

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting1st December 2011

1. Title of Item/Report

EIT Review of Regeneration and Economic Development
- Report of Regeneration and Transport Select Committee

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet considered a report relating to the findings of the EIT Review of Regeneration and Economic Development undertaken by the Regeneration and Transport Select Committee between June and November 2011.

It was explained that the review examined a number of service areas within the Regeneration and Economic Development including employability, enterprise, business engagement (including tourism), support for Tees Valley Unlimited, major projects, town centre development, and the strategic role of Tees Achieve. The overall aim of the review had been to identify options for future strategy, policy & service provision that would deliver efficiency savings and sustain / improve high quality outcomes for the Borough's residents, businesses and visitors.

The Committee concluded that the Service had an important role to play in improving employability and supporting the growth of business sectors that will underpin economic recovery.

In order to achieve the savings that would be required in order for the Service to contribute to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan the Committee had made a number of recommendations. A number of those would be achieved through reductions in project budgets that reflected the reduced workload in some areas, especially physical regeneration schemes. However, due to the nature of the Service's core budget and its focus on staffing costs, the Committee regretted that savings through a reduction in the number of posts within the Service was unavoidable.

Alongside the necessary savings the Committee had made a number of recommendations in order to ensure that the Service would be able to focus on its core role. Several operational and facility management

functions would be more appropriately performed by the relevant dedicated teams elsewhere in the Council's structure, enterprise and employability work would continue to be taken forward, and the increased specialisation within business engagement will enable an increased focus on priority areas.

Critical to the development of its strategic leadership role would be the ability of the Service to undertake higher level analysis of the economic needs of the Borough. In order to do this, the Service would need to increase its capabilities in relation to research and data analysis, namely through the development of an economic intelligence function. This would be a step change in the Council's ability to identify priorities for its strategy for economic development.

The Service would continue to be important in working in partnership with external organisations including TVU in order to successfully implement many of the service improvements that had been identified. The review had made a number of recommendations that will lead to a more effective Regeneration and Economic Development Service in the future.

It was noted that the services under review had a net budget of £1,273m. Taken together the overall financial impact of the recommendations would be to achieve efficiency savings of approximately £210,000 from 2012-13.

Members were informed that subject to Cabinet's consideration, an action plan would be submitted to the Select Committee setting out how approved recommendations would be implemented, detailing the officers responsible for action and timescales.

RESOLVED that

1. that the future role of the Regeneration and Economic Development Service should primarily be that of strategic leadership in supporting the economic growth of the Borough, and defining the Borough's growth needs based on a sound understanding of its existing and future position;
2. that the Regeneration and Economic Development Major Projects Team be reduced to reflect the reduced number of known and potential project opportunities;
3. that specific activities within the current town centres management function, such as the operational elements of festivals, events and markets, be performed by other service areas within the Council, and that

the Regeneration Service continues to provide input into the planning and identification of events to ensure that they bring economic benefits;

4. that a higher level, critical thinking and strategic economic intelligence function should be created within the Regeneration and Economic Development Service, building upon and enhancing the data analysis work undertaken at corporate and directorate level, to create an influential evidence base to steer delivery priorities;

5. that the Tourist Information Centre staff should be retained within Regeneration and Economic Development whilst consideration is given to maintaining a Stockton High Street presence and including tourist information functions at the Customer Contact Centre in Thornaby and other appropriate premises, and that the tourism economic and strategic agenda be incorporated into business engagement, with only strategic input into events planning.

6. a) that a detailed evaluation be undertaken of the operational functions of the Stockton Business Centre;
b) that this evaluation is used to develop options for the future management of the Centre, in conjunction with the Council's review of facilities management;
c) and that prior to a decision on the future management arrangements, the existing Centre management functions become part of the Service's business engagement activities in the short term, and available efficiency savings be implemented;

7. that the Council's Land and Property Services take on the property management functions associated with the Shambles building;

8. that Stockton's input of resources into the Stockton Middlesbrough initiative be reduced in line with the deliverability of schemes;

9. that the Regeneration and Economic Development Service should encourage and raise awareness of enterprise, mainstream the work with children and young people and support for schools and colleges by delivering it as part of the core Service, and provide an element of enterprise coaching targeted on specific groups, such as lone parents;

10. that the Regeneration Service should provide strategic leadership (in partnership with Tees Valley Unlimited) on employment and skills, and better utilise the resources and knowledge within Tees Achieve in understanding and meeting the employment and skills needs of the local economy;

11. that the Regeneration Service should increase its capacity to enable closer working with TVU to ensure the delivery of the TVU Business Plan and Statement of Ambition, and to ensure the success of the Local Enterprise Partnership;

12. the business engagement service increases its capacity to focus support on new and existing businesses based on sectoral growth opportunities, and develop an effective business loans scheme to replace the existing business grants scheme.

3. Reasons for the Decision

As part of the Council's EIT Programme, the Committee had undertaken the review with the aim of identifying options for future service provision that delivered efficiency savings and improved regeneration and economic development services.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Monday 12th December 2011

Proper Officer
06 July 2011