

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

14 JANUARY 2019

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

Present:

Councillor Christopher Akers Belcher (In the Chair)

Councillors: Stephen Akers-Belcher, James Brewer, Paddy Brown, Kevin Cranney, Brenda Harrison, Ann Marshall, Shane Moore, Leisa Smith and Stephen Thomas.

Officers: Gill Alexander, Chief Executive
Hayley Martin, Chief Solicitor
Chris Little, Director of Finance and Policy
Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Steve Hilton, Communications and Marketing Team
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

90. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Mike Young.

91. Declarations of Interest

None.

92. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2018

Confirmed.

93. Land at Brenda Road East - Lease (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

Key Decision, Test (ii) Forward Plan ref RN31/18.

Purpose of report

To seek approval of the lease of land at Brenda Road East for use as a Civil Engineering Academy.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods reported that the Council owns land extending to around 14 acres on the east side of Brenda Road opposite TATA Steel and adjoining businesses. For many years the majority of the property had mainly been used for grazing horses, although part was formerly used to train operatives of diggers and similar construction equipment. The Council's salt barn also adjoins the site.

In 2016, the Council was approached by Hartlepool College of Further Education (HCFE) and Seymour Civil Engineering with a view to finding a suitable site for a Civil Engineering Academy which would provide practical training in excavation, pipe laying and related skills such as site setting out and construction and plant demonstrations. Space for storage of construction materials for incorporation into working areas would also be required and a compound (to be constructed by Seymour at their expense) to be used to store equipment and materials supporting Seymour's general operations and the Academy. The Academy was being planned to meet a training need and to deal with skills shortages in the construction and Civil Engineering sectors.

Approximately 12 acres of the land at Brenda Road was put forward as a potentially suitable site and subsequently, following extensive discussions and working up of proposals by the college and Seymour's, the terms of a lease have been provisionally agreed. Seymour's had submitted a planning application for the development.

The grant of the lease would be subject to the grant of planning permission. The lease terms were set out in a Confidential Appendix which contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, (paragraph 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The Director indicated that this was a great opportunity to address the shortage skills in the construction sector across the Tees Valley and an excellent opportunity for Hartlepool to be the venue for such a training centre.

Councillors Stephen Akers-Belcher and Paddy Brown both referred to their membership of the Planning Committee and indicated that they were only considering the issue of the lease of the land and not predetermining the planning application.

Members welcomed the proposal and a Member questioned if the Council would access the training facility for its own employees. The Director indicated this would be the case. The Vice-Chair indicated that this was a valuable opportunity for Hartlepool residents to access training for the construction sector particularly in light of the growth expected in housing

over the forthcoming years. The Chair commented that such a training facility had been a priority for the Tees Valley and as the Combined Authority lead for Education, Employment and Skills it was great news that Hartlepool was gaining such a valuable facility.

The following decision was agreed unanimously.

Decision

That the grant of the lease to Seymour Civil Engineering be approved in the basis of the terms outlined in the Confidential Appendix which contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, (paragraph 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

94. Health and Safety Policy *(Assistant Director, Corporate Services)*

Type of decision

Non key decision.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to provide Finance and Policy Committee with the revised Health and Safety Policy, for agreement.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Finance and Policy reported that the current Health and Safety Policy had been in place since September 2015. The updated Health and Safety Policy, attached as an appendix to the report, had been refreshed and took account of changes in the arrangements for the management of health and safety in the Council such as the introduction of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee. The final version of the policy has been considered by the Trade Unions and the Corporate Management Team.

Decision

That the revised Health and Safety Policy 2019 be approved.

95. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

The Committee noted the next meeting would be held on Monday 28 January 2019 at the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

The meeting concluded at 10.10 am.

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 16 JANUARY 2019