

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

7 April 2025

The meeting commenced at 5.00pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Councillor Brenda Harrison (In the Chair)

Councillors: Gary Allen, Rachel Creevy, Tom Feeney, Jim Lindridge, Sue Little, John Nelson, Karen Oliver and Mike Young

Also Present: Councillor Corinne Male as substitute for Councillor Pamela Hargreaves in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2.

Officers: Denise McGuckin, Managing Director
Hayley Martin, Director of Legal, Governance and Human Resources
James Magog, Director of Finance, IT and Digital
Sally Robinson, Executive Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services
Craig Blundred, Director of Public Health
Jill Harrison, Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services
Jo Stubbs, Principal Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer

57. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were submitted by Councillor Pamela Hargreaves.

58. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Sue Little declared an interest in item 5.3 (Council Plan 2030) specifically regards home to school transport provision.

60. Minutes of the meeting held on 10th February 2025

Minutes received

61. Minutes of the meeting of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership held on 31st January 2025

Minutes received with the following amendment:

The addition of Councillor Sue Little in the list of attendees

62. Minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board held on 2nd December 2024

Minutes received with the following amendment:

The addition of Denise McGuckin in the list of apologies.

63. Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2030
(*Director of Public Health*)

Type of decision

Key (CJCS 164/25)

Purpose of report

To present the Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy refresh for approval.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Public Health presented the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy refresh for Members' approval. The strategy, attached at Appendix 1, outlined the key priority areas for the next five years:-

- **Starting Well** – All Children and young people living in Hartlepool have the best start in life.
- **Live well** - People live and work in connected, prosperous and sustainable communities.
- **Age well** - People live healthier and more independent lives, for longer

The strategy would inform the development of a detailed action plan and outcome framework which would be monitored and reviewed through the Health and Wellbeing Board annually.

The Chair thanked everyone involved in the formulation of the strategy including those members of the public who had engaged with the process. The following queries were raised:

- What was being done to improve levels of obesity among primary school children? The Director of Public Health confirmed that officers would be looking at the drivers causing obesity such as the home environment and use of takeaways before formulating an action plan. Public Health would work closely with Children's and Health Services. Nurses in schools was a key part of this. A member suggested that healthy menu recipe suggestions be included in Hartbeat magazine. The Director of Public Health would consider

this but there were also issues around families accessing to good quality healthy affordable food and having the means to cook it properly. The Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services referred to The Bread and Butter Thing initiative as one option for people to access affordable, healthy food.

- Older people living in rural communities often struggle to access medical appointments due to transport issues. The Director of Public Health confirmed that they were working with the ICB around public transport as a key health improver.
- Significant work was needed around Children's mental health but the mental health work force was not increasing at a commensurate rate. The Director of Public health acknowledged this but the ICB were responsible for the commissioning of mental health service not Public Health. The Executive Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services advised that there was a mental health in schools programme already commissioned by the ICB and work with CAMHS on early intervention was in place.
- Had consideration been given to a possible reduction in the number of licensed premises in Hartlepool? The Director of Public Health referred to challenges around high levels of alcohol in Hartlepool and the impact this had a weight and long-term addiction. Despite public health not being classed as a licensing objective they continued to lobby on this issue.
- Veterans had not been mentioned in the Strategy. The Director of Public Health confirmed that individual groups had deliberately not been mentioned but the Council has a duty to consider the impact on them and all other groups.
- The awareness of prostate cancer needed to be better advertised particularly among ethnic minority groups.
- It was suggested within the strategy that there was a dementia diagnosis rate of 77% and a member queried what this meant. The Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services explained that this was calculated using expected prevalence of dementia based on local demographics. Diagnosing 77% of those who were expected to have dementia meant GPs were diagnosing earlier, a positive not a negative. Members asked that a foot note be included clarifying this.

Decision

- i. That the strategy be agreed with the inclusion of a footnote clarifying the estimated dementia diagnosis rate.
- ii. That the joint development of the 2025/26 action plan be supported.

64. Equality Objectives *(Managing Director)*

Type of decision

Key Decision (General exception notice applies)

Purpose of report

To agree interim equality objectives for the Council, a specific requirement of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Council has a requirement to publish Equality Objectives every 4 years. Since 2012 these have been based on the strategic objectives set out in the Council Plan however in September 2024 the Executive Leadership Team decided to develop more specific Equality Objectives to sit within the Council Plan and underpin the agreed priorities. These would be based on a review of the available evidence and consultation with local communities. As this might take some time to complete, and in order to meet the legal requirements regards the publication of equality objectives every 4 years it was proposed that interim objectives be agreed as follows:

- To make Hartlepool a safe and welcoming place for people from diverse communities
- To ensure that our services and information are easily accessible by everyone including those with additional needs
- To develop our knowledge and understanding of our communities
- To act as an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion ambassador
- To be an equitable employer

These objectives would be updated following the development of a Cohesion Strategy for Hartlepool and final versions brought back to this Committee for agreement.

Members commented on the criticism levelled against some officers on social media which they were unable to respond to. They felt this was unfair and there should be more support of officers on social media.

Decision

That the proposed interim Equality Objectives for the Council as set out in the report be agreed.

65. Council Plan 2030 *(Managing Director)*

Type of decision

Key (General exception notice applies)

Purpose of report

To present the proposed Council Plan 2030 for approval and seek agreement to the proposed performance management arrangements for the Council Plan.

To provide the latest Strategic Risk Register for information.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Managing Director reported on the background to the development of the new Council Plan and the consultation process that had been undertaken during its development. This had taken place alongside the development of a new Performance Assurance Framework and several other Council areas alongside changes to national priorities following the general election. The priorities previously agreed by Committee had been reviewed and simplified. Details of these were included in the proposed plan as appended to the report. The Strategic Risk Register was also attached.

Members thanked those involved for an inclusive and cohesive document which demonstrated a collective voice on the part of many different people. The Managing Director noted that while it had not been possible to include details of all stakeholders who will continue to be involved in the monitoring process however the views of the Parish Councils were welcomed via the Parish Liaison meetings.

A member referred to reference made within the risk register around safeguarding children and the major risk of this which could lead to budget issues in the future. The Managing Director acknowledged these concerns and reminded members of the work being done in terms of early intervention and prevention to address this, and also mentioned national policy in this area was changing which may help in terms of costs..

Decision

- i. That the proposed Council Plan 2030 and associated performance monitoring arrangements be agreed
- ii. That the latest Strategic Risk Register be noted.

The meeting concluded at 17:50pm

H MARTIN

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

PUBLICATION DATE: 10 April 2025