

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

13 November 2018

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

Present:

Councillor: Stephen Akers-Belcher (In the Chair)

Councillors: Tom Cassidy, Marjorie James, Brenda Loynes and Ann Marshall

Officers: Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Tony Hanson, Assistant Director, Environment and Neighbourhood Services
Steve Hilton, Public Relations Officer
Kieran Bostock, Transport and Infrastructure Manager
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

38. Chair's Opening Comments

The Chair welcomed Kieran Bostock to the meeting and congratulated him on his recent appointment as Transport and Infrastructure Manager.

39. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Sandra Belcher.

40. Declarations of Interest

None.

41. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2018

Received

42. Savings Programme 2019/20 *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To enable Members to consider proposals to achieve further savings in 2019/20 and to provide feedback on these proposals to the Finance and Policy Committee meeting on 26 November 2018.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods presented the report which provided background information to the Council's development of a four year financial strategy which was designed to address the impact of a further four years of cuts in Government funding. By 2019/20 Hartlepool's core Government funding would be 45% less than in 2013/14, a reduction of £20.9m.

A comprehensive report that had been considered by Finance and Policy Committee on 3 September 2018 which advised Members that since the previous plan had been developed councils, including Hartlepool, had faced significant increased financial pressures, which had not been reflected in the funding provided by Government to councils in 2018/19 and 2019/20 in relation to Looked After Children and the ending of the 1% public sector pay cap. As a result of these additional unfunded budget pressures and a further cut in Government funding in 2019/20, the Council now faced a net 2019/20 budget deficit of £5.987m. Given the eight years of austerity and cuts to the Council budget, the position facing the Council for 2019/20 was the most challenging so far and it was anticipated that further budget deficits would arise in 2020/21 and 2021/2022 and that further cuts in Government funding would be made.

At this stage there was no information available to assess the potential impact of the Prime Minister's recent statement that austerity had ended and at best any financial benefits for local government were not anticipated until 2020/2021. If the Government was to end austerity for Hartlepool for 2019/20 they would need to provide a grant increase of 27% just to cover the Revenue Support grant cut they had previously announced for 2019/20. To completely end austerity and cover the £6m deficit and to freeze Council Tax they would need to provide a 41% grant increase.

The Director went on to provide a breakdown of the savings proposals for this Committee of £36K. This proposal would result in a restructure of the

Environmental Health Service which could lead to one compulsory redundancy and the reduction of hours in an administrative support post.

Members were advised that the staffing proposals arising from the savings presented would be managed at a corporate level and would seek to minimise compulsory redundancies and maximise redeployment opportunities.

Decision

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the savings proposals, as set out in the report, be supported and be utilised to formulate a response to be presented to Finance and Policy Committee on 26 November 2018.

43. Update on “Charged For” Waste Services *(Assistant Director, Environment and Neighbourhood Services)*

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

- (i) To provide a further update following the introduction of charges for non-household waste at Burn Road Household Waste Recycling Centre.
- (ii) To inform Members of the new ‘Extended Waste Services’ which had been introduced to provide residents and businesses in the Borough with a cost effective, professional waste disposal service with the assurance that waste was being dealt with in accordance with the appropriate legal requirements.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director (Environment and Neighbourhood Services) presented the report which provided the background to the charges implemented in April 2017 at the Burn Road Household Waste Recycling Centre and the impact of those charges on waste tonnages and costs. One of the primary objectives of introducing the charges was to decrease the costs associated with the disposal of non household ‘DIY’ waste and was in line with a number of neighbouring authorities who now also charged for

this type of waste. In December 2016 the waste management budget had been reduced by £50K. Members were referred to a table, set out in the report, which showed the reduction in disposal costs from comparative periods in 16/17 and 17/18 which indicated a £34,448 saving.

In addition the 2017/18 charges generated an income of £15,485 and this, combined with the reduction in disposal costs of £34,448, ensured that the charges for non-household DIY waste was achieving the required £50,000 saving for the Council.

One of the key concerns associated with the introduction of the charges was that it may directly contribute to increased cases of fly tipping. However, following a review of the data, the DIY type wastes made up only a small fraction of the waste that was fly tipped (less than 0.01%) and this had not increased since the introduction of the charges.

The report included details of extended waste services that had recently been introduced. The Assistant Director was pleased to report that availability and waiting times for the standard waste removal service had improved and residents could now expect to be able to book in for a collection within two weeks, with most collections taking place within a week. The new premium waste service had proven to be extremely popular, with demand for this service increasing dramatically since April 2018 when it was officially launched. Feedback from those using this service had been very positive with clients expressing that the costs were competitive and the standard and efficiency of the service to be very high.

Members welcomed the report and the positive feedback from service users. Concerns were expressed that there was some misunderstanding by residents in relation to household waste charges. Whilst standard waste removal services and premium waste removal services had been improved and extended, it was highlighted that there was currently no charge for the disposal of household waste items (furniture, mattresses, fitted kitchens, wardrobes etc) at the Burn Road HWRC. Emphasis was placed upon the need for further promotion of the HWRC and bulky waste collection service to clarify the arrangements.

A discussion followed on the most effective methods of publicising the service and it was suggested that billboards be utilised in key locations in the town such as bus stops and on Council vehicles and that information also be included within the Council's Hartbeat magazine.

The importance of continuing to examine trends in terms of fly tipping to enable resources to be allocated effectively was highlighted along with the need for further preventative work to ensure fly tipping continued to reduce.

Decision

- (i) That the contents of the report and comments of Members be noted and be utilised to contribute towards a positive educational and media campaign around charges and fly tipping to provide clarity on the arrangements.
- (ii) That billboards be considered to publicise the service in key locations in the town such as bus stops and on Council vehicles and that information also be included in the Council's Heartbeat magazine.
- (iii) That trends in relation to fly tipping continue to be examined to enable resources to be allocated effectively and that further fly tipping preventative work should continue.

44. Chair's Comments

The Chair welcomed Councillor Marshall as Vice-Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

45. Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was reported that due to conflicting diary commitments of the Chair and Vice Chair the dates of future meetings would be re-scheduled to a Monday, details of which would be circulated by Democratic Services following the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 10.20 am

HAYLEY MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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