

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

13 JANUARY 2020

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

Present:

Councillor Shane Moore (In the Chair)

Councillors: James Brewer, Paddy Brown, Dave Hunter, Jim Lindridge, Sue Little, Ann Marshall, Leisa Smith and Mike Young.

Also Present: Councillor Bob Buchan as substitute for Councillor John Tennant in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2.

Councillor Tony Richardson

Officers: Gill Alexander, Chief Executive
Hayley Martin, Chief Solicitor
Chris Little, Director of Finance and Policy
Claire McLaren, Assistant Director, Corporate Services
Sally Robinson, Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services
Denise McGuckin, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Steve Hilton, Communications and Marketing Team
Denise Wimpenny, Democratic Services Team

80. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Christopher Akers-Belcher and John Tennant.

81. Declarations of Interest

None

82. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2019

Received.

83. Minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board held on 23 September 2019

Received.

84. Council Plan 2020-23 (*Chief Executive*)

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To ask the Committee to agree the proposed Council Plan 2020/21 – 2022/23 as a draft for consultation.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Chief Executive reported on the background to the development of a new Council Plan which had been launched on 13 September 2019 during which a number of key questions had and asked as part of the initial consultation. The Plan had been developed to build on what had already been achieved over the last three years and to respond to what residents, employees and partners had told the Council through the consultation.

The draft Council Plan, attached at Appendix 1, included a summary of progress made through the last Council Plan, an outline of the current position in Hartlepool in relation to some of the key indicators and the key themes that had emerged from the recent consultation exercise. Details of the proposed strategic priorities were provided as well as the actions to be taken to deliver the priorities. Members were requested to agree the draft plan for consultation which would be open for five weeks and would include an online survey, Members' Seminar, reports to Policy Committees and various partners, details of which were included in the report.

In the lengthy discussion that followed officers responded to issues arising from the report. Clarification was provided in relation to how various strategic priorities would be delivered including partnership arrangements and how the new model to support school transitions to improve pupil readiness for learning would operate in practice to which a Member requested that the Committee be kept updated of developments in this regard.

In response to suggestions that the plan should include specific targets/comparative figures in relation to the number of jobs created in the town, the Chief Executive outlined the Council Plan development and monitoring process and highlighted that the current process provided the opportunity to set and monitor specific targets once the final plan had been agreed. Reference was made to the poverty impact assessment, attached at Appendix 2, and the need to review the support to lone parents, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those groups who find difficulty managing their finances was highlighted.

Decision

- (i) That the draft Council Plan 2020/21 – 2022/23, attached at Appendix 1 be agreed for consultation.
- (ii) That the consultation timetable be noted.
- (iii) That the comments of Members be noted and actioned as appropriate.

85. Council Tax Base 2020/21 (*Director of Finance and Policy*)

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

The report sought Member approval, as required by statutory regulations, to the Council Tax Base for 2020/21 which would be used for Council Tax billing purposes.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided background information to the requirement by law to calculate the Council Tax Base for the forthcoming year, and inform the major precepting authorities before 31st January 2020. The Council Tax Base was expressed as the number of Band D equivalent properties.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy assumed increases in the Council Tax Yield in 2020/21 from a Council Tax increase and also from increases in the Tax Base principally from housing growth in the Borough, details of which were included in the report.

The Director of Finance and Policy responded to queries arising from the report. Reference was made to the reliance on additional Council Tax to support the budget and Members commented on the importance of being proactive to ensure maximum occupation of dwellings where possible.

Decision

- (i) That a Hartlepool BC Council Tax Base for 2020/21 of 24,882 be approved as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.
- (ii) That a Council Tax Base for 2020/21 for Parishes who may levy a precept upon the Council's Collection Fund be approved as detailed in Appendices 2 to 9 to the report:

Dalton Piercy	100.0	Elwick	703.8
Greatham	586.8	Hart	318.7
Newton Bewley	33.5	Headland	726.5
Brierton	13.1	Claxton	15.7

86. **Child and Family Poverty Reserve Proposal** (*Director of Children and Joint Commissioning Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To outline a proposal for consideration to tackle child and family poverty in Hartlepool.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services reported on the background and purpose of the Child and Family Poverty Reserve which had been created to fund initiatives that addressed and mitigated the impact of poverty on children, young people and their families in Hartlepool. It had also funded the specialist Financial Advice and Guidance Service. However, this was now funded from base budget.

It was proposed to deliver an initiative which promoted the best start in life for babies by offering equipment and a training programme to parents, the reasons and benefits of which were outlined. The projected costs for the delivery of this initiative for a 12 month period was £24,000. A table set out in the report showed the current position of the reserve.

In the discussion that followed the presentation the Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services responded to issues raised arising from the report. Clarification was provided in relation to the ongoing work around partnership and engagement opportunities, the referral process, the timescales for implementation of the scheme and provision of the equipment as well as the ongoing work on pregnancy prevention. Members

welcomed the initiative and the benefits as a result and were keen to receive an update report in three to six months.

Decision

- (i) The Committee approved the proposal and a commitment of funding from the child and poverty reserve to deliver this initiative over the forthcoming 12 months to tackle child and family poverty in Hartlepool.
- (ii) That an update report be provided to this Committee in three to six months time.

87. Hartlepool Power Stations Detailed Emergency Planning Zone Redetermination - Update *(Director for Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

To update Members on the change in minimum distance for the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) for the Power Station due to a change in the consequence report from the station following public health advice.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods referred to a report presented to Committee in October in relation to REPPIR regulations and the Council's responsibility to source independent health protection advice which provided conflicting information mainly around the minimum distance for the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) details of which were provided, as set out in the report. As a result of these discrepancies Public Health England and EDF had worked together and were amending the consequence report to take into account the findings and thus increasing the minimum distance the DEPZ should be.

The original date for the setting of the DEPZ of 22 November had not been met due to the subsequent change in information, the implications of which were outlined.

Decision

The Committee noted the changes to the minimum distance for the power station was larger than the existing DEPZ. However, the area was already covered by the Public Information Zone for COMMAH sites and the resulting work that would ensue in the notification of businesses and residents.

88. Corporate Procurement Quarterly Report on Contracts *(Director of Finance and Policy)*

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

To satisfy the requirements of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules with regard to the Finance and Policy Committee:

- Receiving and examining quarterly reports on the outcome of contract letting procedures including those where the lowest/highest price is not payable/receivable.
- Receiving and examining reports on any exemptions granted in respect of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Finance and Policy submitted a report outlining the Council's procurement activity since the previous quarterly report. Details of the individual contracts were set out in appendices to the report. **One appendix to the report 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 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).**

A Member stated that she wished to further pursue information contained within the confidential appendix. In view of this, it was agreed that discussions be held in private session.

89. Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the discussion on the previous item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

88. Corporate Procurement Quarterly Report on Contracts (*Director of Finance and Policy*)

Details of discussions were set out in the exempt section of the minutes.

Decision

- (i) That the contents of the report and comments of Members be noted.
- (ii) That a report be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee in relation to future contract requirements.

The meeting concluded at 11.10 am.

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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