

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

9 JULY 2018

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Councillor Christopher Akers Belcher (In the Chair)

Councillors: Stephen Akers-Belcher, Tom Cassidy, Kevin Cranney,
Brenda Harrison, Ann Marshall, Leisa Smith and Stephen Thomas.

Also Present: Councillor Robert Buchan as substitute for Councillor Shane Moore in
accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2.

Officers: Sally Robinson, Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning
Services
Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
John Morton, Assistant Director, Finance and Customer Services
Neil Wilson, Interim Assistant Chief Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring
Officer
Julian Heward, Public Relations Officer
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

14. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Paddy Brown and Shane Moore.

15. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Christopher Akers Belcher and Stephen Akers-Belcher declared
personal interests in relation to minute no. 20.

16. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 June, 2018

Confirmed.

17. Minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board held on 5 March, 2018

Received.

18. Minutes of the meeting of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership held on 13 April, 2018

Received.

19. Community Safety Plan 2017-20 (Year 2) *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework.

Purpose of report

To consider and comment on the Community Safety Plan 2017-20 (Year 2).

To consider referral to Council for adoption of the Community Safety Plan (Year 2) attached as an appendix to the report.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods reported that the current Community Safety Plan published in 2017 outlined the Safer Hartlepool Partnership's strategic objectives for a three year period, with a requirement to refresh the plan on an annual basis following completion of the annual strategic assessment.

The Community Safety Plan (Year 2) had been agreed by the Safer Hartlepool Partnership on 22nd June. In accordance with the budget and policy framework the Finance and Policy Committee was requested, therefore, to consider the content of the Community Safety Plan (Year 2).

Decision

1. That the Finance and Policy Committee approves the content of the Community Safety Plan 2017-20 (Year 2).
2. That in accordance with the budget and policy framework, the Community Safety Plan 2017-20 (Year 2) be referred to full Council for the adoption.

20. 'Filling the Holiday Gap' scheme – summer 2018
(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

To provide Members of the Committee with a proposal for the delivery of a

‘Filling the Holiday Gap’ grant scheme for the 2018 school summer holidays to be funded from the Child and Family Poverty Initiatives reserve.

To present options for the future development and sustainability of this food poverty intervention and ensure there are links with the wider work underway around this agenda.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Children’s and Joint Commissioning reported that the Committee received a report on 22 November 2017 highlighting the key outcomes and proposed next steps following the successful ‘Filling the Holiday Gap’ grant scheme in summer 2017. The report outlined options in relation to the delivery of future initiatives and recommended allocating additional resources to the grant scheme for local community and voluntary sector and public sector organisations for Christmas 2017, with any underspend rolling over to support a smaller scheme for Easter 2018.

Committee approved the recommendations as outlined in the report (Minute No. 84, 22 November, 2018 refers) and it was agreed that a further £14,500 (£10,000 plus a £4,500 underspend) would be allocated to the extension of the community ring-fenced reserve for Christmas 2017 scheme, with revised criteria.

The report went on to outline the key outcomes from the scheme indicating the amounts spent by each group involved and the numbers of children and adults that benefitted, and the number of meals, snacks and food parcels provided. In total, over 3,000 meals were provided by the 15 projects over a two week period and almost 500 food parcels distributed to families and individuals. This included over 100 food parcels for families affected by substance misuse via Hartlepool Action Recovery Team.

The Director highlighted that as part of the wider work around tackling food poverty in the borough, a ‘Hartlepool Food Network’ had been established to help coordinate and distribute unsold/unwanted food more efficiently and strategically across the town. The Director recommended that any groups in receipt of a ‘Filling the Holiday Gap’ grant should also register with the food network as a condition of the grant and utilise the surplus food from this project to complement their holiday provision schemes and thus improve longer-term sustainability and reduce overall costs.

It was proposed, therefore, that the Finance and Policy Committee agree to allocate a further £25,000 from the Child and Family Poverty Initiative reserve towards a Summer 2018 ‘Filling the Holiday Gap’ scheme and cap the maximum grant at £2,500 per organisation with further support in accessing food coming from the Hartlepool Food Network.

The Director stated that in order to secure future sustainability of the intervention and move towards a more cost-effective and sustainable approach in light of diminishing Council resources, it was proposed to fund

further community grant schemes for Christmas 2018 and Easter 2019, each at £10,000, from the Child and Family Poverty Initiatives reserve reflecting a move towards greater use of the Hartlepool Food Network and organisations such as Fare Share, Food Cloud and Hartlepool Food Bank to provide surplus food by a more targeted approach.

It was further proposed that Finance and Policy Committee commit funding for the Summer 2019 scheme of £25,000 and set an indicative allocation of £2,500 per organisation subject to review upon the evaluation of the three schemes to be delivered over the forthcoming year. The 'Financial Considerations' section of the report set out the funding in terms of the balance of the Child and Family Poverty Reserve.

Members welcomed the proposals and the extension of the scheme to cover the Christmas and Easter holiday periods. A Member expressed concern that some individuals may be missed from the scheme if they didn't 'belong' to a particular group. Was there any means of ensuring such instances didn't happen through highlighting the schemes through schools. The Chair suggested issuing publicity alongside the free swims programme to schools. The Director stated that information was circulated to all schools as part of wider information that included the free swims programme.

The Vice-Chair indicated that there was some concern around some children going to more than one scheme; was attendance monitored. The Director stated that many of the projects did some wider work around education alongside the delivery of meals or food parcels. Those families that were being supported by the authority were signposted to local projects. Gathering details of individuals and families may prove difficult under GDPR regulations and it had been recognised that some may be taking advantage of the different projects but those numbers were very low and the vast majority were people and families who genuinely found the scheme very valuable.

A Member referred to some of the spend statistics for the various groups and how, on face value, some of the costs varied quite significantly. It was suggested that future information presented to Members include a greater breakdown of costs. The Director stated that the applications for funding did include a breakdown of costs and there was detailed financial monitoring but it may be valuable for members to see those applications in the context of what was delivered in future monitoring reports.

A Member questioned if only children/families in receipt of free school meals were directed towards the programme. The Director indicated that access was universal, though some targeting did take place.

Decision

1. That the findings of the report be noted and the proposals for future delivery of holiday provision schemes for the next 15 months be

- approved.
2. That the provision of another ring fenced non-recurrent community resource for summer 2018 through the Child and Family Poverty Initiative Reserve be approved with £25,000 being allocated and grants capped at £2,500 per organisation.
 3. That £10,000 per scheme be approved towards 'Filling the Holiday Gap' interventions in Christmas 2018, Easter 2019 and £25,000 for Summer 2019, subject to review upon the evaluation of the three schemes to be delivered over the forthcoming year.
 4. That the balance of funding remaining in the Child and Family Poverty Initiative Reserve be noted and that £20,000 be made available on an annual recurring basis for Holiday Gap schemes.

21. Departmental Restructure (*Chief Executive*)

Type of decision

Non-Key Decision.

Purpose of report

The report made recommendations to Committee in respect of the Chief Officer structure of the Children and Joint Commissioning Services Department of the Council.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning reported that in August 2017, Finance and Policy Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive outlining proposals for a corporate restructure following a review the functional groupings in each Department. The aim of the proposed restructure was to ensure that there was a senior leadership team clearly focused on the challenges the Council faced, made best use of the expertise within the authority and delivered excellent and consistent services. Finance and Policy Committee approved the recommendations of the report and the changes were implemented from 1 September 2017.

In January 2018, the Council commenced the process to recruit a permanent Director of Public Health/Assistant Director Joint Commissioning and a Public Health Consultant/Head of Business Intelligence. Unfortunately prior to the date of the interview, the two applicants for the Director of Public Health post withdrew their applications and the Council was unable to appoint to the Public Health Consultant post.

In the light of the difficulties in recruiting to the skill set required for these posts, the Chair of the Appointments Panel asked the Chief Executive and Director of Children and Joint Commissioning Services to review the senior management structure of the department and any alternative models that could be considered to enable the Council to successfully recruit to the vacant posts.

The Chief Executive indicated in the report that she had consulted with the senior leadership team, including the Interim Director of Public Health, and had reviewed the structure of Children and Joint Commissioning Services and proposed a reorganisation of the roles and responsibilities of the Assistant Directors and Director of Public Health functions from those proposed in the report of August 2017. The Chief Executive considered it important that the Council had a structure which best meets the challenges it faces in both the short and medium to long term and makes the best use of the expertise and talents of the existing highly skilled workforce.

The proposals were included in Appendix 1 in the exempt section of the report. The appendix contained exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, Para 2 – Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual).

Members welcomed and supported the proposals as set out in the appendix.

Decision

1. That the restructure outlined in the Exempt appendix to the report be approved.
2. The Committee noted that the proposals as set out in the Exempt section of the report would form the basis of appropriate communications and consultations with those staff affected.
3. That the amendments to the functional groupings as set out in the Exempt section of the report be approved.
4. The Committee noted that the recurring costs of the proposed structure could be funded from existing resources as detailed in the report.

22. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

The meeting noted that the next Committee would be held on Monday 30 July, 2018 commencing at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre.

The meeting concluded at 10.15 am.

H MARTIN

INTERIM CHIEF SOLICITOR

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