

CABINET

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

22 January 2007

The meeting commenced at 9.00am in the Avondale Centre, Hartlepool.

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)
Victor Tumilty (Culture, Leisure and Transportation Portfolio Holder)
Ray Waller (Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder).

Also Present: Councillor Jane Shaw, Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

Officers: Paul Walker, Chief Executive
Tony Brown, Chief Solicitor
Nicola Bailey, Director of Adult and Community Services
Adrienne Simcock, Director of Children's Services
Dave Stubbs, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning Services
Joanne Smithson, Head of Community Strategy
Joan Wilkins, Scrutiny Support Officer
Steve Hilton, Assistant Public Relations Officer
David Cosgrove, Principal Democratic Services Officer

150. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Peter Jackson (Performance Management Portfolio Holder)

151. Declarations of interest by members

None.

152. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2007

Confirmed.

153. Final Report – Raising Boys Achievement – Bridging the Gender Gap (*Children's Services Scrutiny Forum*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

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

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum, Councillor Jayne Shaw, outlined to Cabinet the investigation undertaken by the forum into 'Raising Boys Achievement – Bridging the Gender Gap'. Councillor Shaw highlighted the findings of the forum's investigation and commended the recommendations to Cabinet.

Cabinet welcomed the investigation undertaken by the forum. Cabinet discussed the issues of the different learning styles of different children and the measures put in place in schools to address them. Cabinet members acknowledged that the gender gap in Hartlepool was lower than the national average but considered that the report provided a useful tool for schools to encourage the sharing of best practice in this area to work towards eradicating the gap altogether. Cabinet also made reference to the personalised learning plan proposals now being put forward by government for children and commented that while these plans could be of great benefit to a large number of children, they did need the appropriate finance to support their implementation.

Decision

1. That the recommendations of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into 'Raising Boys Achievement – Bridging the Gender Gap' be welcomed and adopted as set out 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 the 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.

- 2. That an action plan for the monitoring of the implementation of the Scrutiny Forum's recommendations be submitted to a future meeting.

154. Community Strategy and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy *(Head of Community Strategy)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework.

Purpose of report

To update Cabinet on the progress of the review of the Community Strategy and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy that began in May 2006 and to seek agreement to a revision of the review's timetable.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The report set out the background to the review and briefly summarises the implications (for the review) of the recently published Local Government White Paper. The report also reviewed the requirements of the European Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. The report requested that Cabinet agree to a revised review timetable to take into account the requirements of the Directive.

As a result of this additional requirement, it will not be possible to keep to the original timetable of adoption of the revised Community Strategy by April 2007. A more realistic timetable would now appear to be:

Preparation of SEA Environmental Report in May 2007

Consultation on report May to July 2007

Testing of draft Community Strategy against SEA/SA objectives in August 2007

Agreement to revised draft of Community Strategy by Cabinet and Hartlepool Partnership in September 2007

Consultation on revised draft, including Scrutiny Coordinating Committee September to October 2007

Adoption of new Community Strategy by Council and the Hartlepool Partnership in December 2007.

Decision

That the progress of the Community Strategy and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy review be noted and that the revised timetable for the Strategy's adoption be approved.

155. Revision to Local Development Scheme *(Director of Regeneration and Planning Services)*

Type of decision

Non-Key

Purpose of report

The report sought approval to revisions to the Local Development Scheme to reflect certain changes which have taken place over the last year.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Mayor reported that the Local Development Scheme set out the three year rolling programme for the preparation of planning policy documents. It should be kept up to date as far as possible and revised periodically to ensure that key milestones relating to the preparation process are as realistic as possible. There are three main items which need to be revised to reflect changes over the last year.

- The completion and adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
- The amendment of the table setting out the key milestones for the preparation of the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to reflect the timescales which have been set by consultants undertaking work on Open Space provision.
- Inclusion of the timetable for the preparation of a new Supplementary Planning Document on Transport Assessment & Travel Plan Guidance

Decision

That the revisions of the Local Development Scheme for submission to the Secretary of State be approved.

156. Proposed Collective Disputes Resolution Procedure (Chief Personnel Officer)

Type of decision

Non-Key

Purpose of report

To set out a draft framework of a collective disputes process so that further work may be undertaken to develop the framework into a detailed procedure.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Chief Executive reported that the Council required a procedure that establishes the relationships and interactions between Hartlepool Borough Council as an employer and recognised trade unions that seeks to promote joint solutions to resolve differences that may arise from time to time.

Disputes may arise at a national or local level. National issues are subject to a disputes resolution procedure involving Local Government Employers and national officers of the recognised trade unions and are therefore essentially outside Council control. Local disputes, which cannot be resolved between Officers and local trade union representatives and full-time officials, have previously been considered by a Local Joint Committee (LJC). Due to changes in the political structures of the Authority over time this Committee has evolved into a Local Joint Consultative Committee without delegated authority to resolve disputes. The remit of the LJCC was reviewed and agreed last year and was attached as Appendix A to the report. The HJTUC has requested that delegated Authority be given to the LJCC. However due to constitutional reasons this is not possible.

A recent local dispute that was referred to the LJCC and then referred to Cabinet with recommendations, lead the Hartlepool Joint Trades Union Committee (HJTUC) to conclude that the Authority, currently, do not have a Collective Disputes Resolution Procedure. The HJTUC requested that a Collective Disputes Resolution Procedure be agreed.

Discussions have taken place with local trade union representatives to identify the key elements of a procedure that would be workable. The following framework was drafted and presented to the trade unions at a Single Table Meeting in December.

- a) The HJTUC and Chief Personnel Officer will seek to resolve the issue in the first instance.
- b) If the issue is unable to be resolved to the HJTUC's satisfaction the dispute should be referred by the HJTUC to the Chief Executive in writing.
- c) The HJTUC, Chief Executive, Chief Solicitor and Chief Personnel Officer will seek to resolve the issue.

- d) If the issue is unable to be resolved both parties should seek to agree to refer the collective dispute to external conciliation e.g. Joint Secretaries, ACAS.
- e) The referral will be reported to the Performance Management Portfolio Holder for information.
- f) Cabinet will consider the recommendation of external conciliation and any other relevant information and make a final decision.

The framework only covers the outline process and will need further discussion and development. Local trade union representatives have accepted the framework in principle and have agreed, subject to Cabinet approval, to work with officers to produce a detailed procedure.

The Mayor commented that his only concern with the proposed procedure was that it did not include consultation with wider members of the authority through scrutiny or some other means. The Chief Solicitor highlighted that decisions in these cases were the responsibility of the Executive. The views of other members could be achieved through the existing political groups feeding their views into Cabinet. The Mayor was very keen to ensure that as far as possible the views of the wider Council could be gained before Cabinet made any decision.

Decision

- (1) That the proposed framework be approved and the Chief Personnel Officer be authorised to develop a detailed procedure in consultation with local trade union representatives and present a detailed procedure to a future Cabinet meeting for final approval.
- (2) That the Chief Personnel Officer be authorised to review the remit of the Local Joint Consultative Committee (LJCC) in consultation with LJCC members.

157. Hartlepool and Climate Change *(Director of Neighbourhood Services)*

Type of decision

Non-Key

Purpose of report

To inform Cabinet members on the progress of the development of the Hartlepool and Tees Valley Climate Change Strategies and seek comments as part of the consultation process on the Hartlepool Strategy.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Mayor outlined the issues contained in the report which included background information on Climate Change, and its potential impact on Hartlepool. The report also introduced a draft Hartlepool Climate Change Strategy (appendix 1 to the report) which includes an introduction to Climate Change, Greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and actions which can be taken to adapt to and mitigate Climate Change. The report also

informed Members on progress with the Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy, a sub-regional, cross-organisational document that encompasses the whole Tees Valley. The Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy was attached as appendix 2 to the report.

Decision

That Cabinet notes and welcomes the progress made in the production of the Hartlepool and Tees Valley Climate Change Strategies.

J A BROWN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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