Belcher and Shane Moore.

64. Declarations of Interest

None.

65. Minutes

- (i) Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2018 – Received.
- (ii) Minutes of the Joint meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee and Regeneration Services Committee held on 22 January 2018 – Received.

66. Strategic Financial Management Report – as at 31 December 2017 (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods, Director of Public Health and Director of Finance and Policy*)

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the 2017/18 forecast General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Outturn, 2017/18 Capital Programme Monitoring and provide details for the specific budget areas that this Committee was responsible for.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods reported that an updated assessment of the forecast 2017/18 outturn had been completed and a net over spend of £0.124m was now anticipated, which was lower than the previous forecast of £0.250m. Details of the specific budget areas this Committee was responsible for were provided in Appendix A and it was noted that the forecast overspend for the Regeneration Services Committee element of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods was £325k which was due to projected income shortfalls across several service areas including Planning, Economic Regeneration and Cultural Services. In addition to this, it was noted that the forecast overspend for the Committee from Public Health amounted to £180k and included a shortfall on income associated with the Borough Hall and Carlton. The adverse variance in the Sport and Recreation Service Area will be funded from Public Health Reserves in 2017/18.

A discussion ensued on the introduction of the new style larger bins located within Seaton Carew on a trial basis. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that during the trial use of these bins, it had been ascertained that programming the meter to indicate when the bins were 60-70% was the most productive way of ensuring the bins were emptied. The Director added that a report on the performance of the new bins during the trial was being prepared for Neighbourhood Services Committee and would be shared with this Committee for information.

Decision

- (1) The report was noted.
- (2) That the report to be submitted to Neighbourhood Services Committee on the performance of the new bins installed at Seaton Carew on a trial basis also be shared with this Committee for information.

67. Economic Regeneration and Tourism Forum Review (Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration)

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) – Forward Plan Reference No RN13/17.

Purpose of report

To approve changes to the structure and format of the Economic Regeneration and Tourism Forum. The proposed changes will increase business engagement and also improve information sharing with the Council.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report noted that consultation had been undertaken with local businesses and the results of the consultation were outlined in the report. The proposed Terms of Reference (TOR) were attached at Appendix 1 and the main items to note were as follows:

Forum Purpose – to bring together the public and private sector organisations of the Borough in order to provide positive information exchange.

Roles and Responsibilities – participation will be open to allow a wider spectrum of businesses and business groups. The voluntary sector will also be allowed to attend.

High Quality Debate – participants to acknowledge that they will need to work together and contribute positively to discussions.

Further details of proposals for briefings/meetings were included within the Terms of Reference and these were outlined in the report.

The Chair added that the Members, Officers and businesses felt the need to reinvigorate the Forum and explore ways to expand and develop opportunities for businesses in the town through effective sharing of information. In response to a question from a Member, the Chair confirmed that there were processes in place to support any businesses wishing to relocate to Hartlepool. It was noted that meetings of the Forum were an excellent opportunity for businesses to share information and support each other to develop. In response to a question from a member of the public in relation to public engagement with the Forum, the Chair confirmed that the Forum facilitated engagement with the business community and was not a public meeting.

A Member highlighted that there were other groups already established for small businesses in the town and it would be really useful if someone from

the Forum was able to attend and promote the benefits of involvement in the Forum for local businesses. The Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration indicated that maximising engagement with all businesses in Hartlepool and raising awareness were key components to the success of this Forum. The Chair added that this was part of the Regeneration Committee's strategy of support for local business, building upon our recent changes in procurement that encouraged all local businesses to become involved.

Decision

That the proposed changes to the structure and format of the Economic Regeneration and Tourism Forum were approved.

68. Outcome of Ofsted Short Inspection Visit *(Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To inform the Committee of the outcome of Ofsted's Short Inspection visit undertaken on 22 and 23 November 2017.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report provided the background to Ofsted inspections of Hartlepool Adult Education noting that an unannounced short inspection was undertaken on 22 and 23 November 2017. Since January 2016 there had been major transformational changes and re-focussing of priorities within Hartlepool Adult Education to build on the strengths of the service and a number of positive outcomes had been achieved and were detailed in the report.

Attached at Appendix 1 was a copy of the short inspection letter published by Ofsted which noted that the service remained a good provider with some very positive narrative about the excellent outcomes for learners. There were only a small number of recommendations from Ofsted on how the service can improve further and a Post-Inspection Action Plan was being developed to support the service to work towards its ambition of becoming an outstanding provider.

In conclusion it was noted that as outlined within the 10-year strategy, the primary focus of Hartlepool Adult Education was to prepare adults for the

world of work and progress them into a positive destination.

The Chair congratulated all staff and volunteers for the hard work and commitment to improving this service and enhancing the opportunities through adult education for people to improve life skills and increase employment opportunities for people of Hartlepool. A Member highlighted the excellent work undertaken to develop the pastoral service and opportunities for apprenticeships.

In response to a question from a Member, the Learning and Skills Manager indicated that Catcote Academy was a key provider and had done a lot of exceptional work and this was demonstrated with the 29 learners from Catcote all achieving their expected outcomes and progressing with their courses.

A discussion ensued on the independent survey that had been undertaken by the Education Skills Funding Agency with learners accessing the Adult Education service. The key question within this survey was whether the learners would recommend adult education to friends and family with 96% indicating they would. The Learning and Skills Manager informed Members that a Learner Voice Forum had been developed and regularly challenged operational matters of the Adult Education Service. This had proved very productive and had contributed to the development of a new Code of Conduct for Learners.

A Member sought clarification on the number of learners from the BME community. The Learning and Skills Manager indicated that the number of learners from the BME community had doubled with an increased achievement rate. In addition to this, the Learning and Skills Manager commented that there was a lot of work ongoing with Syrian families within the town including the leisure activities to assist integration within local communities.

The Chair referred to the upcoming language lessons being offered to Council staff adding that this was available to Elected Members also.

Decision

The contents of the report and the Short Inspection Letter and associated outcome were noted.

69. Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 *(Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, (the Act) comes into force on 3 April 2018 and placed new statutory duties on local authorities to provide meaningful support to everyone who was homeless or at risk of homelessness, regardless of whether they were in priority need or 'intentionally homeless'. The report summarised the main changes and additional duties the new Act will bring.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report provided the background to the introduction of the Act and the additional duties placed on Local Authorities. The Minister of Local Government had indicated that a new Homeless Code of Guidance which would provide practical advice on how the legislation and related policies should be implemented was expected to be published in Spring 2018.

The Act represents significant changes to homelessness legislation and the key measures were outlined in the report and included:

- Impact to the Council;
- Maximising the use of temporary accommodation;
- Development of advice services offered; and
- Addressing the impact on and of other services.

The new requirements will have financial implications for local authorities and this was recognised with the introduction of two new ringfenced grants. Additional one-off costs will be incurred with finance provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. It was anticipated that the grants would cover all costs associated with the new obligations and there would be no impact on the General Fund. There was however, the potential risk that this funding would not continue after 2018/19 however, given the profile of homelessness this was considered to be low risk.

A discussion ensued on the recent adverse weather conditions and whether any additional assistance had been provided to anyone who was homeless. The Principal Housing Advice Officer indicated that the Local Authority had a statutory duty, if it was expected that the temperature fell below freezing on three consecutive nights, to ensure anyone living on the streets were placed in temporary accommodation. However, Officers would implement the provision of temporary accommodation before that criteria was fulfilled. It was noted that during the recent adverse weather conditions, Officers assisted 5 people into temporary accommodation with the majority being reconnected with family or friends or moving onto tenancy supported accommodation. Members were pleased to note this and suggested that this information should be shared with the wider public to raise awareness of the excellent work undertaken and the support available.

It was noted that there had been reports of people claiming to be homeless but were in fact not homeless but were begging for money on the streets. A Member highlighted that there was a scheme in place in Middlesbrough where if someone on the streets was found not to be homeless, the Police would attend and arrest them for obtaining funds by deception. However, if they were found to be homeless, they were signposted to the Local Authority for support. The Principal Housing Advice Officer indicated she would liaise with Cleveland Police about this but noted that all public bodies had a duty under the new legislation to refer people to the Local Authority.

A Member referred to an incident within a GP surgery where staff suspected a lady to be homeless. Members were advised that if anyone became aware of anyone who was homeless, they should contact the Homeless Section and during office hours an Officer would attend and offer support to that person. If it was out of office hours, the call would go onto the Community Monitoring Centre who would then contact the on-call Officer to attend. The Principal Housing Advice Officer added that she would ensure Practice Managers of all GP surgeries were added to the list to receive communications and advice from the Homeless Team.

A discussion ensued on the financial implications of the introduction of the new legislation. The Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration indicated that there was a new structure in place within the Housing function and the impact of the implementation of this legislation will be closely monitored. It was noted that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had indicated that they expect Homeless Services to increase their staffing compliment in order to fulfil the increased statutory duties under the new Act. However, a further report would be submitted to the Committee in six months time to provide Members with an update on the implementation of this new legislation. In addition to this, it was suggested that a basic report showing the figures of homeless people supported be circulated electronically to Members of the Committee on a quarterly basis.

Decision

- (1) That Elected Members note the changes and implications of the Homelessness Reduction Act and the Council's approach to delivering the requirements of the Act.
- (2) That a monitoring report be submitted to the Committee in six months to report on how the Council and partners have delivered the new requirements of the Act.
- (3) That a quarterly update be circulated electronically to Members of the Committee on the support provided to people identified as homeless.

70. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chairman ruled that the following items of business should be considered by the Committee as a matter of urgency in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that the matter could be dealt with without delay.

Minute 71 – Routes to Work Update *(Learning and Skills Manager)*

71. Any Other Business – Routes to Work Update *(Learning and Skills Manager)*

The Chair sought an update on the progress of the Tees Valley Routes to Work report as this was currently included within the Forward Plan. The Learning and Skills Manager outlined that Routes to Work was a £7.5m Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) pilot project which included £1.5m of match from Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) to support 2,500 long term unemployed and economically inactive adults to move closer to the labour market.

The Learning and Skills Manager stated that the delay in bringing forward this report was that the Combined Authority was the managing agent with the five Tees Valley local authorities delivering the programme and the Council was yet to receive a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which would confirm targets and contract value. Once the MoU was received then a report would be submitted to this Committee.

The Chair added that this initiative would target the most hard to reach groups and would enable each local authority area to tweak provision to meet the needs of their local area.

Decision

The update on the Routes to Work initiative was noted.

The meeting concluded at 3.20pm

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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