

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 16 April 2012

ITEM 6(f)(ii)(d)

Title: Reduction in
Committee Teas

Portfolio(s): Elected Mayor

Cabinet Member(s): Mrs Linda Arkley

Report from Directorate: Chief Executive's Office
(Legal, Governance and Commercial Services)

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Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

The purpose of the report is to set out proposals for the level of provision of refreshments for meetings of the Council and its committees/sub-committees in the light of the reduction in the budget for 'committee teas'.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet approves option 2 outlined in section 1.6 of this report in relation to the provision of food and beverages for formal meetings of the Cabinet, Council and its committees/sub-committees (set out in Appendix 1 to the report).

1.3 Forward Plan:

This report does not appear on the current Forward Plan. However, it is required to be considered at this Cabinet meeting because of its inclusion in the Council's 2012/13 Budget Implementation Plan.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report has no reference in the Council Strategic Plan for 2012/15. However, it relates to an item included in the Council's Implementation Plan and agreed Budget 2012/13.

1.5 Information:

- 1.5.1 At an Extraordinary meeting of Cabinet held on 28 March 2012, an Implementation Plan was agreed in relation to the 2012/15 Council Strategic Plan and 2012/13 Budget. The Implementation Plan requires a report to be submitted to Cabinet in April on the proposed reduced service in relation to the provision of 'committee teas' in the light of the agreed budget reduction from £27,000 to £10,000 per year.
- 1.5.2 The budget for the provision of committee teas is held by Legal, Governance and Commercial Services. Food and beverages are currently provided by North Tyneside Council Catering Services at the request of the Manager of Democratic Services. It is proposed that refreshments be provided in future to the formal meetings of the Council as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 1.5.3 The proposals set out in this report are based on the current commencement times of meetings. Most meetings take place after 5pm when there are no alternative catering services available. To date Committee teas (comprising a sandwich service with soup, cake, fruit and beverages for committees and sub committees and a varied hot buffet service with cake, fruit and beverages for full Council meetings) have been provided for all meetings commencing at 6.00pm or later, with beverages only provided for meetings commencing during the daytime.

The proposed refreshment provision maintains refreshments for all formal evening meetings and beverages for all formal daytime meetings.

- 1.5.4 The proposals are in keeping with the experience in many other local authorities which have reduced expenditure on the provision of refreshments for committee meetings in recent years.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

The provision of a varied hot buffet service with beverages for full council meetings only, similar to that provided in recent months. However, if this option was to be approved there would be insufficient funding to provide either food or beverages for any of the other meetings within the reduced budget.

Option 2

A sandwich service with soup, cake, fruit and beverages can be provided for full council meetings; a sandwich service with beverages for evening Cabinet, committee/sub committee meetings; and beverages only for day time meetings.

Option 2 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 2 is recommended for the following reasons:

- Option 2 allows for the provision of refreshments at all formal meetings of the Cabinet, Council and its committees/sub committees, but still achieving the required budget reduction.

1.8 Appendices:

List of the Council's formal committees and sub committees, for which refreshments would be provided.

1.9 Contact Officers

David Brown, Democratic Services Manager Tel: (0191) 643 5358
Barbara Patterson, Catering Services Manager Tel: (0191) 643 8340
Alison Campbell, Finance Business Manager Tel: (0191) 643 7038
Anthony Gollings, Finance and Resources Tel: (0191) 643 8071

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- (1) The Council's Budget 2012/13.
- (2) Report to and minutes of Cabinet – 28 March 2012: 2012/2015 Council Strategic Plan and 2012/13 Budget Implementation Plan.
- (3) Costings associated with the provision of refreshments for Cabinet, Council and its committees/sub committees.
- (4) Details of provision of refreshments at meetings of other local authorities (source - Association of Democratic Services Officers forum).
- (5) Briefing note to all Members of the Council on Local Authority Governance and Decision Making, 26 March 2012 and addendum note to all Members of the Council, 16 April 2012.

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The proposed level of service set out in this report can be met within the revised budget of £10,000 per annum for Committee teas. Further savings may be achieved if the Council agrees to more committee/sub committee meetings commencing during the daytime.

The reduction in spend on committee teas will affect Catering Services (Children, Young People and Learning Directorate) as this will leave the restaurant with a £17,000 reduction in income.

Whilst the Council will save on the cost of food with immediate effect, a full labour review would need to be undertaken to release further savings to mitigate the effect of losing £17,000 of income through the restaurant.

2.2 Legal

The responsibility for the determination of the budget reduction for the provision of committee teas that is the subject of this report is a matter for Cabinet.

The Council's budget is essentially a financial envelope which is not in itself prescriptive on a line by line basis and is governed by the requirements of the law in relation to the

separation of powers between the Council and Cabinet. However, whilst the determination of the budget reduction for the provision of committee teas that is the subject of this report is a matter for Cabinet, Cabinet are bound to take the Council's views in relation to this matter into account as a relevant consideration in its decision making.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

Consultation has taken place with Catering Services who manage the provision of catering for committee teas.

The Group Leaders have been consulted on the proposed preferred option.

2.4 Human rights

There are no direct human rights implications arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no direct equalities and diversity implications arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

There are no direct risk management implications arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no direct environment and sustainability implications arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) ☒
- Chief Finance Officer ☒
- Monitoring Officer ☒
- Strategic Manager for Policy and Partnerships ☒

Full Council
Cabinet
Adult Social Care Health and Well-Being Sub Committee
Appeals and Complaints Sub Committee
Appointments and Disciplinary Committee
Audit Committee
Children, Education and Skills Sub Committee
Economic Prosperity and Housing Sub Committee
Environment and Culture Sub Committee
Finance Sub Committee
Licensing Committee
Licensing Sub Committee
Outside Bodies Committee
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Planning Committee
Regulation and Review Committee (including Panels)
Standards Committee
Standards Sub-Committee
Tenancies Committee
Whitley Bay Town Cup Sub Committee