

# **ECONOMIC GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

1 MARCH 2022

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

### **Present:**

Councillor Paddy Brown (In the Chair)

Councillors: Ben Clayton, Rob Cook, Brian Cowie, Pamela Hargreaves,  
Jim Lindridge, and Mike Young.

Also Present: Keith Burge, ERS

Officers: Denise McGuckin, Managing Director  
Beverley Bearne, Assistant Director, Development and Growth  
Israr Hussain, Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager  
Michael Beirne, Principal Economic Growth Officer  
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

### **24. Apologies for Absence**

None.

### **25. Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **26. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2021**

Received.

### **27. Council Motion ‘Hartlepool Triple Lock on Jobs’**

*(Managing Director)*

#### **Type of decision**

Non-key decision.

## **Purpose of report**

The December meeting of Full Council considered a motion titled “Hartlepool Triple Lock on Jobs” which was referred to Economic Growth and Regeneration committee, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.4, to consider.

## **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

The Managing Director reported that the following motion had been referred by Council to this Committee for consideration: -

*Council notes that: The jobs crisis in Hartlepool is stark. The percentage of our population that is economically active is lower than both the national and regional average and unemployment is higher than both the national and regional average. Our town is routinely reported as having one of the highest or indeed the highest unemployment rate in the UK. We believe that urgent action is needed and in the absence of meaningful support from elsewhere, the council can and must do more.*

*Council, therefore, resolves that:*

- Every proposal for capital expenditure will now come with an economic impact assessment that will give a detailed estimate of how many Hartlepool based jobs the proposal will create.*
- Procurement procedures for the authority are reviewed and reformed to improve the social value of all tenders/quick quotes, including trebling the value weighting for social value to 30%, which is fixed.*
- The use of “fire and re-hire” within the authority is banned and that the council will actively promote those local employers who similarly refuse to use this disgusting practice.*

*As the largest employer and one of the biggest economic drivers in Hartlepool we must put our town first in everything that we do to ensure that every resident has the opportunity for good, well paid employment to support them and their families. The money this council spends is Hartlepool’s money. The jobs this money creates must benefit our town and its people.*

The Managing Director stated that while every effort was made to put Hartlepool businesses first. However, for high value tenders the Council was also governed by the Public Procurement Regulations where tenders had to be ‘open’ for all to bid for. Before determining a percentage target for social value and / or introducing economic impact assessments ‘we’ would need to determine the opportunities for social value that capital investment would deliver. In some instances such as very specialist services or very large contracts, Hartlepool would not have a local provider

then ‘we’ could look to achieve SV by requiring contractors to deliver this through use of local sub-contractors.

The Managing Director stated that further research would be required to ascertain if there is actual evidence that increasing the social value element to 30% has improved unemployment in a town the size of Hartlepool. In terms of the “Fire and Re-hire” aspect of the motion, the Managing Director agreed that some organisations may use ‘fire and rehire’ in ways that are unacceptable, including ‘fire and rehire’ of staff on a regular basis, in these circumstances we would be happy to support promoting employers who refuse to adopt this serial practise. However, a blanket ban on the use of ‘fire and rehire’ could potentially have unintended consequences and simply mean companies put themselves into administration, dismiss their employees and then set up a new company. Such a proposal could also tie the hands of future administrations and its ability to respond to changing circumstances.

The Managing Director stated that the recommendation to the Committee was to establish an officer working group, which she would lead, to look into the first two elements of the motion to report back to Members during the summer.

In debate Members expressed their view in support of retaining the ‘fire and rehire’ element of the motion. Members indicated that they believed such a policy could improve the terms and conditions of employment of staff in the companies it contracted with. Members indicated that there may already be existing employment policies within partner organisations across the North East that could provide the basis for Hartlepool policy.

Members acknowledged that there may need to be flexibility over the amount of social value that may be included in contracts, if it was included at all, as they had no desire to dissuade local employers through the imposition of even more bureaucracy in the tender process. The aim was to make business think about what they could put back into the local community.

### **Decision**

The Committee approved the proposal to set up an officers working group to look into the first two elements of the motion and note the feedback on Fire and Re-hire practice.

## **28. Economic Growth Strategic Review - Presentation**

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

The Assistant Director, Development and Growth introduced Keith Burge from ERS, the consultants that had been engaged to produce the Council's new Economic Growth Strategy.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

Mr Burge gave a presentation to the Committee outlining the progress on the development of the new strategy and the next steps in the process. It was anticipated that a draft of the document would be provided to a meeting of the Committee early in the new Municipal Year.

In debate the Committee commented that they would wish to see a 'punchy' strategic document that was not too long and focussed on the Council's core aims. Members indicated their support for the 'time is now' campaign that was briefly outlined by the Managing Director but sought assurance that other promotional campaigns would not be diluted.

The Chair and Members noted that there was a need to get these messages a wider audience across the region Hartlepool already got the need to move these things forward.

### **Decision**

1. That Keith Burge (ERS) be thanked for his presentation.
2. That the discussions be noted.

## **29. 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.

The meeting concluded at 11.55 am.

**H MARTIN  
CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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