

CABINET

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

18th December 2006

Present:

The Mayor (Stuart Drummond) - In the Chair

Councillors: Cath Hill (Deputy Mayor),

Pam Hargreaves (Children's Services Portfolio Holder),

Robbie Payne (Finance Portfolio Holder),

Peter Jackson (Performance Management Portfolio Holder),

Victor Tumilty (Culture, Leisure and Transportation Portfolio Holder),

Ray Waller (Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder).

Officers: Paul Walker, Chief Executive
Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning Services
Dave Stubbs, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Adrienne Simcock, Director of Children's Services
Peter Price, Director Public Health and Well-Being, PCT
Ewen Weir, Assistant Director, Adult and Community Services
Stuart Green, Head of Planning and Economic Development
Tony Brown, Chief Solicitor
Mike Ward, Chief Financial Officer
Chris Little, Assistant Financial Officer
Peter Price, Director of Public Health and Well-Being
John Potts, Principal Policy Officer, Community Strategy Team
Julian Heward, Assistant Public Relations Officer
Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

132. Chair of the meeting

Due to the absence of The Mayor, Stuart Drummond, the Deputy Mayor, Cath Hill chaired the meeting at this point.

133. Apologies for Absence

None.

134. Declarations of interest by Members

There were no declarations of interest declared at this point in the meeting.

135. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2006

Confirmed.

136. Local Development Framework: Annual Monitoring Report 2005/06 *(Director of Regeneration and Planning Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To seek approval of the second Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report (2005/2006) for submission to the Government Office for the North East.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

One of the documents to be produced under the new planning system established by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 was the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR reviewed progress made on the implementation of the Local Development Scheme (the programme for the preparation of planning documents) and assessed the effectiveness of current planning policies.

At this point in the meeting, The Mayor, Stuart Drummond arrived and chaired the remainder of the meeting.

A copy of the first AMR, in respect of 2004/05, was endorsed by Cabinet in January 2006. A draft copy of the second AMR in respect of 2005/06 was attached by way of Appendix. It was suggested that minor amendments may be required in the form of additions to the document in light of the information received from the Government on the criteria for the award of Planning Delivery Grant monies for 2006/07. It was proposed to submit the

document to the Government Office in January 2007.

The Head of Planning and Economic Development reported to Members that most milestones identified within the report had been achieved, with particular success in relation to the preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement. Delegated authority was sought for The Mayor to agree the final wording to be submitted to the Government Office by the end of the year.

Decision

The Annual Monitoring Report 2005/06 was endorsed for submission to the Government Office subject to delegated authority being given to The Mayor to agree the final wording of the submission.

137. 2007/08 Budget and Policy Framework Proposals (Corporate Management Team)

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To enable Cabinet to determine the draft 2007/2008 Budget and Policy Framework Proposals to be referred for formal scrutiny.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Finance Portfolio Holder presented a comprehensive and detailed report which outlined the consultation process on the draft Budget and Policy Framework Proposals for 2007/08. Details of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's response to the consultation proposals were reported to Cabinet on 4th December 2006 with the remaining responses being detailed within this report. The report also provided details of the provisional formula grant allocation for 2007/08 and an update of other factors affecting the initial budget forecasts including:

- 2007/08 Capital Budget Proposals and Funding for One-Off Commitments
- 2007/08 Revenue Budget Update
- Corporate Efficiency Strategy
- Review of Salary Turnover Allowance
- Consultation Feedback
- Diversity Impact Assessment

The key milestones within the budget timetable for finalising the budget proposals for 2007/08 were summarised within the report. A Member requested clarification on the recommendation from Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee to reduce the Home Care Service by £95,000. It was reported that the current Home Care Service involved staff working to fixed hours contracts, but to meet the changing needs of people of the town, this needed to be flexible. After the introduction of direct payments, people were able to 'shop around' for care packages and the authority needs to adapt to provide the best care to protect the most vulnerable people in the town. It was suggested that this proposed saving be retained but could be investigated further at the next round of Budget and Policy Framework consultation due to take place in January 2007.

At this point in the meeting, Councillor Ray Waller declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to residents' car parking and indicated he would leave the meeting when this subject was discussed.

Members were pleased to note that resources had been identified from prudential borrowing to tackle the drainage problems at the cemeteries in the town as this was a very immotive subject. Members referred to a previous request for the figures in relation to the level of the Authority's prudential borrowing to be provided. The Chief Financial Officer responded that the prudential borrowing figures were currently being collated and would be presented to Members at a future meeting. Members asked that where a number of contracts were to be issued, for example for demolition works across the town, that one single contract be looked at as an effective way forward as opposed to several different contracts. The Director of Neighbourhood Services indicated that this option was actively being looked into at the present time.

Councillor Ray Waller left the meeting at this point.

A summary of budget proposals recently discussed informally by Cabinet was distributed at the meeting. Members requested further information in relation to the enforcement and implementation of car parking fines. It was noted that a Car Parking Steering Group had been formed to examine the proposed increases and that the proposed savings would be achieved through a combination of proposals. The Director of Neighbourhood Services indicated that there had been no additional funding provided when the decriminalisation of car parking was introduced and that any income received was used to fund staffing to implement and enforce this service. It was suggested that a detailed report be submitted to Cabinet with regard to the savings proposed from the car parking service and that further comments be sought from the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

Councillor Ray Waller returned to the meeting at this point.

Members referred to the proposed closure of Eldon Grove Sports Centre and were assured that all current users would be relocated elsewhere, as sensitively and as soon as possible.

Decision

- 1.1 It was agreed that the following recommendations be approved and referred for formal scrutiny:
 - (a) The proposal to earmark the uncommitted LPSA Reward Grant to fund one-off commitments (£389,000) and termination costs (£179,000).
 - (b) The indicative 2007/08 Council Tax increase of 4.9% be confirmed.
 - (c) CMT be authorised to take action to enable savings to be implemented from 1st April 2007, subject to these proposals being approved by Council in February 2007, including the identification of early retirement/redundancy costs.
 - (d) The indicative Council Tax increases for 2008/09 and 2009/10 of 4.9%.
- 1.2 Cabinet referred the following proposals for formal scrutiny, which produce a net saving of £2.054m:
 - (a) To implement the 3% savings previously identified excluding the items not supported by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee in respect of resident car parking increase, reduction in Economic Development's budget, saving in Home Care Service and to freeze the Community Pool.
 - (b) To achieve increased car parking income to replace the withdrawal of £20 resident parking charge through a combination of:
 - (i) Introduce Monday to Friday contract charging and pay and display car parking charge at Maritime Experience Car Park with exemptions or visitors to Maritime Experience;
 - (ii) Increase staff car park charges;
 - (iii) Introduce car parking charges to Church Street;
 - (iv) Introduce pay and display/permit parking on Whitby/Tower/Surtees Streets;
 - (v) Introduce permit parking in Scarborough Street.
 - (c) Implement the 3% savings included for Home Care Service.
 - (d) Reduce the energy costs provision by £200,000 to reflect the stabilisation of market prices and to underwrite the risk that prices may not be sustained through 2007/08 from General Fund Balance.
 - (e) Establish a budget provision of £50,000 for one-off Cabinet projects which cannot be funded from existing budgets and delegate authority to Cabinet to determine how this resource was used.
- 1.3 Cabinet requested that Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee consider the following specific issues:
 - (a) Cabinet did not proposed any changes to the departmental grant terminations, pressures or priorities referred for Scrutiny in October. In terms of the initial savings, Cabinet proposed to only implement the 3% items previously identified.
 - (b) Cabinet identified a one-off proposal to be funded from the LPSA Reward Grant and available capital resources and the issues affecting Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee were summarised below. For a number of potential capital proposals, work was still ongoing to

quantify the costs of these works and these details would be included in the final budget proposals which would be referred to Council in February.

- (i) Proposals to be funded from LPSA Reward Grant:
 - Termination costs provision - £179,000
- (ii) Proposals to be funded from Capital Resources:
 - Backlog of Priority 1 repairs to Council buildings £300,000
 - Multi-storey car park £300,000

At this point in the meeting Councillors Ray Waller and Cath Hill declared personal and prejudicial interests and left the meeting.

138. Concessionary Local Bus Travel (*Director of Neighbourhood Services*)

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) and (ii) apply.

Purpose of report

To provide an update on the operation of the revised concessionary fares scheme adopted from the 1st April 2006 and arrangements for negotiating reimbursement arrangements with local bus operators from 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008 inclusive.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Transportation presented a detailed and comprehensive report giving the background to the Free National Concessionary Travel Scheme. The negotiated costs for the statutory minimum scheme and a range of possible enhancements were considered by Cabinet on 27th February 2006. The Tees Valley wide all-day scheme was approved at an additional cost of £166,270 over the statutory minimum requirement. The Director of Neighbourhood Services was authorised to complete the final agreement with the bus operators and report back to this meeting.

It was noted that the provision of free travel on local bus services and the extension of the concessionary travel scheme had resulted in significant positive outcomes with the number of concessionary bus passenger journeys increasing by 42%. A total of 1,700 new concessionary passes had been issued to Hartlepool residents from April 2006 to October 2006. The eligibility criteria for concessionary fares now included people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) which was approved by the Culture, Leisure and Transportation Portfolio Holder in July 2006.

The statutory minimum requirement for older and disabled persons travel concessions was to be further enhanced from 1st April 2008 to enable all residents aged 60 and over and disabled people to travel free of charge on registered off-peak local bus services within England. The Government was currently undertaking consultation with local authorities on the practicalities of the implementation of this scheme and this Authority was taking part through various discussion groups.

Members were concerned that any future travel plans should include provision for young people as this was critical to enable them to access services. The Director of Neighbourhood Services indicated that Scrutiny would be involved in this process and added that an element in relation to young people would be included within the criteria from 2008. It was also noted that travel for young people was fundamental within the Building Schools for the Future Programme with schools being required to have travel plans in place from January 2007. Members added that the importance of access to health services should also be considered when examining future travel plans.

Decision

It was agreed that:

- (i) Approval was given in principle to continue the Tees Valley Enhanced Concessionary Travel Scheme for those persons qualifying by way of age of disability with effect from 1st April 2007.
- (ii) A report be provided to Cabinet on the conclusion of negotiations with bus operators and partner authorities setting out the reimbursement arrangements proposed to be implemented on the 1st April 2007.

Councillors Ray Waller and Cath Hill returned to the meeting.

139. Connected Care in Owton (*Director of Adult and Community Services*)

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (ii) applies.

Purpose of report

To inform Cabinet of the Connected Care Pilot in Owton Ward and update on progress with its development.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Adult and Public Health Portfolio Holder presented a report which provided the background to the Connected Care Pilot due to take place in the Owton Ward. It was noted that whilst the pilot project was being developed in Owton initially, it had always been envisaged that if it was successful, it would be rolled out to other parts of the Town. Connected Care aimed to provide integrated health and social care services that address the “whole person”, meeting their complex needs in terms of range and severity of need. The objectives of the Connected Care Service were detailed within the report.

It was noted that the work on developing the pilot scheme was going reasonably well although some fine tuning may need to be undertaken. It was suggested that this scheme could be extended across the Town in due course if the Pilot was evaluated as being successful, but should be localised to meet the differing needs of people across the Town.

Although Members fully supported in principle, the Connected Care Scheme as a way forward for the whole town, they requested clarification on the scheme from the inception to progress made to date and what partnership arrangements were in place. Further information was also sought on the resourcing of the Scheme.

Decision

It was agreed:

- (i) To support the Connected Care Scheme in principle, as a way forward for the whole town.
- (ii) Further clarification be provided on the detail of the scheme undertaken in the Owton Ward from inception to progress made to date, along with what partnership arrangements were in place and what resource implications were involved.

140. Local Area Agreement (LAA) Refresh 2007/08 *(Head of Community Strategy)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To agree the Local Area Agreement (LAA) Delivery Refresh submission for 2007/08.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Principal Policy Officer presented a report which provided the background to Hartlepool's LAA submission agreed by Cabinet on 10th February 2006. The Government Office North East (GONE) requested a refresh in line with new LAA guidance introducing new mandatory outcomes, indicators and nationally pooled funding streams. In order to secure Ministerial approval and ensure continuity in payments, the refresh template, which was attached by way of Appendix, must be completed and returned to GONE by 2nd January 2007. The proposed changes were detailed in the report and affected Outcomes 17 and 21. The new nationally pooled funding streams were detailed in the report and included elements of Standards Funding, the Drug Strategy Partnership Support Grant, the School Travel Advisor Grant and the Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant.

Members sought clarification on the efficiency of the LAA. The Principal Policy Officer indicated that as more and more funding streams were introduced it was labour intensive, although it was hoped that it would prove more efficient in the long term.

The Chief Executive added that Government Ministers were informing Local Authorities that progress towards implementing the Performance Management Framework identified in the new Local Government Bill, must be put in place during the coming months (even though legislation may not be placed on the statute books until summer 2007), so that the new forms of local governance required by the Bill (Act) will be fully operational from 1st April 2008. Members requested further detailed information and the Assistant Chief Executive informed Members that a report would be submitted to Cabinet on 8th January 2007 which would suggest that a series of Members' seminars be held in order to keep Members informed and that further reports will be submitted to Cabinet.

Decision

The LAA Refresh submission was agreed subject to any amendments being agreed with The Mayor prior to submission.

141. Hartlepool Life Expectancy Floor Target Action Plan (Director of Public Health and Well-Being)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To present the Hartlepool Life Expectancy Floor Target Action Plan (FTAP) for information.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Adult and Public Health Portfolio Holder presented a report which highlighted that Hartlepool was one of the districts within the 5th worst areas of life expectancy. Whilst it was noted that life expectancy in Hartlepool was improving, it was not improving as fast as the rest of the country and so the gap was widening. The Floor Target Action Plan had been developed in partnership and had been informed by analysis undertaken by the North East Public Health Observatory. The Plan provided a sound basis for understanding the issues related to poor life expectancy and the challenges ahead and informed the action required to improve life expectancy.

The Plan had been used to inform the Health NRF programme for 2006-8 and the Health and Care Strategy Group would continue to undertake further analysis and monitor performance to revise and develop further action where appropriate. It was noted that Hartlepool Borough Council was a key partner in delivering action to improve life expectancy including the wider determinants of health to contribute to improvements in life expectancy in the long term.

It was accepted that life expectancy improvement was a long term issue and would change through generations and that the main determinant in the figures was that Hartlepool included a high level of deprivation and was previously supported mainly by heavy industry. Members noted the positive impact the implementation of New Deal for the Communities and Neighbourhood Renewal Fund initiatives had in the most deprived areas of the Town.

Members noted that the emergency cover provided at the Wynyard Road Resource Centre had been discontinued. However, the Director of Public Health and Well-Being indicated that there was currently a review being undertaken of the Emergency Care Strategy and that this would be reported to Cabinet at a future meeting.

Decision

The contents of the Life Expectancy Floor Target Action Plan was noted.

J A BROWN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 22nd December 2006