

PLEASE NOTE VENUE AND TIME

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE AGENDA



Friday 5th January 2007

at 1.30 pm

**Main Hall, Owton Manor Community Centre
Wynyard Road, Hartlepool**

MEMBERS: SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE:

Councillors SAllison, Barker, Clouth, R W Cook, Fleet, Gibbon, Hall, James, Laffey, A Marshall, J Marshall, Preece, Shaw, Wallace, Wistow and Wright.

Resident Representatives:

Ian Campbell, Iris Ryder and Linda Shields

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2006 (*attached*) and the Single Status Working Group held on 21st November 2006 (*to follow*).

4. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO REPORTS OF THE SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

No items.

5. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS FROM COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND NON EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

No items.

PLEASE NOTE VENUE AND TIME

6. FORWARD PLAN

6.1 The Executive's Forward Plan – *Scrutiny Manager*

7. CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS / BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS

No items.

8. CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL MONITORING/CORPORATE REPORTS

No items.

9. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

8.1 Final Report: Raising Boys Achievement – Bridging the Gender Gap - *Chair of Children's Services Scrutiny Forum*

8.2 Scrutiny Forums – Progress Reports:-

- (a) Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee – *Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee;*
- (b) Children's Services Scrutiny Forum – *Chair of Children's Services Scrutiny Forum;*
- (c) Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum – *Chair of Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum;*
- (d) Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum – *Chair of Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum; and*
- (e) Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum – *Chair of Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum.*

10. CALL-IN REQUESTS

11. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- i) **Date of Next Meeting Friday 19th January 2007 at 1.30pm in the Main Hall, West View Community Centre, Miers Avenue, Hartlepool**

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

24 November 2006

Present:

Councillor: Marjorie James (In the Chair)

Councillors: Steve Gibbon, Gerard Hall, Pauline Laffey, Ann Marshall, John Marshall, Arthur Preece, Steve Wallace and Gerald Wistow.

Resident Representatives:

Ian Campbell, Iris Ryder and Linda Shields.

Also Present: In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2, Councillor Brash as substitute for Councillor Shaw.
Councillor Pam Hargreaves, Children's Services Portfolio Holder.
The Mayor, Stuart Drummond.

Officers: Chris Little, Assistant Chief Financial Officer
Bart Johnson, Principal Economic Development Officer (Europe)
Peter Turner, Principal Strategy Development Officer
Paul Briggs, Assistant Director (Children's Services)
Penny Thompson, Children's Centre and Childcare Co-ordinator
Jo Dickinson, Business Support Officer
Adrian Hurst, Principal Environmental Health Officer
Charlotte Burnham, Scrutiny Manager
Jonathan Wistow, Scrutiny Support Officer
David Cosgrove, Principal Democratic Services Officer

131. Apologies for Absence

Councillors S Allison, C Barker, R W Cook and Jane Shaw.

132. Declarations of interest by Members

Councillor Wallace declared a non-prejudicial interest as Chair of Hartlepool PCT.

133. Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee and the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum held on 29 September, 2006

Confirmed.

134. Minutes of the meetings held on 13 October, 20 October and 27 October, 2006.

Members made further comment in relation to the minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2006. In relation to the comments on the question of whether people's ability to pay was taken into account when setting the level of Council Tax, the Chair clarified that it was not but that should individuals or families have difficulty paying their council tax they were, on occasions, benefits that may be claimed to assist in meeting the bill.

Members, by way of consensus, amended the minutes of the meeting and specifically Minute 118 "Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents – Budget and Policy Framework Initial Consultation Proposals 2007/2008", to reflect their disappointment that the Mayor had not remained throughout the whole of the meeting.

Recommended

1. The minutes of the meetings held on 13 October and 20 October, 2006 were confirmed.
2. That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 October, 2006 are confirmed subject to the following amendments: -
Minute No. 118 "Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents – Budget and Policy Framework Initial Consultation Proposals 2007/2008".
1st paragraph (page 2), the first sentence be amended to read "The Mayor was briefly in attendance and addressed the Committee..."
3rd paragraph (page 2), the addition of the following sentence to the end of the paragraph; "Members expressed their regret that the Mayor could not stay for the remainder of their debate."

134. Withdrawal of European Regional Development Funding to the Voluntary Sector within Hartlepool Scrutiny Referral – Scoping Report (*Scrutiny Manager / Scrutiny Support Officer*)

On 10 January 2006 (minute no. 26 refers) the Authority's Grants Committee referred the Withdrawal of European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) to the Voluntary Sector within Hartlepool, to the Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Function. In particular, the Grants Committee asked the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee to consider the issue of the withdrawal of

the funding and the impact it would have across the voluntary sector. On 10 February 2006 (minute no. 146 refers) the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee considered the receipt of the referral of this item. Members of the Committee expressed their support for accepting the referral, but suggested that an audit of the community and voluntary sector organisations within Hartlepool be undertaken prior to the undertaking of the Scrutiny Referral. This audit had now been completed and had been reported to the Committee at its meeting on 20 October 2006.

The report set out briefly the history of European funding for the voluntary sector between 2000 and 2006 and the changes that were to affect such funding to 2013. The Council's Principal Economic Development Officer (Europe) was present at the meeting and highlighted that the affects of the changes to the funding regime were likely to amplified in Hartlepool as the town had effectively "punched above its weight" in past years. Through the thorough preparation of multiple schemes, Hartlepool had gained additional funds when other areas couldn't spend their full allocation. This was not likely to happen again. The reduction in the overall funding levels by as much as 50% and the fact that other areas were now as prepared as Hartlepool, meant that competition within the region for funds was likely to be fierce. It was highlighted that there was only a limited number of voluntary groups in Hartlepool that actually had the ability to access European funds.

Given the background to European funding provided within the Scoping Paper the Scrutiny Support Officer suggested it would be more appropriate for the Overall Aim of the Scrutiny Investigation to be to examine the issue of the reduction in European Structural Funds on the Voluntary Sector and the impact that this will have. It was also suggested that the title of the Investigation should reflect this change.

The following Terms of Reference for the review were proposed in the report:-

- (a) To gain an understanding of how the voluntary sector are being / will be affected by a major loss in European Funding;
- (b) To establish what has been done at national, regional and local levels in anticipation of this reduction in European Funding;
- (c) To establish how the local authority can continue to best support the voluntary sector in light of changes to European Funding; and
- (d) To establish the likely impact of a loss of funding on services provided within the town.

The Forum could invite a variety of people to attend to assist in the development of a balanced and focused range of recommendations and it was suggested that the Committee may wish to include the following in their investigation:-

- (i) Representative from Hartlepool Targeted Communities Package Partnership;
- (ii) Representative from University of Teesside Social Futures Institute

- (authors of Facing the Future: a Study of the Impact on the Voluntary Sector and Community Sector in the North East of England);
- (iii) Representatives from the CVS (from which groups to be determined at the meeting);
 - (iv) Conduct a Focus Group in relation to this issue with representatives of the 12 CVS bodies that have received European funding in either 2005 or 2006;
 - (v) Representative from One North East;
 - (vi) Representative from Government Office for the North East; and
 - (vii) Representative from Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit (TVJSU)

Members discussed the terms of reference and the groups/organisations to be involved in the investigation. Through this debate the following points / amendments to the terms of reference and the groups/organisations to be involved in the investigation were agreed by the committee: -

- ✍ Term of reference (c) be amended to state "...the local authority and the Local Strategic Partnership..."
- ✍ That the Principal Economic Development Officer (Europe) advises on the representatives that should be invited to be involved in the investigation and the Focus Group.
- ✍ That the Chair of the Committee and the Scrutiny Manager give consideration to the Committee's desire to run a second inquiry side-by-side with this inquiry on the involvement of the voluntary sector in the provision of services in Hartlepool through such means as Social Enterprise contracts.

The timetable for the inquiry was proposed as detailed below. It was pointed out by the Scrutiny Support Officer that the timetable was relatively brisk due to the need to complete the inquiry before the end of the municipal year.

24 November 2006 – 'Scoping and Setting the Scene of the Scrutiny of the Topic'

19 December 2006 / 5 or 19 January 2007 – Regional and Sub-regional perspective. Invite witnesses from Government Office North East, One North East, Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit and Teesside University to gain an understanding of developments in the region and sub-region and their likely impact on Hartlepool.

Early to Mid December / Early to Mid January – Conduct Focus Group

5 January 2007 / 9 February 2007 – Local perspective. Feed in Focus Group findings and invite responsible Council Officers, CVS representatives, and representative from Hartlepool Targeted Communities Package Partnership to this meeting.

Mid to Late January / February – schedule an informal meeting of the Committee to consider contents of a Draft Final Report.

9 February /16 March 2007 – Agree Draft Final Report

Recommended

1. That the terms of reference for the inquiry as set out in the report be approved subject to the following amendment: -

(c) To establish how the local authority *and the Local Strategic Partnership* can continue to best support the voluntary sector in light of changes to European Funding;

2. That the Council's Principal Economic Development Officer (Europe) be involved in advising on the representatives that should be invited to be involved in the investigation and the Focus Group.

135. Request for Items for Discussion – Joint Cabinet / Scrutiny Event on 28 November, 2006 (*Scrutiny Manager*)

The Scrutiny Manager reported that the next meeting of the Joint/Cabinet Scrutiny Event was to have been held towards the end of December 2006. In light of the festive season ahead and following consultation with the Mayor and the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, it was agreed that such event be brought forward to 28 November 2006. Items for discussion were sought from Members of this Committee, which would then form the basis of the Joint Agenda in conjunction with the issues received from the Cabinet.

Members raised the following issues for discussion at the meeting: -

- ✍ When policy initiatives are taken by the Executive, any Scrutiny inquiry reports that had been used in the development of the policy should be recognised;
- ✍ The Scrutiny Members' budget priority of £50,000 for the establishment of a dedicated budget to support the Scrutiny Function during the 2007/08 financial year and the implementation of a formal procedure for its use should the dedicated budget be agreed during the budget setting process; and
- ✍ Reconsideration of the timescale for the Executive to report back to Scrutiny on reports received. The timescale for the Executive was twelve weeks while this was shorter for external bodies.

Recommended

That the above issues be included on the agenda for the joint meeting.

136. Quarter 2 – Corporate Plan Progress and Revenue Financial Management Report 2006/07 (*Assistant Chief Executive / Chief Financial Officer*)

A copy of the comprehensive report which was presented to Cabinet on 20 November, 2006 was submitted for the Committee's consideration. The Principal Strategy Development Officer briefly outlined the overall performance and progress on actions and key performance indicators. The Assistant Chief Financial Officer gave a brief overview of the Council's anticipated 2006/2007 Revenue Outturn.

The following points were then raised by the Committee during the debate.

Responses from the officers, where appropriate are also included.

- ✍ “The project for improving training and employment prospects for carers went live in July, 2006 and is currently working with 13 carers. At the end of quarter 2 four carers have achieved a level 2 qualification and one has secured employment.” The Chair questioned whether this was through direct Council intervention? A written response was to be provided.
- ✍ What control did the Council have in relation to Delegated Schools Grant (DSG) expenditure and, in particular, overspending by a school? The Assistant Chief Financial Officer stated that DSG received into the Authority was ring-fenced and passed directly to schools. If a school overspent on DSG, that overspend could be carried forward to be met from the following year’s DSG but that they would need to consult the local authority before doing so. There was a responsibility placed on the Council, specifically the Director of Children’s Services, to ensure no schools were in deficit at the end of the financial year.
- ✍ Where had the decision been made to spend at DSG level? The Assistant Chief Financial Officer stated that it was implicit within the budget. Cabinet had not proposed to spend above DSG and in any event that would require a full Council decision. Members requested that reference to this issue be made in the next stage of the budget consultation process.
- ✍ If schools spent their DSG efficiently and under-spent, would that affect the following year’s allocation? The Assistant Chief Financial Officer indicated that it would not and any under-spend would go into school balances. School balances was, however, an issue that had been raised by central government as they wanted to see the money allocated now spent on the children in school now. Government did have the facility to claw-back surpluses and reduce future DSG. The Assistant Director of Children’s Services indicated that consideration was being given by government to a ‘cap’ on school balances, not as a punitive measure but to encourage expenditure.
- ✍ Concern was raised at the Council ‘assisting’ schools through expenditure on certain schemes and projects when the school may have significant balances itself. The Assistant Chief Financial Officer indicated that school balances were in the public domain and this was an issue being considered further by the School’s Forum. Members requested that when the School’s Forum made its recommendations, that they be reported to this Committee.

Recommended

That the report be noted.

137. Quarter 2 – NRF, Capital and Accountable Body Programme Monitoring Report 2006/07 *(Chief Financial Officer)*

A copy of the comprehensive report that had been presented to Cabinet on 20 November, 2006 was submitted for the Committee’s consideration. The

Assistant Chief Financial Officer highlighted the principal issues for the Committee's information. In relation to the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund it was reported that the Local Strategic partnership was to review expenditure on the schemes funded. In relation to Capital budget expenditure, it was reported that all grant funding was expected to be spent in line with the appropriate funds requirements and deadlines. Details of the various accountable body programmes were also submitted for information within the report.

Members referred to the previous consideration of these reports at the end of quarter 1 and the subsequent letter circulated by the Assistant Chief Financial Officer in response to members' queries. In that letter, a response had been given to a question on the Connected Health Care Trainer. Members understood that this programme was designed to meet local needs through local provision; which they understood to be from within Hartlepool. However, Members indicated that they understood that the person appointed to the post was from Easington. Members believed that this issue and the programme in general warranted further investigation as they were concerned that the original scheme approved and funded by the Local Strategic Partnership was not now being delivered 'on the ground'. The Assistant Chief Financial Officer indicated that he would investigate the matter further and report back to the Committee under separate cover.

Recommended

That the report be noted.

138. Cabinet Response to the Call-in of the Cabinet's Decision Relating to Salary Deductions for Industrial Action *(The Cabinet)*

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond was present at the meeting and submitted a report from Cabinet following its consideration of the report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on the Call-In of part (iii) of its decision relating to Salary Deductions for Industrial Action (Minute No. 78 of the Cabinet Meeting of 25 September 2006 refers).

The Cabinet at its meeting on 6 November 2006 considered the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's request for the reconsideration of its original decision and agreed that (Cabinet Minute 110 refers):-

"The establishment of a policy for future deductions from pay in response to strike action be referred to a Cabinet Working Group to include also Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee Members and Trade Union Representatives."

The Chair was concerned that the 'spirit' of the Cabinet resolution didn't echo that of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee. The Mayor commented that the spirit was the same but that the Working Group needed to be Cabinet led in order to formulate policy. The Mayor stated that he was happy to amend the constitution of the group to that suggested by the

Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

Recommended

That the amendment to the Cabinet decision agreed by the Mayor to the constitution of the group to formulate a policy to that initially recommended by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (Joint Trade Union Consultative Committee, with input from three Cabinet Members and three Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee Members) be noted.

139. Portfolio Holders Response to the Formal Response to the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CORWM) Scrutiny Referral *(Director of Regeneration and Planning Services / Director of Neighbourhood Services / Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder)*

The report provided Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee with feedback on the recommendations from the investigation into the Formal Response to the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CORWM) Scrutiny Referral, which was reported to Council on 14 September 2006. The Principal Environmental Health Officer indicated that the government had recently published its response following the consultation and there would be a further period of consultation. A report was to be submitted to Cabinet in December. In response to Members questions, the officer indicated that there would be public involvement in the Government's consultation process.

Following consideration of the Final Report, Council approved the recommendations in their entirety. Details of each recommendation and proposed actions to be taken following approval by Council were provided in the Action Plan attached at Appendix A to the report.

Recommended

That the proposed actions detailed within the Action Plan be noted.

140. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews from Council, Executive Members and Non Executive Members

No items

141. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents

No items.

142. Portfolio Holders Response to the Closure of Hartlepool College of Further Education's on-site

Nursery Facility Scrutiny Referral (*Director of Children's Services / Director of Regeneration and Planning Services / Children's Services Portfolio Holder / Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder*)

The report provided Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee with feedback on the recommendations from the investigation into the Closure of Hartlepool College of Further Education's on-site Nursery Facility Scrutiny Referral, which was reported to Council on 14 September 2006. Both the Children's Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor Pam Hargreaves, and the Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder, The Mayor, Stuart Drummond, were present at the meeting. Details of each recommendation and proposed actions to be taken following approval by Council were provided in the Action Plan submitted as Appendix A to the report.

Members questioned if recommendation (a) "That a formal feedback mechanism be established with regard to the dissemination of information throughout the Authority for Elected Members serving on internal and external bodies (as also recommended by the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum during the undertaking of the Partnerships Enquiry, accepted by the Cabinet in May 2006)", had been actioned. The Chair indicated that the Constitution Working Group had discussed this issue but it was difficult to determine where to draw the line; Cabinet's advice may be needed. The Mayor commented that this was a very difficult area and it may rely on individual Councillors to determine when a report needed to be submitted. The Mayor suggested that the Members' Development group may also wish to look at this area.

After debating the issue further Members considered that the starting point for the exercise should be for the outside bodies list to be reviewed to determine which organisations and bodies the Council had sufficient interest to warrant membership. This could then be extended to indicate which appointments would require Members to report back to the Council.

Recommended

That the report be noted.

143. Closure of Rossmere Learner Pool Scrutiny Referral - Evidence from the Authority's Elected Mayor (*Scrutiny Manager*)

The Scrutiny Manager reported that The Mayor, Stuart Drummond, had been invited to attend this meeting to provide evidence in relation to the on-going investigation into the Closure of Rossmere Learner Pool Scrutiny Referral. The Mayor commented that a joint Portfolio meeting had been arranged for early December with the Children's Services Portfolio Holder and the Performance Management Portfolio Holder to discuss Rossmere Pool. The Mayor indicated that it was his intention to see the pool demolished in January, subject to the appropriate contract being arranged, and he hoped

the joint portfolio meeting would take that decision.

The Chair was concerned that at the meeting of the Committee held on 20 October 2006 information disclosed at the meeting appeared to give the impression that the decision had already been taken. The Mayor indicated that this was not the case but he had indicated in correspondence with one of the Rossmere Ward Councillors that it was his intention to demolish the building. The Mayor gave copies of the correspondence to the Chair who read the contents to the Committee.

Members again expressed their concern at the closure of the pool and the over-burdening of other pools. The Mayor stated that the closure of the Rossmere pool had had no effect on the delivery of the school swimming programme.

Members discussed if the information had been misleading at the previous meeting at some length. The Chair indicated that the reason the Mayor had not indicated anything prior to this meeting was due to this being private correspondence only referring to his 'intention' to demolish; no final decision had been made. The decision on this matter would be undertaken after the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee had concluded its investigation.

Recommended

That the Mayor be thanked for his attendance at the meeting.

144. Closure of Rossmere Learner Pool Scrutiny Referral - Draft Final Report *(Chair of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee)*

The draft final report of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee's investigation into the Closure of Rossmere Learner Pool was submitted for the Committee's consideration, amendment and subsequent approval for submission to Council. The report set out the terms of reference, the methods utilised and the findings of the investigation.

The draft conclusions of the report, were as follows: -

- “(a) That difficulties were encountered throughout the undertaking of the Scrutiny Referral mainly due to the fact that many of the senior officers closely involved in the circumstances leading to the closure of the Rossmere Swimming Pool no longer worked for the Authority;
- (b) That the Health and Safety Inspection Report of 2004 for Rossmere Swimming Pool triggered the decision to close the swimming pool although other reports of Property Services together with earlier Health and Safety Inspection Reports (should one of been undertaken during 2003), would have highlighted the problems sooner;
- (c) That the circumstances leading to the closure of Rossmere Swimming Pool were clearly an example of bad practice and that of corporate neglect;

- (d) That there was no evidence available to determine that the responsible Service Departments had taken appropriate action to respond to the recommendations of the independent IRSM Report undertaken in 2001 and the routine Annual Health and Safety Inspection Reports undertaken in 2002 and 2004;
- (e) That in response to the health and safety concerns raised during the initial undertaking of the Scrutiny Referral and during a debate by Full Council in April 2005, the Performance Management Portfolio Holder commissioned an independent investigation into the health and safety arrangements in community and school pools in Hartlepool to ensure that processes would be implemented to ensure that no similar failures in the reporting and acting upon Health and Safety Inspections would occur in the future;
- (f) That the recent conditions assessment/survey of the Rossmere Swimming Pool raised significant concerns in relation to the building's fabric, mechanical and electrical installations;
- (g) That the Children's Services Department has a robust asset management plan and manages its school property effectively, however, both Rossmere and Brinkburn Swimming Pools are anomalies within the Department's property portfolio which may explain why the process leading to the closure of Rossmere Swimming Pool did not follow the department's usual consultation process;
- (f) That the Brinkburn Swimming Pool seems to be following the same sequence of events, in particular with its current condition and maintenance regime which led to the closure of the Rossmere Swimming Pool and this should be addressed as a matter of urgency via the responsible Portfolio Holder; and
- (h) That the support provided by the Chief Personnel Services Officer, the Assistant Director for Children's Services (Resources and Support Services) and the Scrutiny Support Team during the undertaking of this Scrutiny Referral was provided in an open and transparent manner."

A Member commented that the Committee's first responsibility through this investigation was to ensure the safety of children. The Councillor believed that the report was very damaging to the Council and Councillors and considered that children were put at risk and still were due to the condition of the building. The Councillor urged the Mayor to 'fast-track' the demolition of the building.

The Mayor commented that many lessons had been learnt through this episode. The Mayor agreed with comments that the matter had gone on for too long. The Mayor indicated that in future no Council buildings/facilities would be considered for closure unless a plan was in place to deal with the building immediately after closure. Rossmere Pool had been closed

because it was a risk to users, now it needed to be demolished as it was a risk to residents.

Members considered that the investigation, while it had been long, had been a necessary process. A Member asked the Mayor what steps he had undertaken following the unanimous Council resolution to protect the condition of the pool. The Mayor indicated that he did not have that information but would provide a chronology of the events following the Council resolution for the Committee's information. The Member expressed his concern that the Mayor was not being made fully aware of the facts by officers. The Members expressed concern that the Mayor had not been made aware of the issues at Brinkburn Pool that had been discussed at previous meetings of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee.

The Mayor indicated that he was very concerned about the points made in relation to Brinkburn Pool and would look at this matter at the earliest opportunity after the meeting. A Member pursued the issues highlighted at the Brinkburn Pool with the Assistant Director (Children's Services). The Assistant Director indicated that a Health and Safety inspection had been undertaken at Brinkburn Pool, the report of which had been received in the Children's Services Department earlier in the day. This report showed that the pool and the building were not in the 'catastrophic' state of repair alleged at the previous meeting. There were some issues that needed to be dealt with but by no means was the pool or the building a danger to users. In relation to further questions, The Assistant Director (Children's Services) indicated that he personally had not checked whether the telephone at Brinkburn Pool was in operation. When he had outlined the concerns and issues raised at the previous meeting in relation to Brinkburn Pool with his Officers, they had indicated that this was not the case.

Members requested that a copy of the Health and Safety report for Brinkburn Pool could be circulated together with an assurance that the telephone at the building was in working order and had always been during the last six months. Members also asked if there was a defibrillator at the Brinkburn pool.

Members discussed the conclusions set out in the report and considered that they reflected the concerns aired during the investigation. Members indicated that the further information on Brinkburn pool requested at the meeting be incorporated within the conclusions but asked that the information be circulated at the earliest opportunity. Members also supported any final amendments to the Final report be delegated to the Chair of the Committee prior to its finalisation and submission to Council on 14 December 2006.

Recommended

That the draft final report of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee's investigation into the Closure of Rossmere Learner Pool be approved, subject to: -

1. The inclusion in the conclusions of the requests for further information on Brinkburn Pool being circulated to the Committee;
2. The inclusion of appropriate recommendations based upon Members' discussions and the conclusions set out in the draft report;
3. That the Chair be authorised to approve any detailed amendments to the report prior to its submission to Council.

145. Building Schools for the Future (*Director of Children's Services*)

To report informed Members of the outcomes of the first stage of consultation together with the agreed outcome(s) arising from the Cabinet meeting of 20 November 2006 with regard to the second stage of the consultation process, in preparation for the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. The Assistant Director (Children's Services) reported that Cabinet had agreed to the second stage of the consultation process as set out in the report submitted to Cabinet which was attached as an appendix for Members' information.

Recommended

That the report be noted.

146. Call-In Requests

No items.

147. Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Tuesday 19 December, 2006 commencing at 5.00pm.

MARJORIE JAMES

CHAIR

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

5 January 2007



Report of: Scrutiny Manager

Subject: THE EXECUTIVE'S FORWARD PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the opportunity for the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (SCC) to consider whether any item within the attached Executive's Forward Plan should be considered by this Committee or referred to a particular Scrutiny Forum.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 As you are aware, the SCC has delegated powers to manage the work of Scrutiny, as it thinks fit, and if appropriate can exercise or delegate to individual Scrutiny Forums.
- 2.2. One of the main duties of the SCC is to hold the Executive to account by considering the forthcoming decisions of the Executive and to decide whether value can be added to the decision by the Scrutiny process in advance of the decision being made.
- 2.3 This would not negate Non-Executive Members ability to call-in a decision after it has been made.
- 2.4 As such, the most recent copy of the Executive's Forward Plan is attached as **Appendix 1** for the SCC's information.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee considers the content of the Executive's Forward Plan.

Contact Officer:- Charlotte Burnham – Scrutiny Manager
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523 087
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.



HARTLEPOOL
BOROUGH COUNCIL

FORWARD PLAN

JANUARY 2007 – APRIL 2007

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The law requires the executive of the local authority to publish in advance, a programme of its work in the coming four months including information about key decisions that it expects to make. It is updated monthly.
- 1.2 The executive means the Mayor and those Councillors the Mayor has appointed to the Cabinet.
- 1.3 Key decisions are those which significantly modify the agreed annual budget of the Council or its main framework of policies, those which initiate new spending proposals in excess of £100,000 and those which can be judged to have a significant impact on communities within the town. A full definition is contained in Article 13 of the Council's Constitution.
- 1.4 Key decisions may be made by the Mayor, the Cabinet as a whole, individual Cabinet members or nominated officers. The approach to decision making is set out in the scheme of delegation which is agreed by the Mayor and set out in full in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

2. **FORMAT OF THE FORWARD PLAN**

- 2.1 The plan is arranged in sections according to the Department of the Council which has the responsibility for advising the executive on the relevant topic:

Part 1	Chief Executive's Department	CE
Part 2	Adult & Community Services Department	ACS
Part 3	Children's Services Department	CS
Part 4	Neighbourhood Services Department	NS
Part 5	Regeneration and Planning Department	RP

- 2.2 Each section includes information on the development of the main policy framework and the budget of the Council where any of this work is expected to be undertaken during the period in question.
- 2.3 It sets out in as much detail as is known at the time of its preparation, the programme of key decisions. This includes information about the nature of the decision, who will make the decisions, who will be consulted and by what means and the way in which any interested party can make representations to the decision-maker.

3. **DECISIONS MADE IN PRIVATE**

- 3.1 Most key decisions will be made in public at a specified date and time.
- 3.2 A small number of key decisions, for reasons of commercial or personal confidentiality, will be made in private and the public will be excluded from any sessions while such decisions are made. Notice will still be given about the intention to make such decisions, but wherever possible the Forward Plan will show that the decision will be made in private session.
- 3.3 Some sessions will include decisions made in public and decisions made in private. In such cases the public decisions will be made at the beginning of the meeting to minimise inconvenience to members of the public and the press.

4. **URGENT DECISIONS**

- 4.1 Although every effort will be made to include all key decisions in the Forward Programme, it is inevitable for a range of reasons that some decisions will need to be taken at short notice so as to prevent their inclusion in the Forward Plan. In such cases a minimum of 5 days public notice will be given before the decision is taken.
- 4.2 In rare cases it may be necessary to take a key decision without being able to give 5 days notice. The Executive is only able to do this with the agreement of the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee or the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the local authority. (Scrutiny committees have the role of overseeing the work of the Executive.)

5. **PUBLICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

- 5.1 All decisions which have been notified in the Forward Plan and any other key decisions made by the Executive, will be recorded and published as soon as reasonably practicable after the decision is taken.
- 5.2 The Council's constitution provides that key decisions will not be implemented until a period of 3 days has elapsed after the decision has been published. This allows for the exceptional cases when a scrutiny committee may 'call in' a decision of the Executive to consider whether it should be reviewed before it is implemented. 'Call in' may arise exceptionally when a Scrutiny Committee believes that the Executive has failed to make a decision in accordance with the principles set out in the Council's constitution (Article 13); or that the decision falls outside the Council's Policy Framework; or is not wholly in accordance within the Council's budget.

6. **DETAILS OF DECISION MAKERS**

- 6.1 Names and titles of those people who make key decisions either individually or collectively will be set out in Appendix 1 once they are determined.

7. **TIMETABLE OF KEY DECISIONS**

- 7.1 The timetable as expected at the time of preparation of the forward plan is set out in Appendix 2. Confirmation of the timing in respect of individual decisions can be obtained from the relevant contact officer closer to the time of the relevant meeting. Agenda papers are available for inspection at the Civic Centre 5 days before the relevant meeting.

PART ONE – CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S DEPARTMENT

A. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

A report is to be submitted to Cabinet that begins the main budget consultation process with the Council’s Scrutiny Committees, Political Groups, Hartlepool Trade Unions and Business representative and other groups. Cabinet will need to determine whom it wishes to consult with. Consultation will be undertaken by issuing the consultees with a copy of the Cabinet’s report and through a series of presentations with the various groups.

A report will be produced to commence the budget process for 2007/08. This process will continue over the coming months and will be concluded in February 2007 when the Cabinet determines the final Budget and Policy framework proposals it wishes to submit to full Council for consideration. The report to be submitted in October will outline the financial position facing the Council and proposed measures to balance the budget for 2007/08. The report will include details of the proposed Council Tax increase for 2007/08, budget pressures, priorities, efficiencies and savings. In addition, the report will consider capital investment needs and how these might be funded.

B. SCHEDULE OF KEY DECISIONS

DECISION REFERENCE: CE23/06 – PAY AND GRADING STRUCTURE

Nature of the decision

To approve a pay and grading structure for employees employed under NJC for Local Government Employees and associated changes in terms and conditions to achieve single status and satisfy equal pay requirements

Who will make the decision?

The Council will make the decision, following considerations by Cabinet.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made after negotiations with trade union representatives are completed between November 2006 and February 2007.

Who will be consulted and how?

- ? Negotiations will be held with representatives of the recognised trade unions.
- ? A working group of Members from Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee will be briefed and consulted during the negotiation period.
- ? A report to the Performance Management Portfolio Holder will set out the negotiation programme

Information to be considered by the decision makers

Members will be provided with information and guidance on:

- ? Compliance with equality legislation. The Council's pay and grading structure and other terms and conditions must satisfy equal pay legislation. An assessment will be made at the time of recommendation together with a programme for future equal pay audits.
- ? Options for the best negotiated settlement, which will secure endorsement by local trade union representatives and their national officers.
- ? Options for implementing without trade union support, should a negotiated settlement not be achievable.
- ? Financial implications of a revised pay and grading structure, associated protection arrangements and any other changes to terms and conditions.

How to make representation

Representation should be made to Joanne Machers, Chief Personnel Officer, Level 3, Civic Centre, Hartlepool TS24 8AY. Telephone: (01429) 523003.

Email: Joanne.machers@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from Joanne Machers, as above.

PART TWO – ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

A. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

None

B SCHEDULE OF KEY DECISIONS

DECISION REFERENCE: SS40/06 FAIR ACCESS TO CARE SERVICES

Nature of the decision

To inform Cabinet of the outcome of consultations on the possible raising of the threshold for access to statutory care services.

To decide whether to raise the threshold from 'moderate' to 'substantial', in the context of the current budget round.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet.

Timing of the decision

Decision will be made at Cabinet meeting on 22nd January 2007.

Who will be consulted and how?

All partner agencies, service users and carers, voluntary bodies, service providers, and neighbourhood forums are being consulted on the options.

Proposed means of consultation

The means of consultation being used include established planning groups and relevant forums, presentations to meetings, individual letters, focus groups, and the H&C Scrutiny Forum.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

The report will include information on the results of the consultation process, and an update on the impact of the potential change in terms of Council finances, public policy, personal risk, and diversity.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Alan Dobby, Assistant Director (Support Services), Adult & Community Services, Level 4, Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool. Telephone (01429) 523912, email: alan.dobby@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information available from Cath Adams, Adult & Community Services, Level 3, Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool. Telephone (01429) 284020, email: cath.adams@hartlepool.gov.uk

DECISION REFERENCE: SS43/06 COMMUNITIES FOR HEALTH

Nature of the decision

Seeking authority to join the Communities for Health programme, which will result in a grant of £100,000 to support the Council and its partners in meeting the challenges we face in improving health and reducing inequalities.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by the Portfolio Holder for Adult and Public Health.

Timing of the decision

Adult and Public Health Portfolio – 15 January 2007.

Who will be consulted and how?

Health and Care Strategy Group.

Proposed means of consultation

Via discussion and presentation on the key issues at regular meetings.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

Letter from the Department of Health requesting Hartlepool Borough Council to express an interest for Communities for Health Funding.

How to make representation

Representation should be to Margaret Hunt, Policy and Organisational Development Advisor, Adult and Community Services, Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY. Tel: (01429) 523928 email margaret.hunt@hartlepool.gov.uk.

Further information

Further information on this matter can be sought from Margaret Hunt at the above address.

PART THREE – CHILDREN’S SERVICES DEPARTMENT

A. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

NONE

B. SCHEDULE OF KEY DECISIONS

DECISION REFERENCE: ED29/06 CHILDREN'S TRUST

Nature of the decision

To determine arrangements for a Children's Trust from 1st April 2007. A Children's Trust is the mechanism by which local authorities and their partners can co-operate to improve children's wellbeing in relation to the five national outcomes: Be Healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Make a Positive Contribution and Achieve Economic Wellbeing.

Who will make the decision?

Cabinet will make the decision.

Timing of the decision

The decision will be made in January 2007. Consultation took place with the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership on 28th November 2006. The Children's Services Portfolio Holder is the Chair of the Partnership.

Who will be consulted and how?

Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership which includes a wide range of stakeholders in Hartlepool who work with children and young people will be consulted through formal meetings. The development of the Children's Trust will also form part of consultation during November 2006 on the review of the Hartlepool Partnership structures. Links will also be made to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum Partnerships Enquiry report. A preliminary report setting out background information on Children's Trust arrangements was submitted to Cabinet on 25th September 2006 and it was agreed that Hartlepool would develop a partnership model of trust for 1st April 2007, with the option of moving towards a "harder" model of trust at a later stage if required.

Information to be considered by the decision-makers

A report will be provided setting out the requirements of the statutory guidance on Children's Trusts, identifying options for delivering these within Hartlepool and providing possible models for governance arrangements.

How to make representations

Representations should be made to Adrienne Simcock, Director of Children's Services, Level 4, Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY. Telephone 01429 523734, e-mail adrienne.simcock@hartlepool.gov.uk.

Further information

Further information on this matter can be sought from Adrienne Simcock as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: ED30/06 BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE: STAGE 2 CONSULTATION

Nature of the decision

Key Decision. To decide the content of Stage 2 consultation on Building Schools for the Future, including models for possible change.

Who will make the decision?

Cabinet will make the decision.

Timing of the decision

The decision will be made on the 8th January 2007.

Who will be consulted and how?

- ? Parents and carers
- ? Children and young people
- ? Schools and Colleges
- ? Residents of Hartlepool
- ? Ward Councillors
- ? Strategic partners - these will include:
 - o The Learning and Skills Council
 - o The Church of England Diocese
 - o The Roman Catholic Diocese
 - o Hartlepool Primary Care Trust
 - o Cleveland Police
- ? The Voluntary and Community Sector
- ? Trade Unions and Professional Associations
- ? The Hartlepool Partnership
- ? The Lifelong Learning Partnership

This will be done through wide circulation of a consultation document and a series of meetings including public events.

Information to be considered by the decision-makers

Draft consultation document identifying possible models for change.

How to make representations

Representations should be made to Paul Briggs, Assistant Director of Children's Services, Level 4, Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY. Telephone 01429 523733, e-mail paul.briggs@hartlepool.gov.uk.

Further information

Further information on this matter can be sought from Paul Briggs as above.

PART FOUR - NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENT

A. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

NONE

B. SCHEDULE OF KEY DECISIONS

DECISION REFERENCE: NS100/06 MIDDLETON GRANGE SHOPPING CENTRE MULTI STOREY CAR PARK

Nature of the decision

To consider potential further phases of maintenance requirements of the Multi Storey Car Park and the possibility of future ownership and operation.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet with referral to Council in relation to funding and future arrangements.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in January 2007 .

Who will be consulted and how?

Full Council
Shopping Centre Owners

Information to be considered by the decision makers

At its meeting on 15 May 2006 Cabinet was advised of the Council's liability in respect of repairs at this property and the risk of substantial funding being required to remedy the situation. Urgent Phase 1 works amounting to £179,000 were agreed and subsequently approved by full Council. Cabinet now need to consider further works identified in the original report, together with a business case on the future of the multi-storey car park and its relationship with the shopping centre .

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Graham Frankland, Head of Procurement & Property Services, Neighbourhood Services Department, Leadbitter Buildings, Stockton Street, Hartlepool. Tel 01429 523211. E Mail graham.frankland@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Graham Frankland, as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: NS101/06 SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN II

Nature of the decision

To examine the complete SMP II document and consider whether to adopt the outcomes of the strategy document as they affect the Hartlepool coastline. Under Defra guidelines, SMP plans are updated and amended every five years.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in January 2007.

Who will be consulted and how?

Consultation will be extensive:

- All Members
- Public Town wide
- All Statutory Consultees
- All interested Organisations and parties

Information to be considered by the decision makers

Background will be provided in respect of the SMP II and how it would affect Hartlepool. The SMP II will be a large document that looks at the overall strategic management of the coastal processes over the next hundred years and covers the area from the river Tyne in the north to the Humber estuary in the south. There will be a need to focus in on those parts of the document that only affects the Hartlepool coastline.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Alastair Smith, Head of Technical Services, Neighbourhood Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool. Tel: 01429 523802. Email: alastair.smith@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Alan Coulson, Engineering Manager, Neighbourhood Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool. Tel: 01429 523242. Email: alan.coulson@hartlepool.gov.uk or Dave Thompson, Principal Engineer, Neighbourhood Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool. Tel: 01429 523245. Email: dave.thompson@hartlepool.gov.uk

DECISION REFERENCE: NS103/06 TEES VALLEY AND SOUTH DURHAM NHS LIFT.

Nature of the decision

To consider further the relevant land transactions on the Town Centre NHS LIFT site including methods of funding and the Council's involvement in this process.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet with possible referral to full Council if there are any budget and policy framework implications.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in January 2007.

Who will be consulted and how?

NHS LIFT Company and Hartlepool PCT.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

At its meeting on 14 August 2006 Cabinet considered outstanding land transactions and potential funding options. This report will look at the progress of the land transactions, including the Hoardings site on the corner of Park Road and Waldon Street, the arrangements for the former Barlows and St Benedicts Hostel Site and consider how any potential funding options could work. The latest timetable for the development will also be presented.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Graham Frankland, Head of Procurement & Property Services, Neighbourhood Services Department, Leadbitter Buildings, Stockton Street, Hartlepool. Tel 01429 523211. E Mail graham.frankland@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Graham Frankland, as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: NS104/06 SELECTIVE LICENSING OF PRIVATELY RENTED HOUSES

Nature of the decision

To consider the merits of introducing selective licensing for landlords and managers or privately rented houses.

Who will make the decision?

The Cabinet will make the decision.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in January 2007.

Who will be consulted and how?

- ? Residents in the North Central and West Central regeneration areas – individual questionnaires and drop-in sessions.
- ? Residents in appropriate areas of private housing outside those areas – individual questionnaires.
- ? Residents groups through presentations at their meetings plus completion of questionnaire on behalf of the group.
- ? Landlords – questionnaires.
- ? Agencies – NDC, Hartlepool Revival, Housing Hartlepool.
- ? HBC sections dealing with housing and anti-social behaviour.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

- ? The data concerning the criteria which must be met to designate selective licensing, i.e. to show that an area is in 'low demand' or likely to be in 'low demand', or that significant or persistent anti-social behaviour, requires action through licensing.
- ? The information collected from residents, landlords and officers on the extent of the problems and the suitability of selective licensing to tackle them.
- ? Formulate a guide as to which areas might be appropriate for licensing.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to John Smalley, Principal EHO (Housing), Neighbourhood Services Department, Level 3, Civic Centre, Hartlepool. Tel: 01429 523322. Email: john.smalley@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Joanne Burnley, Senior EHO (Housing), Neighbourhood Services Department, Level 3, Civic Centre, Hartlepool. Tel: 01429 523324. Email: joanne.burnley@hartlepool.gov.uk

DECISION REFERENCE: NS106/06 REVIEW OF CONCESSIONARY FARE PAYMENTS TO BUS OPERATORS FOR 2007-2008

Nature of the decision

To agree a revised payment structure for the provision of free concessionary travel for the over 60's and disabled for the 2007-2008 period with the bus operators.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet.

Timing of the decision

The decision will be made in February 2007.

Who will be consulted and how?

Consultation will take place with the bus operators and will be coordinated on a Tees Valley level in the first instance with a local agreement determined from this dialogue.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

Information from the bus operators on the number of passengers using free concessionary travel for the period from April 2006 will be used as a basis for negotiations.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Mike Blair, Transportation and Traffic Manager, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. Telephone: 01429 523252. Email: mike.blair@hartlepool.gov.uk.

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Mike Blair as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: NS107/06 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT (APR) OF THE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP).

Nature of the decision

To report the settlement figure for the 2006 APR return and agree the capital programme for 2007-2008 based on this settlement.

Who will make the decision?

The Culture, Leisure and Transportation Portfolio Holder will make the decision.

Timing of the decision

The decision will be made in February 2007.

Who will be consulted and how?

Consultation was carried out as part of the development of the second Local Transport Plan, approved by Cabinet in March 2006, to inform the implementation programme.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

The Portfolio Holder will be provided with the proposed capital expenditure figures for 2007-2008, based on the LTP settlement.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Mike Blair, Transportation and Traffic Manager, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. Telephone: 01429 523252. Email: mike.blair@hartlepool.gov.uk.

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Mike Blair as above.

PART FIVE - REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES **DEPARTMENT**

A. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

1. THE PLANS AND STRATEGIES WHICH TOGETHER COMPRISE THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North East is currently under preparation. A Public Examination was held between 7th March and 7th April, 2006. The Panel appointed by the Secretary of State to conduct the Examination in Public (EiP) has submitted its report, which is now published for information only. The report, which can be downloaded from the Government Office website (www.go-ne.gov.uk), has been printed and circulated to local authority officers and libraries by the Northeast Assembly, and was reported to Cabinet and the Hartlepool Partnership in October. Any proposed modifications which the Secretary of State wishes to make will subsequently be published, and there will then be a 8 week period of consultation on these changes from January 2007. It is anticipated that the RSS will be formally adopted in the spring of 2007.

The Hartlepool Local Plan review has now been completed, the new plan being adopted by Council on the 13th April 2006

With the enactment of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, a new development plan system has come into force. There are still two tiers of development plan, but in due course the Regional Spatial Strategy will replace the structure plan and development plan documents contained within a local development framework will replace the local plan. However, the new local plan will be saved for a period of at least three years after adoption.

The Local Development Framework will comprise a 'portfolio' of local development documents which will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the borough. Local development documents will comprise:

- a) Development plan documents – (part of the development plan) which must include
 - o A core strategy setting out the long term spatial vision for the area and the strategic policies and proposals to deliver the vision
 - o Site specific allocations and policies
 - o Generic development control policies relating to the vision and strategy set out in the core strategy, and
 - o Proposals Map
- b) Supplementary planning documents

In addition, the Local Development Framework will include Minerals and Waste Development Plan documents. Cabinet on the 12th April 2006 endorsed the principle of the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Committee taking responsibility for the initial preparation of Joint Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents on behalf of the Borough Council and the other four Tees Valley authorities. It is likely that the JSC will consider

the initial Issues and Options Report in March, 2007, with public consultation on these in May.

Work has started on a supplementary planning document (SPD) on planning obligations and the Mayor (Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder) and the Culture, Leisure and Transportation Portfolio Holder agreed on 26th July 2006 to the appointment of consultants to undertake Open Space and Sports Facilities Audits as part of the preparation of the evidence base for this SPD.

Initial preparatory work has also started on The Core Strategy DPD. Regular reports will be made to Cabinet on progress on this document.

The other documents within the local development framework which must be prepared but which do not form part of the development plan are:

- a) Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) setting out how and when the Council will consult on planning policies and planning applications;
- b) Local Development Scheme (LDS) setting out a rolling programme for the preparation of local development documents, and
- c) Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) assessing the implementation of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which current planning policies are being implemented.

a) The Statement of Community Involvement was adopted by the Council on the 26th October, 2006.

b) The first Local Development Scheme (LDS) was approved by Cabinet on 21st February 2005 and came into effect on 15th April 2005. The Scheme was updated and the revised LDS came into effect on 28th July 2006.

The Local Development Scheme will continue to be updated as necessary to take into account completion of documents, the need to revise timetables and the need to include new documents. The next update reflecting the adoption of the SCI, the revision to the timetable for the Planning Obligations SPD and the inclusion of a new SPD on Travel Plans will be reported to Cabinet in January 2007.

c) The first Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), as submitted by Government Office for the North East in December 2005, was endorsed by Cabinet in January 2006. Cabinet agreement to the second AMR relating to the period 2005-2006 will be sought in December 2006.

2. THE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Background

Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2000 places on principal Local Authorities a duty to prepare "Community Strategies" for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas, and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK.

Government guidance issued in December 2000 stated that Community Strategies should meet four objectives. They must:

- ? Allow local communities (based upon geography and/or interest to articulate their aspirations, needs and priorities;
- ? Co-ordinate the actions of the Council, and of the public, private, voluntary and community organisations that operate locally;
- ? Focus and shape existing and future activity of those organisations so that they effectively meet community needs and aspirations; and
- ? Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development both locally and more widely, with local goals and priorities relating, where appropriate, to regional, national and even global aims.

It also stated that a Community Strategy must have four key components:

- ? A long-term vision for the area focusing on the outcomes that are to be achieved;
- ? An action plan identifying shorter-term priorities and activities that will contribute to the achievement of long-term outcomes;
- ? A shared commitment to implement the action plan and proposals for doing so;
- ? Arrangements for monitoring the implementation plan, for periodically reviewing the Community Strategy and for reporting progress to local communities.

The Hartlepool Partnership, the town's Local Strategic Partnership, and the Council agreed a draft Community Strategy in April 2001 and adopted a final version in April 2002.

Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy Review 2006

The current Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy is part of the Community Strategy though published as a separate 70 page document. The Strategy sets out the boundaries of Hartlepool's disadvantaged neighbourhoods – and establishes a Neighbourhood Renewal Area. Neighbourhood Renewal is about narrowing the gap between conditions in the disadvantaged communities and the rest of the town. It is therefore important that the Neighbourhood Renewal Area is kept as tightly defined as possible and is based upon the statistical level of disadvantage.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy sets out the intention to prepare Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs) in the Borough's disadvantaged Neighbourhoods and provides a policy framework for this development. These NAPs are now in place and provide a more detailed policy framework for improvements in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods than was available in 2002.

Review 2006

Hartlepool's Community Strategy set out a timetable for review in five years. In line with this agreement, the Community Strategy Review 2006 was launched on 5th May 2006 and a new Community Strategy will be in place in April 2007.

The timetable and structure for the Community Strategy Review 2006 was agreed by the Regeneration & Liveability Portfolio Holder and the Hartlepool Partnership in April 2006:

	Timetable	Task
Phase 1	5 th May 06 – 31 st July	? Review current Strategy and prepare a new Strategy
Phase 2	Sept – 17 November 2006	? Members' Seminar
		? Cabinet 11 th September
		? Hartlepool Partnership 5 th September ? Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee 15 th September
Phase 3	Jan-March 2007	? Members' Seminar 12 th Sept
		? Hartlepool Partnership 19 th January
		? Cabinet 22 nd January
		? Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee 9 th February
		? Cabinet 19 th March
		? Hartlepool Partnership 23 rd March ? Council 19 th April

Phase 2

The 1st consultation draft of the revised Community Strategy, *Hartlepool's Ambition*, was published in September 2006. Consultation on the draft ran until 17th November. The revised strategy builds on the 2002 strategy and sets out a revised policy framework for Hartlepool. Key revisions include:

- ? The strategy now incorporates the previously separately published Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (2002) and the Sustainable Development Strategy (2001);
- ? The vision has been revised along with many of the Priority Aims and Objectives;
- ? Housing and Environment are established as Priority Aims in their own right and as a result the number of priority aims has increased from 7 to 8;
- ? Changes to the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy boundary, including the addition of the disadvantaged part of Throston ward as detailed in Appendix Map 1 attached.

The consultation draft sets out a number of specific questions:

1. Is the draft Strategy about right?
2. What would you like to see changed?
3. Does the Vision capture Hartlepool's ambition?
4. Do you agree with the Priority Aims and related Objectives?
5. Is there anything you would like to add to the Priority Aims?
6. How could consultation on the Community Strategy and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy be improved in future?

Phase 3

Phase 3 of the review process will start in January 2007 and lead to the adoption of the revised strategy, scheduled for April 2007.

3. LOCAL AGENDA 21 STRATEGY

Hartlepool Borough Council agreed its Local Sustainable Development Strategy (Local Agenda 21 Strategy) in January 2001. The Strategy aimed to:

“achieve improvements in the quality of our lives without causing irreversible damage to the environment or preventing our children from being able to enjoy the benefits we have today”.

In 2005 the Government published Securing the Future - UK Government sustainable development strategy, updating the 1999 Strategy. The new Strategy outlines a pivotal role for local authorities and their partners, through Local Strategic Partnerships, in delivering sustainable communities. The Strategy states that:

Making the vision of sustainable communities a reality at the local level means sending the right signals to local Government about the importance of sustainable development, supporting strong local leadership and developing the right skills and knowledge. Government will work with its partners to develop toolkits and other materials to support Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in developing and delivering Sustainable Community Strategies which help deliver sustainable development in the UK.

In response to this guidance, the revised Community Strategy incorporates a revised local Sustainable Development Strategy. As a result it is proposed to remove the Local Agenda 21 Strategy from the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

4. THE ANNUAL YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

We expect that the Annual Youth Justice Plan will be required to be submitted to the Youth Justice Board by 30th April 2007, however at the end of 2006 no guidance had been received to confirm this requirement. The Youth Offending Service has begun the preparation for a draft plan, on the basis of a final approved version being required by 30th April 2007. Therefore, a draft plan will be reported to Cabinet in late January 2007. Consultation with statutory and other partner organisations, as well as referral to Scrutiny will be carried out during February and March 2007. Cabinet will consider the finalised Plan, which will have incorporated consultation comments. Final approval of the Plan will be sought from Council during April 2007.

B SCHEDULE OF KEY DECISIONS

DECISION REFERENCE: RP89/05 DEVELOPMENT AT HARTLEPOOL COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION

Nature of the decision

Cabinet are requested to consider further details of the HCFE expansion and development plans, including the potential proposed land take at the Council owned, Albert Street Car Park, design issues, funding sources and project timetable. The report will also provide details of the most recent HCFE Property Strategy, due to be completed June 2006, which will shape the College's future development options.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in January 2007, or following the completion of the HCFE Property Strategy.

Who will be consulted and how?

Officers have been working closely with Hartlepool College of Further Education (HCFE) and other partner organisations including University of Teesside and the Learning and Skills Council.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

The report will expand on information presented in two previous reports to Cabinet on the 04/04/05 and 22/07/05, and also extracts from the Town Centre Strategy, in order to progress the development of the College scheme.

How to make representation

Representations can be made in writing to Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning Services, Regeneration and Planning Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. Telephone 01429 523401, email peter.scott@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Peter Scott as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: RP104/06 HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL PROGRAMME 2006-8

Nature of the decision

To confirm the scope of the housing market renewal programme 2006-8.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in January 2007 .

Who will be consulted and how?

Housing Market Renewal interventions currently being progressed in central Hartlepool have been developed through successive rounds of community consultations, and this engagement process remains ongoing.

Members will be aware of several previous reports relating to the various aspects of the programme as it has developed so far, including reports relating to the development of these schemes to date, planning applications relating to new housing proposals and the use of compulsory powers to progress redevelopment,

In summary, proposed housing clearance and redevelopment activity is currently being progressed in 3 blocks within west and north central Hartlepool where housing market failure was identified to have been most acute, ie in the Mildred/Slater Street area, the Mayfair/Gordon Street area (with NDC, Hartlepool Revival, and Yuill Homes), and in the Moore Street/Marston Gardens area (with Housing Hartlepool and George Wimpey). Ultimately this activity will see the clearance of around 600 primarily older terraced dwellings, and their replacement with a mix of around 330 modern family homes for sale, rent and shared ownership built to high standards of construction and environmental sustainability.

Additional consultation has recently been undertaken in other parts of central Hartlepool (the primary focus for housing market renewal interventions), including Belle Vue and other parts of North Central Hartlepool (predominantly Dyke House ward).

Information to be considered by the decision makers

Cabinet will consider future phases of housing market renewal work in view of funding resource availability, the outcome of recent community consultations activity, programme development issues, and financial and risk management considerations.

How to make representation

Representations can be made in writing to Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning Services, Regeneration and Planning Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. Telephone 01429 523401, email peter.scott@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Mark Dutton, Housing & Regeneration Coordinator, Regeneration and Planning Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. Tel 01429 284308, email mark.dutton@hartlepool.gov.uk.

DECISION REFERENCE: RP107/06 STRATEGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN HARTLEPOOL 2006 - 2008

Nature of the decision

To agree a strategy for the implementation of Anti-social Behaviour in Hartlepool to cover the period 2006- 2008.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in January 2007 .

Who will be consulted and how?

There was a half-day clinic of the Safer Hartlepool Executive on 3rd August 2006. Presentations were given to the North, Central and South Police and Community Safety meetings in September 2006. A draft of the document is currently available. A consultation event is taking place on 19th December with a view to a final document being in place by the end of January 2007.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

The strategy will set out how Anti-social Behaviour is to be tackled over the period until the current Community Safety Strategy is reviewed in 2008. The strategy will incorporate the policy that is under development on dealing with racially motivated incidents in Hartlepool.

How to make representation

Representations should be made in writing to Sally Forth, Anti-social Behaviour Co-ordinator, Regeneration and Planning Services Department, 65 Jutland Road, Hartlepool, TS25 1LP. Telephone 01429 296582, e-mail: sally.forth@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Sally Forth as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: RP109/06 LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Nature of the decision

To consider and endorse some revised governance arrangements for the Hartlepool Partnership, which is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for Hartlepool. These recommended arrangements have been developed on the basis of the proposals in the Hartlepool Local Area Agreement (LAA) and will provide a framework for the future development of theme partnerships such as the Children's Partnership.

Who will make the decision?

Cabinet will be requested to endorse the recommended arrangements. The arrangements will have been considered for endorsement by the LSP Board in December 2006.

Timing of the decision

The decision will be made in January 2007.

Who will be consulted and how?

The recommended arrangements have been developed on the basis of the proposals in the Hartlepool Local Area Agreement. The proposals have been developed and discussed with key members of the Theme Partnerships and the Local Strategic Partnership. The arrangements will be considered for approval by the LSP Board in December 2006.

Information to be considered by the decision-makers

A report will be provided setting out the recommendations for the development of the LSP structure and particularly the recommended structure of thematic partnerships. The recent advice from the Audit Commission and Government on partnership working and the outcome of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum Partnerships Enquiry will be taken into account in preparing the report. In addition the consequences of the Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' (October 2006) is also taken into account and an analysis of the proposals in so far as they relate to LSPs is included with the report.

How to make representations

Representations can be made in writing to Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning Services, Regeneration and Planning Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. Telephone 01429 523401, email peter.scott@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information on this matter can be sought from Peter Scott as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: RP112/06 BURBANK NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PLAN (NAP) UPDATE

Nature of the decision

To endorse the Burbank Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) Update.

Each of the Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs) across the town (Dyke House/Stranton/Grange, Burbank, Rift House/Burn Valley, Owton, Rossmere and North Hartlepool) are being updated, in the order in which they were developed. This is with the exception of the New Deal for Communities (NDC) NAP which is currently being developed by the NDC Staff Team.

The Burbank Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) is the second NAP to be updated following the completion of the Dyke House/Stranton/Grange NAP Update in November 2006.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by the Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in January 2007.

Who will be consulted and how?

The first draft of the Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) Update is currently being developed following the initial community consultation event held in October 2006. The community consultation event was crucial in identifying the community's priority concerns and the actions required to address the concerns. Household survey data (MORI 2004) and other baseline data and statistics have also provided an understanding of the conditions in the Burbank area and will also be included within the plan.

To complement this, comprehensive consultation will also be undertaken to ensure comments are received from key stakeholders and residents on the first draft of the NAP. Further consultation will include:-

- ✍ Delivering a newsletter to every household in the area;
- ✍ Visiting Residents Associations in the Burbank area;
- ✍ Visiting the Burbank Forum;
- ✍ Visiting Youth Groups operating throughout the area;
- ✍ Holding community drop-in sessions at various community buildings;
- ✍ Visiting and working with pupils from local schools;
- ✍ Liaising with Hartlepool Community Network and Housing Hartlepool;

- ✍ Meeting with key service providers including; Hartlepool Borough Council Officers, Housing Hartlepool, Voluntary / Community Groups, Ward Councillors and representatives from the Theme Partnerships; and
- ✍ Taking the first draft of the plan to the Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder, Central Neighbourhood Consultative Forum and the Hartlepool Partnership for comment.

The final draft will then be circulated for comment to ensure that all amendments have been incorporated and reflected accurately.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

A copy of the Burbank Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) Update along with a summary document highlighting the priority concerns, and the actions to address will be available for consideration by the Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder. The Burbank NAP Update will also be considered for endorsement by the Central Neighbourhood Consultative Forum and the Hartlepool Partnership.

The document will be structured in a way that is intended to give a clear picture of the strong themes running through the Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) back to the sister documents of the Community Strategy and the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

The introductory section will cover the background to Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs), a brief description of the Burbank neighbourhood, how the Burbank NAP has been developed, and a summary of the community's main concerns.

The following section will then comprise the seven theme areas:- Jobs and Economy; Lifelong Learning and Skills; Health and Care; Community Safety; Environment and Housing; Culture and Leisure and Strengthening Communities. Each theme will include key statistics, strengths and weaknesses, key resources and programmes delivered in the area / accessible to residents of the Burbank area, and the gaps in service delivery which need to be addressed.

Alongside this will be a table which identifies the community's priority concerns, the actions that are required to address the concerns, the organisations who need to be involved in delivering the actions, possible funding and resources, how success will be measured and how the actions will contribute to addressing strategic targets (such as the Local Area Agreement Indicators). The last section of the plan will be a Jargon Buster.

The objective of the Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) is to integrate policies at the local level to improve the way that services are provided.

How to make representation

Representations can be made in writing to Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning Services, Regeneration and Planning Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. Tel. 01429 523401, e-mail. peter.scott@hartlepool.gov.uk.

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Gemma Clough, Principal Regeneration Officer, Regeneration and Planning Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. Tel. 01429 523598, e-mail. gemma.clough@hartlepool.gov.uk.

DECISION REFERENCE: RP113/06 RIFT HOUSE/BURN VALLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PLAN (NAP) UPDATE

Nature of the decision

To endorse the Rift House/Burn Valley Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) Update.

Each of the Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs) across the town (Dyke House/Stranton/Grange, Burbank, Rift House/Burn Valley, Owton, Rossmere and North Hartlepool) are being updated, in the order in which they were developed. This is with the exception of the New Deal for Communities (NDC) NAP which is currently being developed by the NDC Staff Team.

The Rift House/Burn Valley Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) is the third NAP to be updated following the completion of the Dyke House/Stranton/Grange NAP Update in November 2006, and anticipated completion of the Burbank NAP Update in January 2007.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by the Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in March 2007.

Who will be consulted and how?

The first draft of the Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) Update will be developed following the initial community consultation event which is to be held in December 2006 / January 2007. The community consultation event will be crucial in identifying the community's priority concerns and the actions required to address the concerns. Household survey data (MORI 2004) and other baseline data and statistics will also be examined in order to provide an understanding of the conditions in the Rift House/Burn Valley area. These statistics will also be included within the plan.

To complement this, comprehensive consultation will also be undertaken to ensure comments are received from key stakeholders and residents on the first draft of the NAP. Further consultation will include:-

- ✍ Delivering a newsletter to every household in the area;
- ✍ Visiting Residents Associations in the Rift House/Burn Valley area;
- ✍ Visiting the Rift House/Burn Valley Forum;
- ✍ Visiting Youth Groups operating throughout the area;
- ✍ Holding community drop-in sessions at various community buildings;
- ✍ Visiting and working with pupils from local schools;
- ✍ Liaising with Hartlepool Community Network and Housing Hartlepool;

- ✍ Meeting with key service providers including; Hartlepool Borough Council Officers, Housing Hartlepool, Voluntary / Community Groups, Ward Councillors and representatives from the Theme Partnerships; and
- ✍ Taking the first draft of the plan to the Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder, Central Neighbourhood Consultative Forum and the Hartlepool Partnership for comment.

The final draft will then be circulated for comment to ensure that all amendments have been incorporated and reflected accurately.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

A copy of the Rift House/Burn Valley Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) Update along with a summary document highlighting the priority concerns, and the actions to address these will be available for consideration by the Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder. The Rift House/Burn Valley NAP Update will also be considered for endorsement by the Central Neighbourhood Consultative Forum and the Hartlepool Partnership.

The document will be structured in a way that is intended to give a clear picture of the strong themes running through the Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) back to the sister documents of the Community Strategy and the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

The introductory section will cover the background to Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs), a brief description of the Rift House/Burn Valley neighbourhood, how the Rift House/Burn Valley NAP has been developed, and a summary of the community's main concerns.

The following section will then comprise the seven theme areas:- Jobs and Economy; Lifelong Learning and Skills; Health and Care; Community Safety; Environment and Housing; Culture and Leisure and Strengthening Communities. Each theme will include key statistics, strengths and weaknesses, key resources and programmes delivered in the area / accessible to residents of the Rift House/Burn Valley area, and the gaps in service delivery which need to be addressed.

Alongside this will be a table which identifies the community's priority concerns, the actions that are required to address the concerns, the organisations who need to be involved in delivering the actions, possible funding and resources, how success will be measured and how the actions will contribute to addressing strategic targets (such as the Local Area Agreement Indicators). The last section of the plan will be a Jargon Buster.

The objective of the Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) is to integrate policies at the local level to improve the way that services are provided.

How to make representation

Representations can be made in writing to Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning Services, Regeneration and Planning Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. Tel. 01429 523401, e-mail. peter.scott@hartlepool.gov.uk.

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Gemma Clough, Principal Regeneration Officer, Regeneration and Planning Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. Tel. 01429 523598, e-mail. gemma.clough@hartlepool.gov.uk.

DECISION REFERENCE: RP114/06 NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND (NRF) AND NEIGHBOURHOOD ELEMENT PROGRAMME 2006/07

Nature of the decision.

To agree to grant delegated authority to the Head of Community Strategy to bring forward interventions agreed for 2007/08 into the current financial year to reduce a potential carry over of above the % level allowed by Government.

Who will make the decision?

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Liveability and Housing will make the decision.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in January 2007.

Who will be consulted and how?

It is a condition of receipt of the NRF grant that the NRF programme is approved by the Borough Council and the LSP.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

The majority of the NRF programme was agreed previously by the Portfolio Holder for 2006/07 and 2007/08.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Joanne Smithson, Head of Community Strategy, Regeneration and Planning Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. Telephone 01429 284161, e-mail: Joanne.smithson@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information on this matter may be sought from Chris Barlow, Principal Community Planning Officer, Regeneration and Planning Services Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. Telephone: 01429 523589 or e-mail: chris.barlow@hartlepool.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

DETAILS OF DECISION MAKERS

THE CABINET

Many decisions will be taken collectively by the Cabinet.

- ? The Mayor, Stuart Drummond
- ? Councillor Cath Hill
- ? Councillor Ray Waller
- ? Councillor Pamela Hargreaves
- ? Councillor Victor Tumilty
- ? Councillor Robbie Payne
- ? Councillor Peter Jackson

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Members of the Cabinet have individual decision making powers according to their identified responsibilities.

Regeneration, Liveability and Housing	-	The Mayor, Stuart Drummond
Without Portfolio	-	Councillor Cath Hill, Deputy Mayor
Adult and Public Health Portfolio	-	Councillor Ray Waller
Children's Services Portfolio	-	Councillor Pamela Hargreaves
Culture, Leisure and Transportation Portfolio	-	Councillor Victor Tumilty
Finance Portfolio	-	Councillor Robbie Payne
Performance Management Portfolio	-	Councillor Peter Jackson

APPENDIX 2

TIMETABLE OF KEY DECISIONS

Decisions are shown on the timetable at the earliest date at which they may be expected to be made.

1. DECISIONS EXPECTED TO BE MADE IN JANUARY 2007

1.1 8 JANUARY 2007

ED30/06 (Pg 12) BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE: STAGE 2 CONSULTATION CABINET

1.2 15 JANUARY 2007

SS43/06 (Pg 9) COMMUNITIES FOR HEALTH PORTFOLIO HOLDER

1.3 22 JANUARY 2007

SS40/06 (Pg 8) FAIR ACCESS TO CARE SERVICES CABINET

1.4 DATE NOT YET DETERMINED

ED29/06 (Pg 11)	CHILDREN'S TRUST	CABINET
NS100/06 (Pg 14)	MIDDLETON GRANGE SHOPPING CENTRE MULTI STOREY CAR PARK	CABINET
NS101/06 (Pg 15)	SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN II	CABINET
NS103/06 (Pg 16)	TEES VALLEY AND SOUTH DURHAM NHS LIFT	CABINET
NS104/06 (Pg 17)	SELECTIVE LICENSING OF PRIVATELY RENTED HOUSES	CABINET
RP89/05 (Pg 25)	DEVELOPMENT AT HARTLEPOOL COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION	CABINET
RP104/06 (Pg 26)	HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL PROGRAMME 2006-8	CABINET
RP107/06 (Pg 28)	STRATEGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR 2006 – 2008	CABINET
RP109/06 (Pg 29)	LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE REVIEW	CABINET
RP112/06 (Pg 30)	BURBANK NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PLAN (NAP) UPDATE	PORTFOLIO HOLDER
RP114/06 (Pg 36)	NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND (NRF) AND NEIGHBOURHOOD ELEMENT PROGRAMME 2006/07	PORTFOLIO HOLDER

2. DECISIONS EXPECTED TO BE MADE IN FEBRUARY 2007

2.1 DATE NOT YET DETERMINED

CE23/06 (Pg 6)	PAY AND GRADING STRUCTURE	CABINET
NS106/06 (Pg 18)	REVIEW OF CONCESSIONARY FARE PAYMENTS TO BUS OPERATORS FOR 2007-2008	CABINET
NS107/06 (Pg 19)	ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT (APR) OF THE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP)	PORTFOLIO HOLDER

3. DECISIONS EXPECTED TO BE MADE IN MARCH 2007

3.1 DATE NOT YET DETERMINED

RP113/06 (Pg 33) RIFT HOUSE/BURN VALLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PLAN
(NAP) UPDATE

PORTFOLIO
HOLDER

4. DECISIONS EXPECTED TO BE MADE IN APRIL 2007

4.1 DATE NOT YET DETERMINED

NONE

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

5 January 2007



Report of: Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

**Subject: FINAL REPORT – RAISING BOYS ACHIEVEMENT
– BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present the findings of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into 'Raising Boys Achievement – Bridging the Gender Gap'.

2. SETTING THE SCENE

2.1 Boys' achievement is one of the key factors effecting education performance and the gender-gap has been a high profile issue, both nationally and internationally, since the early 1990's.

2.2 The issue of boys achievement is complex and there is little consensus with professionals regarding its causes although some possibilities include:-

- (a) Girls' greater maturity and social awareness;
- (b) Some boys disregard for authority, academic work and formal achievement;
- (c) Girls' intuitive use of talk, reflection and collaboration to support learning;
- (d) Girls' apparent ability to rise above indifferent teaching;
- (e) Differential gender interactions between pupils and teachers in the classroom;
- (f) Differences in students' aspirations and their attitudes to work;
- (g) A 'macho' or 'laddish' peer culture among boys;
- (h) Boys' efforts to avoid the culture of failure; and
- (i) Modification of the examination system.

- 2.3 It is acknowledged that literacy skills play a key role in the gender gap, however, it is important to recognise that the pattern of boys' underachievement does not relate to all boys, or all subjects. Whilst girls do consistently outperform boys in all four stages in English the position in mathematics up to the age of 16 is more evenly matched. Nationally there are also signs that girls are beginning to fall behind in science by the age of 11.

3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 3.1 The overall aim of the Scrutiny investigation was to examine the educational achievement levels of boys in Hartlepool with a view to identifying possible ways of improving performance to bridge the gender gap.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 4.1 The Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Investigation were as outlined below:-

- (a) To gain an understanding of national policy issues relating to boys achievement levels and the bridging of the gender gap;
- (b) To gain an understanding of the national and regional picture relating to the gender gap in education achievement levels;
- (c) To gain an understanding of work undertaken nationally and regionally to identify factors affecting boys achievement and the strategies/models identified to address the gender gap;
- (d) To consider examples of good practice in other Local Authorities;
- (e) To examine boys achievement levels in Hartlepool and explore:
 - (i) The reasons for/factors linked to underachievement by boys and the gender gap;
 - (ii) The strategies in place to improve boys achievement levels and close the gender gap; and
 - (iii) The effectiveness of the strategies in place.
- (f) To compare strategies/practices implemented in other Local Authorities, and strategies/models identified nationally, with those in place in Hartlepool with a view to identifying possible areas for improvement.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

5.1 The membership of the Scrutiny Forum was as detailed below:-

Councillors Brash, S Cook, Fleet, Griffin, Laffey, London, Preece, Rogan, Shaw, MWaller and Young.

Co-opted Members: Elizabeth Barraclough, David Relton and Jesse Smith.

Resident Representatives: John Cambridge, Evelyn Leck and Michael Ward.

Education Advisor: Rob Lowe.

6. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

6.1 Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum met formally between 17 July 2006 to 11 December 2006 to discuss and receive evidence relating to this investigation. A detailed record of the issues raised during these meetings is available from the Council's Democratic Services.

6.2 A brief summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:-

- (a) Detailed Officer reports supplemented by verbal evidence;
- (b) A site visit to examine the good practice that exists within a neighbouring Local Authority in relation to 'Raising Boys' Achievement'. Visit undertaken to Sunderland City Council (4 October 2006);
- (c) Site visits to the following schools to illustrate the work already being undertaken in Hartlepool:
 - (i) West View Primary School – 15 September 2006;
 - (ii) Golden Flatts Primary School – 20 September 2006;
 - (iii) Kingsley Primary School – 22 September 2006;
 - (iv) Manor College of Technology – 26 September 2006;
 - (v) Dyke House Secondary School – 5 October 2006; and
 - (vi) Brierton Community School – 17 October 2006.
- (d) Evidence received from the National Education Breakthrough Programme;
- (e) Evidence received from the Blended Learning Pilot Programme (currently being implemented in Hartlepool);

- (f) Evidence received from a representative from North East of England National Strategies for School Improvement; and
- (g) The views of local residents, parents, children/young people, teachers, school governors and adults other than teachers working in schools.

FINDINGS

7. NATIONAL POLICY RELATING TO BOYS' ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS AND THE BRIDGING OF THE GENDER GAP

7.1 The Scrutiny Forum was informed of the Government's commitment to raising the performance of all underachieving pupils, both boys and girls and its efforts to address the gender issue through the work of the DfES and its partner organisations. Further details of the research undertaken and the strategies implemented are outlined in Section 10 of this report.

7.2 Based on the information shared with the Scrutiny Forum, Members also found that:-

- (a) The Government recognised the complexity of the factors contributing to the gender gap and the absence of a simple solution;
- (b) Appreciated the diverse nature of each school in terms of their history and culture; and
- (c) Recognised that whilst many of the problems experienced by schools were shared, there was a need for solutions to be based on the requirements of each individual school. In order to achieve this it was necessary for each school to focus on the evaluation of its results to find out when and where boys' underachievement occurs.

8. THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PICTURE RELATING TO THE GENDER GAP IN EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS

8.1 Member were pleased to find that statistics showed that the percentage difference between boys and girls achievement levels for 2006 confirmed that the gender gap in the North East region differed very little from the national position.

8.2 The Forum was also advised of evidence that in some instances:-

- (a) The gender gap in the North East region was in fact smaller, or equal, to the national figure, as shown in bold in **Tables 1, 3 and 4** overleaf; and that

- (b) Boys outperform girls, as shown in the shaded boxes in **Table 2**, and have consistently achieved similar results as girls in maths and science.

TABLE 1 – Percentage Gender Gap at Key Stage 1 (KS1) – Achieving Level 2 or above

	Reading %	Writing %	Maths %
England (LA maintained schools)	9	11	3
North East	9	11	3
Hartlepool	11	13	3

TABLE 2 – Percentage Gender Gap at Key Stage 2 (KS2) - Achieving Level 4 or above*

	English %	Reading %	Writing %	Maths %	Science %
England (LA maintained schools)	10	8	15	1	1
North East	11	8	20	1	2
Hartlepool	8	8	17	3	1

TABLE 3 – Percentage Gender Gap at Key Stage 3 (KS3) – Achieving Level 5 or above*

	English %	Reading %	Writing %	Maths %	Science %
England (LA maintained schools)	15	15	14	1	1
North East	15	16	15	2	1
Hartlepool	16	17	18	4	1

TABLE 4 - Percentage Gender Gap at Key Stage 4 (KS4) – GCSE or equivalent*

	5+A*-C %	5+A*-C (inc. English & Maths) %	5+A-G %	5+A*-G (inc. English & Maths) %
England (LA maintained schools)	9.7	8.2	4.3	4.7
North East	8.9	7.3	4.1	4.7
Hartlepool	7.4	11.2	3	3.3

* Figures provided by the DfES (North East of England National Strategies for School Improvement)

8.3 The Forum was particularly pleased to see the lower than national figures in relation to Key Stage 4 (GCSE or equivalent results), however, it was noted that there was an increase in the gender gap for 5+ A*- C grades in Hartlepool when English and maths figures were included. The Forum observed that this was a reverse of the national and regional trend and were of the view that this reflected the real area of concern for boys' achievement in Hartlepool, i.e. English and in particular writing.

8.4 The Forum also drew attention to the increase in the gender gap following the movement of boys from primary school (Key Stage 2 – Table 3) to secondary school (Key Stage 3 – Table 4). It was noted that this increase occurred nationally, regionally and more specifically in Hartlepool and tended to be larger in English, maths and writing. This added further weight to the point made in paragraph 8.3 and highlighted concerns regarding the effectiveness of transitional arrangements across the region and nationally.

9. WORK UNDERTAKEN TO IDENTIFY FACTORS AFFECTING BOYS' ACHIEVEMENT

9.1 The Forum was informed that in identifying factors affecting boys' achievements a number of pieces of research had been undertaken resulting in the production of the following papers:-

- (a) 'Yes He Can – Schools Where Boys Write Well'; and
- (b) 'Boys' Achievement in Secondary Schools'.

- 9.2 The main findings of these reports were that whilst the issue of boys' underachievement was complex schools that had been successful in raising boys' attainment and writing skills all exhibited the following characteristics:-
- (a) A positive learning culture that stimulates high standards, engages boys' interests and insists on good behaviour;
 - (b) Good teaching and learning;
 - (c) Good classroom management;
 - (d) Track and support boys' performance; and
 - (e) Have strategies focused on literacy which provides intensive support on reading, writing and literacy across the curriculum.
- 9.3 Members of the Forum were encouraged to find that many of the characteristics identified were already present in schools in Hartlepool and felt that this was a contributory factor to Hartlepool's success in dealing with the issue. Further details of the Forum's observations in terms of work being undertaken in the schools visited in Hartlepool as part of the investigation are outlined in Section 12 of this report.
- 9.4 The Forum was also advised that the Government had initiated a three year pilot project (The Raising Boys' Achievement Project), the aim of which was to 'examine strategies employed by specific schools which appeared to be effective in raising boys' achievements'. The results of the project showed that:-
- (a) Boys respond well to an integrated approach to literacy, where the emphasis is less on the teaching aspects of learning to read and write, and more on the process of becoming a reader and a writer. Drama provides a medium through which this approach can be effectively delivered;
 - (b) Target setting and mentoring have a strong potential to raise achievement for boys;
 - (c) Single sex classes can contribute to raising achievement as they enable a classroom environment to be created which allows both sexes to learn with less distraction and disruption; and
 - (d) Socio-cultural approaches underpin other strategies through challenging images of masculinity.
- 9.5 Regarding the work of the Raising Boys' Achievement Project, the Forum was particularly interested in the elements of its recommendations relating to the factors necessary for the effective implementation of strategies to deal with raising boys' achievement. These included:-

- (a) The importance of leadership and support;
- (b) A shared commitment by all staff involved; and
- (c) The creation of school ethos where staff and pupils feel valued and involved, have clear boundaries and where there is a focus on the individual pupil.

9.6 Members of the Forum acknowledged the importance of these factors and gave consideration to how they related to the work currently being undertaken in Hartlepool schools. The Forum commented that on the basis of the visits undertaken as part its investigation it appeared that schools also recognised the importance of these strategies and that activities were being undertaken to achieve them. It was, however, noted that only a selection of schools had been visited and at the time of the investigation a full analysis of activities being undertaken was not available, although work was now underway on obtaining this.

10. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL STRATEGIES/MODELS IDENTIFIED AND IMPLEMENTED TO ADDRESS THE GENDER GAP

National Strategies and Models

10.1 It was brought to the Forum's attention that the Government had in recognition of the importance of the gender gap issue developed and implemented a range of strategies. These included:-

- (a) The National Literacy Strategy;
- (b) The Key Stage 3 National Strategy;
- (c) Materials and Guidance;
- (d) The Raising Boys' Achievement Project;
- (e) The Blended Learning Project;
- (f) The National Reading Campaign;
- (g) Playing for Success;
- (h) The Dads and Sons Campaign;
- (i) LEA Education Development Plans;
- (j) The Breakthrough Collaborative Project (i.e. The National Education Breakthrough Programme referred to in section 9 of this report.);
- (k) Sponsoring work with Beacon Schools; and

(l) The Gender Achievement website.

10.2 Each of these strategies could be grouped into four different areas:-

- (a) Pedagogic - Classroom-based approaches centred around teaching and learning;
- (b) Individual - Essentially a focus on target-setting and monitoring;
- (c) Organisational - Ways of organising learning at the whole school level; and
- (d) Socio-cultural - Approaches which attempt to create an environment for learning where key boys and girls feel able to work with, rather than against the aims and aspirations of schools.

Strategies and Models Implemented Regionally

10.3 Following an examination of the national strategies available, the Forum was encouraged to see that many were already being 'rolled out' on a regional basis. In looking more closely at some of these strategies the Forum received presentations on the work being undertaken through the National Education Breakthrough Programme for Raising Boys' Achievements in Secondary Schools and the Blended Learning Project.

10.4 In relation to the National Breakthrough Project the Forum was advised that sixty six schools across the country, including a number from the North East region, were taking part. One Council which had been taking part in the programme was Sunderland City Council and that in order to observe its operation first hand the Forum undertook a visit as part of its investigation. Details of the visit are outlined in Section 11 of the report.

10.5 The Forum was also informed of the work being undertaken as part of the Blended Learning Project, the aim of which was to raise boys' achievements by changing organisational systems of learning and teaching in order to maximise the potential of students. A pilot of this project was already being implemented in Hartlepool and details of this are outlined in section 12 of this report.

11. GOOD PRACTICE IN OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES

11.1 As part of the Forum's remit, consideration was also given to comparing a neighbouring Local Authority's activities in addressing the issue of raising boys' achievement and reducing the gender gap.

11.2 Sunderland City Council had over recent years been involved with National Education Breakthrough Programme for Raising Boys' Achievements in Secondary Schools, the key principles of which were:-

- (a) Use of strong leadership and the creation of an environment for change;
 - (b) Focus on teaching and learning methods;
 - (c) Use of mentoring and targeted intervention;
 - (d) Create capacity; and
 - (e) Use data to drive improvement.
- 11.3 These key principles mirrored a number of the findings of the Raising Boys' Achievement Project.
- 11.4 Members received evidence from the Boys' Underachievement Project Manager, and School Improvement Officer, for Sunderland City Council. During the course of the presentation it was highlighted to Members that some of the schools participating in the programme had achieved a 17% improvement in GCSE results. Members were also advised that involvement in the programme had for Sunderland City Council resulted in a 4% reduction in the gender gap (to 8.15%) between 2005 and 2006.
- 11.5 During the course of the visit those Members of the Forum present were clearly impressed with operation of the programme and in particular the use of learning conversations as a way of reaching boys. An additional issue raised during the Forum's visit related to the sharing of information. It became evident during the course of discussions that there was a considerable amount of expertise available within the North East region in relation to raising boys' achievements. Whilst it appeared that there were informal mechanisms in place for the sharing of this information Members suggested that the creation of a formal body should be explored.
- 11.6 Members at a later meeting of the Forum received a detailed presentation on the work of the programme from the Programme Director of the Education Breakthrough Programme and were interested to hear that a secondary school in Hartlepool (Brierton Secondary School) was already participating in the first stages of the programme. Members welcomed the involvement of Hartlepool schools in the programme and it was suggested that the situation at Brierton Secondary School should be monitored with a view to the involvement of more Hartlepool schools in the programme should it prove to be effective.
- 11.7 In considering the possible extension of involvement in the National Education Breakthrough Programme for Raising Boys' Achievements the Forum acknowledged the possible financial implications. During discussions with programme Director a possible option for the formation of a funding cluster approach came to light and the Forum was of the view that this should be explored further.

12. BOYS ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS IN HARTLEPOOL

- 12.1 Following detailed consideration of the national and regional position in relation to raising boys' achievements, and the gender gap, the Forum went on to look at the position in Hartlepool.
- 12.2 The Forum was informed that locally the issue of raising boys' achievements was one of the key priorities within the Council's Children and Young Persons Plan. Members were encouraged to note that Hartlepool had a history of dealing well with the gender gap issue and had consistently performed close to the national figure.
- 12.3 The Forum received information to illustrate this, as outlined in **Tables 5 to 8** below, with instances where boys outperform girls shown in the shaded boxes:-

**TABLE 5 – Percentage Gender Gap In Hartlepool at Key Stage 1 (KS1)
- Achieving Level 2 or above***

Year	Reading %	Writing %	Maths %
2003	11.5	13.1	1.7
2004	11.6	12.5	4.5
2005	9.4	12.5	1.8
National Figure 2005	8	11	2
2006	11	13	3

**TABLE 6 – Percentage Gender Gap In Hartlepool at Key Stage 2 (KS2)
- Achieving Level 4 or above***

Year	English %	Maths %	Science %
2003	13.1	0.2	1
2004	6.9	1/9	0.1
2005	8.8	0.2	1.5
National Figure 2005	10	1	1
2006	8	3	1

**TABLE 7 – Percentage Gender Gap In Hartlepool at Key Stage 3 (KS3)
- Achieving Level 5 or above***

Year	English %	Maths %	Science %
2003	13.1	4.3	4.5
2004	15.7	3.1	2.7
2005	14.9	2.7	4
National Figure 2005	13	1	1
2006	16	4	1

**TABLE 8 – Percentage Gender Gap In Hartlepool at Key Stage 4 (KS4)
- GCSE or equivalent***

Year	5+A*- C %	5+A*-C (inc. English & Maths) %	5+ A-G %	5+ A* - G (inc. English & Maths) %
2003	9.5	8.3	3.2	2.1
2004	4	6.8	2.1	3.8
2005	8.3	7.5	3.7	4.4
National Figure 2005	11	9	5	5
2006	7.4	11.2	3	3.3

12.4 From the statistical information provided for the last three years the Forum observed that:

- (a) The highest gender gap percentage was consistently in the area of English and in particular writing. This pattern was mirrored nationally and was recognised by Members as a possible area for the concentration of efforts in Hartlepool; and
- (b) Where boys had outperformed girls it always tended to be in the areas of maths and science.

12.5 From the statistical information provided for 2006 the Forum also learned that:-

- (a) In terms of GCSE (or equivalent) results Hartlepool was now within the top ten percent of all local authorities with 58.1% of all pupils achieving at least 5+ A*-C. This exceeded the 55% national target set for 2006 and was only 3.9% off the target already set for 2007;

- (b) When broken down into boys and girls achievements 2006 results showed a 7.4% gender gap, in favour of girls. This was an improvement on the 8.3% figure for 2005 and was only 2.2% off the national figure for 2006 of 9.6%; and
- (c) The importance of literacy in terms of boys achievements could be seen when 2006 results were looked at more closely in terms of the number of 5+ A*-C GCSE (or equivalent) including English and mathematics. Results showed that the gender gap increased to 11.2% in 2006 compared to the national figure of 8.7% and in terms of how this compared to previous years it represented an increase in the gender gap from 7% in 2003, 7.3% in 2004 and 7% in 2005.

12.6 On a regional basis, the Forum considered and compared Hartlepool's results with those of the neighbouring Tees Valley Authorities, as outlined in **Tables 9 and 10** below .

12.7 The Forum noted from the information provided that Hartlepool performed well in comparison to its Tees Valley neighbours in relation to Key stage 4 and the number of A*-C grades achieved and was in fact under the national figure. An examination of the figures for A*-C grades including English and maths, however, resulted in the Forum reiterated its view regarding the major contributory factor which English and maths grades make to boys achievement levels and the need for the focusing of strategies in Hartlepool towards this in the future.

TABLE 9 - Achievement Gap between Boys and Girls - 2006 - Key Stage 4 (A*-C Grades)

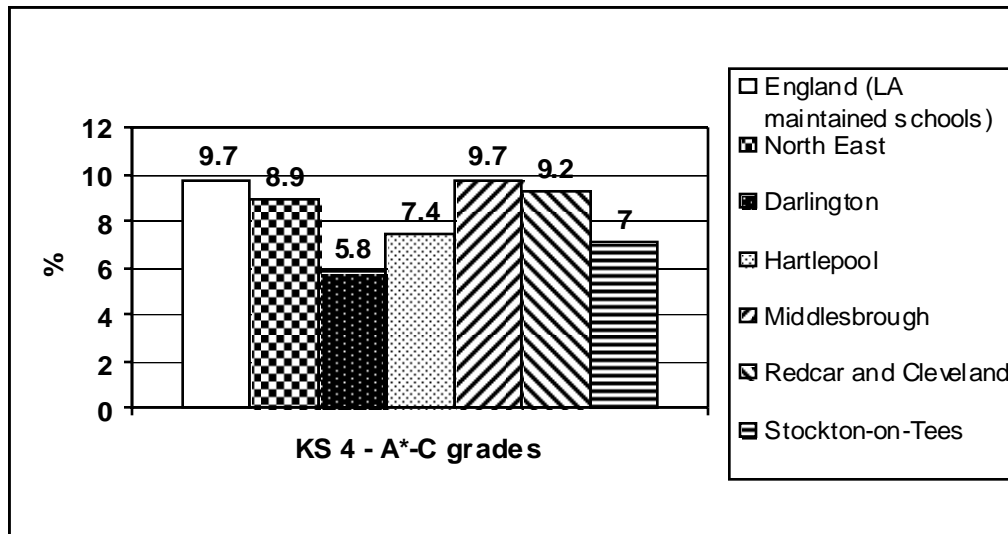
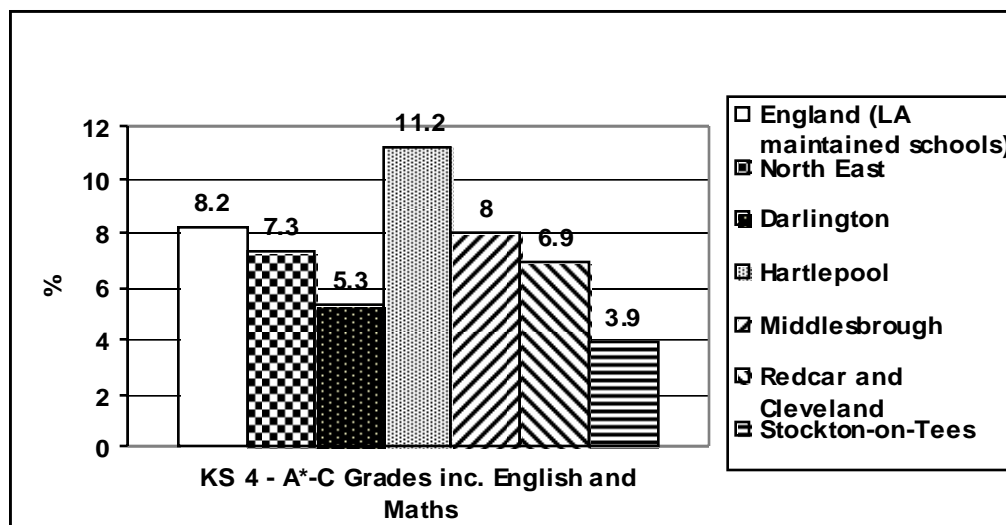


TABLE 10 - Achievement Gap between Boys and Girls - 2006 - Key Stage 4 (A*-C Grades – Including English and Maths)

The Reasons for Factors Linked to Underachievement by Boys and the Gender Gap

12.8 In examining the statistical information provided Members of the Forum acknowledged that Hartlepool started with a very low baseline in terms of boys' abilities, i.e. when they start school at the foundation stage, and were of the view that Hartlepool's achievement in relation to the size of its gender gap was even more commendable.

12.9 During the course of its investigation the Forum undertook a series of visits to schools in Hartlepool. During the course of these visits the Forum obtained a 'snapshot' of each school's view on the gender gap issue and the types of activities being undertaken to address it. From these visits it was apparent to Members that many of the reasons for boys' underachievement in Hartlepool mirror those identified nationally, as outlined in paragraph 2.2.

The Strategies in place to Improve Boys' Achievement Levels and Close the Gender Gap and their Effectiveness

12.10 During the course of the investigation and in particular the visits to schools the Forum noted that many of the views expressed and activities undertaken were mirrored across all the schools. These included:-

- (a) The absence of a single solution to the gender gap issue and the need for a combination of initiatives and options to be available for schools;
- (b) The importance of:-
 - (i) Good transitional arrangements;

- (ii) Mentoring;
 - (iii) Knowing your students and identifying what types of learners they are;
 - (iv) Social skills and interaction;
 - (v) Creating a positive ethos in the school, in terms of manner and speech with the aim of making learning 'cool';
 - (vi) Sharing information with other schools in relation to each child and best practice for dealing with the gender gap;
 - (vi) Good teachers and having teaching assistants in class;
 - (vii) Continuous monitoring of staff and pupil performance;
 - (ix) Making boys to feel secure in their learning environment;
 - (x) Curriculum development were possible and the problems which the rigidity of the curriculum in the first three years of secondary school causes in terms of keeping boys engaged;
 - (xi) Effective transitional arrangements between primary and secondary schools; and
 - (xi) Personal and subject profiles so that everyone knows what is expected of them and what is needed to move onto the next level.
- (c) The need:-
- (i) To teach every child as an individual and address their learning needs;
 - (ii) For teachers to adapt teaching styles;
 - (iii) Gear the curriculum to each child's needs/curriculum enrichment; and
 - (iv) For parental involvement at all levels.

12.11 It was, however, apparent to Members that views differed on issues such as the importance of male teachers in their position as role models for boys and the effectiveness of single sex classes. Whilst there had been some success with single sex classes some there were concerns regarding then impact of separation on children's social skills and where it is used it tended to be in single subjects, i.e. English. It was also noted that the use of single sex classes tended to raise the performance of both genders and as such did not tend to reduce the gender gap.

12.12 In considering the issues/areas of importance identified through the schools visits the Forum welcomed the views expressed regarding the need for good teachers and teaching assistants in schools if boys and indeed all pupils were to succeed. Particular support was also expressed for the:-

- (a) The provision of information sharing;
- (b) The need to teach every child as an individual and address their learning needs;
- (c) Provision of effective transition arrangements for children between Key Stages 2 and 3 and the establishment of a consistent approach across schools;
- (d) The need for teachers to adapt teaching styles;
- (e) The need to make learning 'cool' for boys;
- (f) The importance of portraying a good school image in the press and the role the Local Authority can play in assisting in this;
- (g) The need to gear the curriculum to each child's needs/curriculum enrichment; and
- (h) The need for parental involvement at all levels.

12.13 The Forum acknowledged that a considerable amount of work was being undertaken, however, it was noted that an overall view of what was being done across all schools in the town was not yet available. The Forum noted that this situation was in the process of being addressed through the appointment of the Boys' Achievement Co-ordinator, on a part time basis, the remit of whose post was to be to focus on addressing the issue of underachieving boys from Key Stage 2 to 3 and beyond. This was to include an audit of current practice in schools across Hartlepool and the Forum hoped that its work could feed into the future activities of this post.

12.14 The Forum also learned that work was also just beginning to be undertaken by:-

- (a) A small number of enquiry groups across Hartlepool's primary schools to look at the issue of boy's achievement which it was felt might benefit from elected Member involvement; and
- (b) The Blended Learning Project (a national strategy). As a project currently being piloted across a small number of schools in Hartlepool the Forum was impressed by its operation so far. The Forum expressed its support for the 'rolling out' of the project across all schools in Hartlepool the Forum and was of the view that serious

consideration needed to be given to how this was to be resources in terms of officer support.

- 12.15 In relation to the wider issue of the activities being undertaken by the Children's Services Department, the Forum observed that details of each activity and timescale were outlined in the Performance and Achievement Division's Operational Plan 06/07. The Forum noted that whilst it was clear from the Operational Plan that a considerable amount of work was being undertaken to address the gender gap issue funding for this area of work, as with others, was tight. Work on this issue had in the past been undertaken alongside officers other duties and the new Boys Achievement Co-ordinator post was the first to be created specifically to deal with the issue.

13. COMPARISON OF STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES – HARTLEPOOL'S APPROACH

- 13.1 In comparing strategies and practices implemented by other local authorities the Forum was as previously indicated impressed by the work being undertaken by Sunderland City Council. Members were, however, aware that the Authority had in place specifically appointed officers to undertake this work. When compared to other Tees Valley Authorities it became apparent to the Forum that as in Hartlepool the activities undertaken to address the boys' achievement issue were undertaken by officers as part of their other day to day duties. The Forum felt that this would continue to be the most appropriate course of action and welcomed the flexibility which the appointment of the new Boys Achievement Co-ordinator on a fixed term basis would provide in the future.
- 13.2 In terms of possible areas for improvement the Forum was of the view that the practices and strategies currently being implemented in Hartlepool continued to be very effective. This was reflected in the level gender gap in the town. There were, however, some areas where further work could be explored and these are outlined in Section 14 below.

14. CONCLUSIONS

- 14.1 The Forum concluded:-
- (a) That Hartlepool continued to do well in addressing the boys' underachievement issue in its schools with the gender gap being very close to national figures. However, the gap in Hartlepool related to boys writing rather than reading and as such future strategies should be focused upon boys literacy and in particular writing;
 - (b) That the Authority should be commended on the appointment of a dedicated Raising Boys' Achievement Co-ordinator and that the findings of this scrutiny investigation would clearly feed into the development of future practices.

- (c) That it was evident that there was no 'one fits all' strategy that would address the boys' underachievement issue and where strategies were successful in Hartlepool, it was as a result of individual schools implementing innovative initiatives and practices tailored to their own cultural environments;
- (d) That in recognition of the differing ways in which individuals learn the curriculum should be tailored where possible, and vocational courses utilised, to meet the needs of individual boys;
- (e) That there was a need to encourage schools in Hartlepool to share best practice and whilst informal arrangements were in place consideration needed to be given to the creation of a formal network and perhaps Hartlepool's involvement in a regional network;
- (f) That transition arrangements for pupils moving between primary and secondary schools appeared on a whole to be working effectively in Hartlepool although it was evident that further improvements could be made;
- (g) That in view of the effectiveness of the National Education Breakthrough Programme for Raising Boys' Achievements in helping other local authorities to raise boys' achievement levels, there was a need to explore the extension of schools involvement in the programme within Hartlepool;
- (h) That it was evident that a 'cluster' funding approach to reduce the costs of involvement in the National Education Breakthrough Programme would be beneficial;
- (i) That to ensure the effectiveness of the 'rolling out' of the Blended Learning Project it was crucial for adequate staffing arrangements to be in place;
- (j) That whilst the Primary School Enquiry Groups had recently been established there may be a benefit for Elected Member involvement in them together with the creation of similar groups for Secondary Schools;
- (k) That a large factor in boys reaching their true potential was the provision of good all round support and this was particularly applicable to parents; and
- (l) That whilst Departmental Action Plans were in place to address the underachievement of boys' there was clearly a need for the establishment of a separate departmental policy/strategy.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 The Children's Services Scrutiny Forum has taken evidence from a wide range of sources to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of recommendations. The Forum's key recommendations to Cabinet are as outlined below :-
- (a) That the Authority focuses its future strategies in relation to the raising of boys' achievement levels on boys' literacy and writing;
 - (b) That in addition to the Authority's Children's Services Departmental Action Plans, the creation of a policy, that includes a clear timetable and future aims and objectives, in relation to the raising of boys' achievement levels in Hartlepool be further explored;
 - (c) That a review be undertaken to ensure that an appropriate staffing structure is in place for the effective 'rolling out' of the Blended Learning Project across all Hartlepool schools;
 - (d) That a review be undertaken to ascertain what, if anything can be done to strengthen the authorities transfer and transition arrangements, including the possible extension of use of the Transfer and Transition Self Evaluation Toolkit;
 - (e) That a formal process be developed for the sharing of information and best practice to assist in the raising of boys' achievement levels across all schools in Hartlepool;
 - (f) That the feasibility of establishing a Regional Network with Local Authorities to share best practice to relation to addressing the boys' underachievement issue be explored;
 - (g) That ways of encouraging greater parental involvement in the education of boys' within schools across Hartlepool be explored;
 - (h) The Authority encourages schools with low levels of boys' achievement to become involved in the National Breakthrough Programme;
 - (i) That the Authority explores with National Breakthrough Programme the possibility of adopting a 'cluster' funding approach, to assist in the reduction of costs associated with participation in the programme; and
 - (j) That Elected Member involvement in the Primary School Enquiry Groups together with the creation of Secondary School Enquiry Groups be further explored.

16. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 16.1 The Scrutiny Forum is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of our investigation. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular of the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below named:-

Hartlepool Borough Council:

John Collings, Assistant Director of Children's Services

Paul Wilkinson, Senior Advisor

Ruth Chalkley, Secondary AFL and Literacy Co-ordinator

Geraldine Chapman – KS3 Strategy Co-ordinator

Anne Pringleton (Blended Learning Project)

Gillian Richmond, Gender Achievement Co-ordinator

Schools:

Andy Brown (West View Primary School)

Kate Callan (Golden Flatts Primary School)

D.Dobson, M.Mailen, A.Darby and K.Hill (Kingsley Primary School)

Alan White (Manor College of Technology)

Bill Jordan (Dyke House Secondary School)

Chris Simmons, Governor, West View Primary School

External Representatives:

Janet Potts, Programme Director, the Education Breakthrough Programme

Mike Viner, Senior Regional Director, North East of England National Strategies for School Improvement, DfES

Dave Howcroft, Boys' Underachievement Project Manager, Sunderland City Council

Chris Campbell, School Improvement Officer, Sunderland City Council

**COUNCILLOR SHAW
CHAIR OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

December 2006

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were consulted or referred to in the preparation of this report:-

- (a) DfES – Research Report No 636 – Raising Boys' Achievement (Raising Boys' Achievement Project);
- (b) Department of Health Report – Using the National Healthy Schools Standard to Raise Boys' Achievements;
- (c) CYPP;
- (d) Raising Boys' Achievement - DfES – Research Report by the Raising Boys' Achievement Project - No 636;
- (e) Raising Attainment at Key Stage Two – Medway Council – Education and Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Feb 2005); and
- (f) Addressing the Educational Needs of Boys (Submitted to Department of Education, Science and Training - 2004).

In addition, the following websites have been used for background information in the preparation of this report:-

- (a) Raising Boys' Achievement Project: www-rba.educam.ac.uk
- (b) The DfES Standards Site: www.standards.defs.gov.uk
- (c) The Basic Skills Agency: www.basic-skills.co.uk
- (d) Case studies: www.teachernet.gov.uk
- (e) Ofsted: www.ofsted.gov.uk

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

5 January 2007



Report of: Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

Subject: SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE –
PROGRESS REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee of the progress made to date of this Committee, since my last progress report to this Committee on 20 October 2006.

2. PROGRESS ON THE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2006/07

- 2.1 I am pleased to report that following consultation with the Scrutiny Chairs and the Scrutiny Support Team, substantial efforts are continued by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to ensure the work programme for 2006/07 is delivered to the prescribed timescales.

3. GENERAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ISSUES

- 3.1 Scrutiny Members Development Programme for 2006/07 – As Members are aware, the last of our Scrutiny Members training sessions was held on the evening of 12 December 2006, whereby Members polished their scrutiny questioning techniques.
- 3.2 Reflecting back on the four training sessions which were all very well attended, I feel this year's programme provided by INLOGOV has been very successful. Although it has been quite evident throughout the running of the programme that there is a need to balance the academic view point against that of the practitioners.
- 3.3 A final training session is to be for Officers on 25 January 2007 by way of an introductory session in relation to the role of the Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Function together with what would be expected of an Officer should they be subject to scrutiny involvement in the near future – I'm sure Officers will find this session most informative!

- 3.4 Informal Meeting of the Scrutiny Chairs – I am pleased to report that a further informal meeting of the Scrutiny Chairs was held on 16 November 2006. To ensure openness and transparency is maintained, I am pleased to inform Members that the following issues were discussed during the meeting:-
- (a) CPA 2006 – Observations at various meetings of the Authority’s Overview and Scrutiny Committees / Interviews with Scrutiny Chairs and randomly selected Scrutiny Members;
 - (b) Scrutiny Training and Development Programme for 2006/07 with particular reference to an additional budget scrutiny training session being held on 7 December 2006;
 - (c) Attendance at NEREO Joint Members/Officers Scrutiny Network by Scrutiny Chairs;
 - (d) CfPS Scrutiny Champion’s Network – October 2006 Bulletin / Scrutiny Expert Advice (Information Item);
 - (e) The discontinuation of the Authority’s LGIU Membership / Extension to PublicNet Free Trial; and
 - (f) The extended role for Scrutiny via the Police and Justice Act 2006 (guidance to be issued Summer 2007 with implementation date of early 2008):-
 - (i) Community Calls for Action – facility for the public to refer community safety concerns for investigation by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should it not of been dealt with appropriately by partners; and
 - (j) The holding of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to account.
- 3.5 Final Reports Recently Considered / Awaiting Consideration – At the time of writing this report the following Final Reports/Formal Responses were either awaiting consideration or had already been considered by the Authority’s Cabinet or other Committees:
- (a) Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee’s Final Report ‘Closure of Rossmere Learner Pool Scrutiny Referral - (Considered by Council on 14 December 2006).
- 3.6 Joint Cabinet/Scrutiny Event held on 28 November 2006 – You will recall that a further joint event was held successfully on 28 November 2006, issues discussed are as outlined overleaf:-
- (a) Feedback on the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee’s involvement in the budget setting process to date;
 - (b) The discontinuation of the Authority’s LGIU Membership / Extension to PublicNet Free Trial (with agreement being given to hold an informal meeting

between the Scrutiny Chairs, the Elected Mayor and the Portfolio Holder for Performance Management to determine what information was available to Elected Members and how Members were able to access it);

- (c) Resourcing of the Scrutiny Function - £50k proposal for a dedicated budget to support the function during the 2007/08 financial year; and
- (d) Timescale for the consideration of Scrutiny Final Reports by Cabinet / Feedback Mechanism.

3.7 Members will have received under separate cover a brief note that reflects the discussion held during this event. As agreed the next meeting is to be held in March 2007 and Members will be notified in due course of the proposed date.

3.6 Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee Single Status Working Group Meeting of 21 November 2006 – Members of the Single Status Working Group met on 21 November 2006 whereby consideration was given to the Authority's progress in relation to Job Evaluation. In light of the discussions during that meeting it was agreed that the next meeting of the Working Group scheduled for 18 December 2006 be cancelled and re-convened in the New Year.

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee notes the content of this report.

**COUNCILLOR MARJORIE JAMES
CHAIR OF SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

5 January 2007



Report of: Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

Subject: CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM –
PROGRESS REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee of the progress made to date by the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum.

2. PROGRESS OF THE SCRUTINY FORUM

2.1 Since the Forum's last progress report to this Committee on 20 October 2006, the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum has undertaken the following work-

2.2 Raising Boys' Achievement - Bridging the Gap – The Forum at its meeting on the 6 November 2006 undertook a final evidence gathering session as part of its 'Raising Boys' Achievements – Bridging the Gap' investigation. Following consideration of all of the information provided the Forum on the 11 December 2006 approved its final report for consideration by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee at today's meeting.

2.3 The Executive's Initial Budget and Policy Framework Consultation Proposals for 2007/08 – The Children's Services Scrutiny Forum on the 8 November 2006 considered initial consultation proposals for the Children's Services Department and reported its views back to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on the 17 November 2006.

2.4 These views were then noted by Cabinet on the 4 December 2006 and arrangements finalised for a repeat of the same process during consideration of the Executive's finalised budget proposals. The Children's Services Scrutiny Forum will consider the Executive's finalised budget proposals for the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum on the 8 January 2007.

- 2.5 Sex and Health Education – The Forum will at its meeting on the 8 January 2007 be undertaking a ‘scoping’ exercise to establish the Aim, Terms of Reference and Timetable for its ‘Sex and Health Education’ investigation.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee notes the progress of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum.

**COUNCILLOR JANE SHAW
CHAIR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

05 January 2007



Report of: Chair of the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum

Subject: ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AND HEALTH SCRUTINY FORUM - PROGRESS REPORT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform the Members of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee of the progress made to date by the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum.

2. PROGRESS OF THE FORUM

2.1 Since the last progress report was presented by the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 20 October 2006, the Forum has been involved in the following issues:-

(a) Scrutiny Investigation into Social Prescribing: The Forum has continued its in-depth investigation into Social Prescribing. Members have received evidence from representatives of the Community and Voluntary Sector, Service Users, Carers and Bradford PCT as a best practice Local Authority. A number of interesting findings are emerging and the Forum aims to conclude its investigation by March 2007.

(b) Health Scrutiny Support Programme – Annual HealthCheck Training: The Forum has secured via the CFPS Health Scrutiny Support Programme, five free days of support for Health Scrutiny. One of these days will be used to deliver specialist health scrutiny training in relation to the Annual HealthCheck. This session will take place on 9 January 2007 and will be a valuable opportunity for Health Scrutiny Members to understand the HealthCheck process.

(c) The Executive's Initial Budget and Policy Framework Consultation Proposals for 2007/08 – The Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum on the 14 November 2006 considered initial consultation proposals for the Adult and Community Services Department and reported its views back to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on the 17 November 2006. These views were then noted by Cabinet on the 4

December 2006 and arrangements finalised for a repeat of the same process during consideration of the Executive's finalised budget proposals. The Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum will consider the Executive's finalised budget proposals for the Adult and Community Services Department on the 16 January 2007.

- (d) Consultation on Community Care Eligibility Criteria:- In January 2006 Cabinet agreed to consult on raising the Fair Access to Care Services eligibility criteria to "substantial" needs. This issue was referred to the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum for consideration and Members were first invited to consider the proposals around the community care eligibility criteria at the Forum's meeting on 26 October 2006. At this meeting Members requested further information and agreed to revisit the issue the Forum's meeting in December for determination. The outcome of this issue will be reported verbally to Members of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee at today's meeting.
- (e) Consultation Response - Hartlepool PCT (HPCT) Proposed Management Arrangements: - The Forum submitted an interim report to Cabinet and HPCT on 9 October 2006 in relation to this issue. The Forum is still awaiting a formal response from HPCT although it expects to receive one soon.
- (f) Proposals for the Procurement of Additional Primary Medical Services: - The Forum will receive a report on this issue from HPCT at its meeting on 19 December 2006.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee notes the progress of the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum.

COUNCILLOR GERALD WISTOW

**CHAIR OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AND HEALTH SCRUTINY
FORUM**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

5 January 2007



Report of: Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum

Subject: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM
– PROGRESS REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee of the progress made to date by the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum.

2. PROGRESS OF THE SCRUTINY FORUM

- 2.1 Since the Forum's last progress report to this Committee on 20 October 2006, the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum has undertaken the following work:-
- 2.2 Six Monthly Progress Report - Local Bus Service Provision in Hartlepool Investigation – The Forum, at its meeting on the 29 November 2006, received a report outlining progress against each of the recommendations made as part of its 'Local Bus Service Provision in Hartlepool' investigation.
- 2.3 Following consideration of the information provided the Forum noted progress against each of its recommendations.
- 2.4 Draft Thoroughfare Policy – The Forum, at its meeting on the 25 October 2006, received a referral from Cabinet for consideration of a Draft Thoroughfare Policy.
- 2.5 Following consideration of the content of the draft policy it was agreed that the most appropriate course of action would be for the Forum to undertake an evaluation of the efficiency of the policy 12 months after its implementation. This review was to be undertaken during the course of next years work programme.

- 2.6 Private Sector Landlords – The Forum at its meeting on the 25 October 2006 commenced examination of the performance and operation of private sector rented accommodation, and landlords. At this meeting the Forum approved the Aim, Terms of Reference and Timetable for the investigation and received a brief ‘Setting the Scene’ report and presentation.
- 2.7 As part of the next stage of the process the Forum will in January be undertaking a benchmarking visit to Gateshead City Council. A Focus Group session was also held on the 13 December 2006 to seek the views of residents, tenants and landlords and further details of this will be reported by the Chair of the Forum.
- 2.8 The Executive's Initial Budget and Policy Framework Consultation Proposals for 2007/08 – The Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on the 15 November 2006 considered initial budget proposals for the Neighbourhood Services Department and reported its views back to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on the 17 November 2006.
- 2.9 These views were then noted by Cabinet on the 4 December 2006 and arrangements finalised for a repeat of the same process during consideration of the Executive's finalised budget proposals. The Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum will consider the Executive's finalised budget proposals for the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on the 10 January 2007.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee notes the progress of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum.

**COUNCILLOR GERA RD HALL
CHAIR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

5 January 2007



Report of: Chair of the Regeneration and Planning Services
Scrutiny Forum

Subject: REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES
SCRUTINY FORUM - PROGRESS REPORT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Members of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee of the progress made to date by the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum.

2. PROGRESS OF THE FORUM

- 2.1 Since the last progress report from the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 20 October 2006:-

(a) The Forum went on a site visit on the train to view the railway approaches from the north and south of the town on 16 October. In addition, the site visit incorporated comparisons with neighbouring towns' railway approaches and stations. Video footage was taken of the railway approaches during this visit to be viewed, and discussed, at a later date to add to the discussions during the visit.

(b) The Forum met on 2 November 2006 to consider evidence from the following witnesses as part of the ongoing investigation into Railway Approaches:

- i. The Chair of the Economic Forum;
- ii. 'Coastliners' - a local rail users group; and
- iii. Written evidence from the Community and Voluntary Sector.

The evidence from these bodies was well received and the information provided here, and the subsequent discussions, are being incorporated into the overall findings of the Investigation. A further item on the agenda focused on feedback from the site visit on 16 October. Members viewed a short film of the site visit and then discussed their views on the railway approaches into the town. Again this information has been incorporated into the overall findings and conclusions of the investigation.

- (c) The Forum met on 7 December 2006 primarily to consider a Position Paper on the Railway Approaches Investigation. The purpose of this report was to clarify the Forum's findings so far and to discuss potential recommendations emerging from this investigation. Members held a thorough discussion in relation to this item and broadly accepted / supported the findings of the report. A number of suggested amendments were also made by Members to be incorporated into the Final Report of this Investigation. Verbal evidence from Network Rail and Northern Rail in relation to a number of specific findings of the Forum's Investigation was also sought at this meeting. Unfortunately due to a major road accident on the A19 representatives from both of these bodies were unable to get to the meeting in time for their item. Members requested that they be invited to the next meeting of the Forum. Finally the Authority's Transportation Team Leader presented a report on the recent award to Hartlepool of the Department for Transport's Access for All Small Schemes Funding for improvements to Hartlepool and Seaton stations.

2.3 The next meeting of the Forum on 18 January 2007 will include:

- (a) A discussion of the draft final report of the Forum on the Railway Approaches Investigation;
- (b) Verbal evidence from Network Rail and Northern Rail in response to the findings and recommendations of the Investigation for which they hold some responsibility;
- (c) A Scoping Paper on Youth Unemployment; and
- (d) Finalised Budget Proposals consultation with the Forum.

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee notes the progress of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum.

**COUNCILLOR STEPHEN WALLACE
CHAIR OF REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- i. Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum Agenda 2
November 2006
- i. Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum Agenda 7
December 2006