

**THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CHESTER-LE-STREET**

Minutes of the proceedings at the Meeting of the District Council of Chester-le-Street held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Chester-le-Street on Thursday 28 September 2006 at 6.00pm

PRESENT:

Councillor R Harrison (Chairman)

Councillors:

Armstrong G	Humes A
Barr S	Jukes C
Barrett JW	Kerr GAN
Carr C	Proud JM
Davidson GK	Rand DA
Ebbatson L	Richardson R
Evans JJ	Robson D
Gollan M	Smith IS
Hall RW	Stoker DMG
Henig SA	Turner A
Holden AK	Willis A

Officers: R Templeman (Chief Executive), L Chambers (Director of Resources), I Forster (Assistant Chief Executive), T Galloway (Director of Development Services), M Walker (Head of Regeneration), J Henderson (Revenues and Benefits Manager), I Herberson (Accountancy Manager), C Potter (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), P Stephens (Housing Services Manager) and C Turnbull (Democratic Services Officer).

Also present S Nicklin (District Auditor), C Tyrell (Audit Manager) and one member of the public.

**Prior to commencement of business the Chairman referred to the recent death of County Councillor Christine Smith and a minute silence was observed as a token of respect.**

**The Chairman advised that item no. 13 on the agenda relating to the Estate Agreement for Lilac House had been withdrawn.**

**55 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors LEW Brown, P Ellis, S Gollan, D Holding, W Laverick, PH May, DS Meek, K Potts, M Potts, and SCLWestrip.

**56 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 27 JULY 2006**

The minutes of the proceedings at the Meeting held 27 July 2006 copies of which had previously been circulated to each Member, were submitted.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the minutes be taken as read and approved.”

The Chairman duly signed the minutes as being a true and correct record.

**57 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

**58 REPORT OF SPECIAL AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD 27 JUNE 2006**

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the report of the Special Meeting of the Audit Committee held 27 June 2006 copies of which had previously been circulated, be accepted.”

**59 REPORT OF AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD 6 JULY 2006**

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the report of the Meeting of the Audit Committee held 6 July 2006 copies of which had previously been circulated, be accepted.”

**60 REPORT FROM LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Councillor L Ebbatson, Leader of the Council, reported on the following matters:-

## Public Speaking

Councillor L Ebbatson welcomed the development of public speaking at Council and at the Executive, with guidance notes now being available for members of the public who wish to speak at these meetings.

## Local Government Association

Councillor L Ebbatson advised Members that she had been invited to become a member of the Local Government Association Environment Board, which she had duly accepted.

## Association of North East Councils

It was reported by Councillor L Ebbatson that 22 September saw the launch of the 2006-07 Association of North East Councils' manifesto which brings to the fore the major contribution of local authorities and local government to quality of life in the region.

## Equalities and Diversity

Councillor L Ebbatson drew attention to the fact that The Improvement Partnership for the North East will be holding a regional 'Challenge and Inspire' Event on 31 October to promote excellent work in the field of Equalities and Diversity. She congratulated Council Officers involved in Action Learning Set 2 (Equalities and Diversity) on their excellent 'It's a Knockout' held on 2 September which successfully highlighted not just the difficulties which may be faced by people with disabilities but also the major contribution they make to the happiness and well being of all.

## Scrutiny

Councillor L Ebbatson welcomed a new member of staff, Mr Nigel Cummings, the new Scrutiny Officer and reminded Members that effective and efficient scrutiny is essential to the performance of the Council as a whole.

## Local bus services

Councillor L Ebbatson reported that several members of the public had raised concerns about the changes to local bus services and expressed her intention to write to Go-North East to express concerns about the loss of service in some areas and the negative impact of re-routing in local communities.

Councillor L Ebbatson added that there were questions as to whether statutory consultation was undertaken. Furthermore she reported that it would appear that in some instances at least, particularly around Gibside and Auckland, those who need public transport most and are core customers ( i.e. those living in sheltered accommodation) have been left high and dry. It was reiterated that bus passes without buses are useless.

Councillor L Ebbatson went on to state that the new routes also appear to be contrary to the County Durham Transport Plan which was predicated on the further development of links between the County's market towns as transport hubs, with local service buses feeding into the system.

Councillor L Ebbatson remarked that the new routes reduce the local services and effectively by-pass the town. She pointed out that direct links to Newcastle /Gateshead to the North will only exacerbate the commuter status of Chester-le-Street at a time when the Council would wish to maintain and enhance the viability of the town centre through regeneration.

Councillor L Ebbatson then invited Members to join with her in raising concerns.

The Chairman of the Council allowed this item of business relating to changes to local bus services to be debated in view of its urgency.

Councillors AK Holden, JJ Evans, JM Proud and C Carr made reference to the changes in bus services as they affect their wards.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That a letter from the Leader of the Council to Go-North East expressing concerns about the changes in the local bus services be supported and that letters be also sent to the Department of Transport and the Traffic Commissioners.”

Union Learn

Councillor L Ebbatson drew attention to a letter from Union Learn (the Northern TUC) thanking the Council for encouraging the participation of Union Learn Representatives among Council staff. She highlighted that Union Learn Representatives make a valuable contribution to staff development by providing a friendly and accessible route to learning for those who wish to improve their skills.

## **61 REPORTS FROM PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

### **(a) Finance and Leisure**

Councillor SA Henig reported on the following matters:-

## Local Bus Changes

Councillor SA Henig made two comments on the local bus changes. The first was that the local bus changes were particularly galling for him as Finance Portfolio Holder given the long negotiations and the lead up to the free bus travel. The Council had acted, as other Districts in County Durham did, in good faith with the bus companies to try to get a good deal for all concerned. He expressed disappointment that the changes undermined that carefully agreed settlement and he certainly had not expected the services to be cut as much only some six months or so later.

The second comment was about political cynicism, a matter raised at the Labour Party Conference which he had recently attended. Councillor SA Henig highlighted the negative impact the changes would have on the public in terms of their trust in those elected to represent them. He stated that the members of the public received a leaflet saying that there had been big improvements to bus services and yet now half of the local communities have had their service halved or worse. Councillor SA Henig stated he was absolutely appalled and observed that it was not surprising that the Council has so many problems trying to persuade electors in good faith that things the Council are doing are genuine. He reminded the Meeting that there was already a big enough agenda for the Council on issues such as Housing and Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) without making things harder and harder all the time.

## Leader of the Council's Appointment

Councillor SA Henig congratulated Councillor L Ebbatson on being appointed to serve on the Environment Board of the Local Government Association (LGA). He stated that it was quite an achievement because those Committees at the LGA in his view tend to be dominated by big Unitary Councils and Counties and therefore it is actually relatively unusual for people from small Districts such as this District to get places.

## Closing of the 2005/2006 Accounts

Councillor SA Henig very briefly highlighted that the Meeting marked the closing of the 2005/06 accounts. He commented that the accounts had been discussed many times before and it may be that when that item of business comes up for discussion at the Meeting there might not many points left to talk about, particularly because quite a number of points had been raised at the June Council Meeting.

Councillor SA Henig expressed thanks on behalf of all Members to the Director of Resources, the Accountancy Manager and their Team for all the hard work that has obviously gone into this and requested that such thanks be passed on to all the Council Officers concerned.

## Next Year's Budget Process

Councillor SA Henig observed that things never stand still and informed the Meeting that a week on Tuesday he would be meeting with the Director of Resources to talk about the budget process for 2007/08 which again promises to be challenging. He stated that he would be starting that process straight away and as last year he would try to get as much Member involvement as he could.

Councillor SA Henig concluded by stating that he would obviously report back at subsequent Meetings on progress made.

### (b) Environment

Councillor AK Holden reported on the following matters:-

#### Planning

Councillor AK Holden explained that the Development Control Team has continued to build on recent improvements to Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 109 – speed of decision making for planning applications.

Official figures for 2005/06 shown the Service to be the top performing Council in the North East Region for minor and other types of planning applications – an excellent achievement which has been the subject of much positive regional and national press coverage. He stated that the Planning Enforcement Service continues to go from strength to strength following the appointment of the current post holder. He mentioned that local performance indicators for the Service are now being reported for the first time and a presentation by the Enforcement Officer, David Chong, to Planning Committee in August was well received.

Councillor AK Holden reminded Members that the Service is focusing on improvements to its customer care and community engagement. He stated that in June Council Officers held a public meeting which was attended by members of the public and the Ward Councillor and was well received. Council Officers had also established and will soon be holding the first 'Development Forum' to encourage customers from the development industry to engage in service improvement. In addition a 'Community Planning Forum' is also to be formed which will enable community representatives' proposals for housing development at Kimblesworth Industrial Estate to engage with Officers to inform service improvement.

Councillor AK Holden reported with pleasure that, following the recent recruitment process for a new Head of Planning and Environmental Health, Anneliese Hutchinson from Gateshead Council has been appointed to the position.

He advised the Meeting that the new Head of Planning and Environmental Health will take up her new post on 3 January 2007. Having been personally involved in her recruitment Councillor AK Holden stated that he had no doubt that she will prove to be a welcome addition and an asset to the Department and the Council.

#### Environmental Services

Councillor AK Holden announced that the skills and dedication of the Council's Horticultural and Cemetery Apprentices has been recognised in the Council's Ropery Lane Cemetery being short listed in the finals of the Cemetery of the Year Awards 2006. The Awards are organised by the Memorial Awareness Board and sponsored by the Institute of Crematorium Management and recognises organisations that provide high quality surroundings that put people first, so they can grieve and contemplate in peace and tranquillity. Councillor AK Holden stated that it was pleasing to see that the Council's investment in the Bereavement Service over the last few years has resulted in national recognition. He remarked that it must be recognised that this is an important first step in the improvements of all the cemeteries across the District.

Councillor AK Holden commented that in response to concern at the national level following several fatalities, the Environmental Services Departments of all local authorities up and down the country are undergoing Health and Safety Inspections from the Health and Safety Executive. Chester-le-Street Environmental Services

Department recently had its inspection and, but for a few minor issues at the depot, was given a clean bill of health by the Inspectors. An Action Plan to address the issues had been drawn up and is currently being implemented.

#### Environmental Health

Councillor AK Holden revealed that the Environmental Health Sustainability Team recently had spearheaded a half day workshop to develop an Environmental Strategy for the District. The workshop hosted by Groundwork West Durham was attended by 45 delegates, including elected members, representing 18 partner agencies and focused on consulting with and drawing together the views of the Council's partners on what should be in an Environmental Strategy. He stated that the resulting comments and views were being drawn together and a draft strategy prepared for wider consultation and presentation to a future Executive meeting.

He advised the Meeting that out of hours licensing enforcement had started again with a very successful exercise in August and that Officers from the Licensing Team would be conducting a joint exercise with the Police and Fire Authority in September.

Councillor AK Holden stated that public consultation on the Council's draft Gambling Policy was continuing, with the deadline for responses on 13 October. Following this, he reassured Members that the draft policy would be reviewed in the light of comments made and then presented to both the Statutory Licensing Committee and Council for formal adoption.

Councillor AK Holden mentioned that contracts for both a temporary Pest Control Officer and a temporary Licensing Administrator have been extended until April 2007 following a review of priorities and budget.

He added that the Department's Housing Team had completed a review of potential Houses in Multiple Occupation. Thirteen premises had been visited and assessed and links to identify other potential premises have been reviewed and strengthened.

Councillor AK Holden announced that a Working Group to consider the issue of empty properties is currently being established and that this joint Officer/Member project will consider the scope of the issue in the District and look at potential solutions. He added that it is hoped the Group will develop a draft Empty Property Policy.

(c) Regeneration

Councillor C Jukes reported on the following matters:-

Councillor C Jukes stated that his Portfolio had covered a number of areas in the last few months.

Single Housing Investment Pot (SHIP)

Councillor C Jukes advised that the SHIP 1 financing is progressing, and the Ship 2 funds have been allocated. He observed that the main thing with both funding streams is that the project management brings the on-time delivery of projects.

Councillor C Jukes reassured the Council that local members would continue to be kept up to speed on developments within their respective communities.

Sacriston

Councillor C Jukes mentioned that the area development framework is being developed in Sacriston, and that this would enable regeneration initiatives to follow best practice models of development and delivery.



## Pelton Fell

He announced that the major regeneration project in Pelton Fell is continuing and some difficult challenges had been faced up to recently. Anti-social behaviour, discussions regarding demolishing properties, and also supporting the community in its aspirations for new community facilities, had been some of the recent challenges for partners on the Partnership Board.

## Grange Villa

Councillor C Jukes informed the Council that the Grange Villa Regeneration Project is progressing and paid tribute to the hard work of community leaders, activists, and partners in their common endeavour to deliver a sustainable project with the objective of the re-vitalisation and sustainability of yet another of the District's villages which are so rich in potential.

## Chester-le-Street

He announced that the refurbishment of the Mechanics' Institute will be completed by Spring 2007 and pointed out that this is a project that is time and finance limited. He was aware that some disruption was inevitable while the contractors were on site, but stressed that businesses of all descriptions, and the wider community, will have a facility of which all can be genuinely proud.

Councillor C Jukes reported that the Civic Heart project is reaching a potential critical phase during the coming months. He highlighted that clearly there are some important planning and consultative considerations to be taken into account if this project is to develop further. Councillor C Jukes added that he was keen for this project to deliver value for money, that the community is very properly considered, that traders are treated sensitively, and that people are attracted to the town centre. He stressed that an essential part of the Civic Heart is redeveloping and re-energising the Market. It was mentioned that a pilot exercise had recently been undertaken with French stallholders selling goods which he understood from the feedback to have been positive. Councillor C Jukes stated that he had been able to do some 'browsing' on those days when the French market was in town and found it fascinating, with a tremendous array of produce on display, and of course the sound of "allez! allez!" made him feel for a moment as if he were in Brittany. Councillor C Jukes expressed the sincere hope that in time more of the themed approach to The Market can compliment the more traditional products that have been available hitherto.

## Regeneration Strategy

Councillor C Jukes advised that the Regeneration Strategy was scheduled to be adopted later this year to build upon existing projects. He added that there was another consultation event for partners over the next few weeks to further refine the strategy.

## Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

Councillor C Jukes informed the Council that the Economy and Regeneration Policy Group of the Local Strategic Partnership had virtually reached its final conclusions as part of the revised Community Strategy, which he believed would become an increasingly important part of the co-ordination of service delivery in the District.

## Electronic Government (E-Government)

Councillor C Jukes concluded by stating that the Council continues to make significant progress with its e-government communications. He remarked that, although he knew he had mentioned it before, it was worth just re-iterating that some excellent work has been undertaken in Information Technology (IT), not least in the way support has been provided in developing the Council's Geographical Information System (GIS) service.

Councillor C Jukes recommended those who have access to the internet should visit the Council's website to have a look at the GIS service as it was well worth looking at. He added that it is part of the Council's continued strong performance in implementing its Improvement and Recovery Plan.

### (d) Housing and Community Safety

Councillor IS Smith reported the following matters:-

#### Audit Commission Inspection

Councillor IS Smith drew attention to a headline from one of the local newspapers which reported 'What a Star' - and that yes it related to Chester-le-Street District Council's Housing Service. The Audit Commission Housing Inspectors had awarded the Service a one star rating.

She explained that the Inspectors recognised considerable progress has been made in most service areas since the last inspection.

Councillor IS Smith highlighted some of those improvements, namely that:

- Gas servicing is now well managed
- The homelessness service has improved beyond all recognition
- The energy efficiency of housing stock has improved
- Anti social behaviour is being dealt with effectively
- The Council is recognised for good regeneration work
- It has achieved the good practice target for urgent and emergency repairs
- Its tenancy agreement has improved and is easy to understand
- The Council has secured a lot on inward investment over the last 2 years from both the Single Housing Investment Pot (SHIP) and the Housing Corporation

Councillor IS Smith stated that Members, Officers and staff are to be congratulated for without their hard work and commitment the Council would not have been able to achieve the improvements so she expressed thanks to all.

She added that there still remained a number of challenges to meet. For example – a need to investigate in further Information Technology (IT) to make the current system more efficient.

Councillor IS Smith observed that performance, although improving, is variable in some areas and that the Council needs to publicise what it does more. She suggested that the Council needs to consider whether it can employ more apprentices. She added that benefits ‘take up’ needs to be improved through more benefit campaigns and the Council needs to develop a comprehensive profile of all customers. Councillor IS Smith stated that she was confident that the Council can meet those challenges.

### Community Safety

Councillor IS Smith advised that the District Council with its partners is working proactively in dealing with community safety. She explained that the partnership is known as Chester-le-Street Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and that its priorities are to reduce recorded crime, anti social behaviour, hate crime, domestic violence and substance misuse.

Councillor IS Smith reported that each priority is accompanied by an action plan detailing how the partnership will achieve its priorities and that to ensure that structures and processes are effective the partnership has:

- Implemented a performance and project management framework
- All Action Plans reviewed every 6 months
- Created a funding delegation scheme
- Localised service delivery
- Improved data provision

Councillor IS Smith drew attention to the fact that the District of Chester-le-Street is allocated funding annually from the Safer Stronger Communities Fund. This money, she pointed out, is allocated to projects that will enable the Council to achieve the priorities within its Crime Reduction and Substance Misuse Strategy.

She explained that one of these projects is the Private Landlords Accreditation Scheme - a scheme which is very successful and now has 50 members and over 200 properties. Of these properties all have been inspected and given accreditation status. This ensures these properties are of a high standard. All tenants are vetted and have no history of rent arrears or anti social behaviour. This has led to a decrease in anti social behaviour.

Councillor IS Smith reported that the Council's Community Safety Team is actively working within all of the local communities, dealing with very sensitive issues and working with the Police to make these communities safer and better places in which to live.

It was explained that since March 2006, in one village, the Council and the Police have implemented a number of enforcement and interventions:

- 2 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) have been signed
- 3 Notices to Quit have been issued
- 6 joint warning letters have been sent
- 16 visits have been carried out by an Anti-social Behaviour Officer (ASB) Officer and local Beat Officer
- 195 cases responded to by the local Police Officer

Councillor IS Smith stressed that it was important to remember that residents play an essential part in this process for it to be successful.

She stated that the Community Safety Manager regularly updates the Council's web page with statistical information regarding crime and deliberate fire data, and advised that if Members don't have access to this facility they can contact the Community Safety Manager.

#### Affordable Homes

Councillor IS Smith reported that the Council has teamed up with Barrett Homes to provide affordable homes in Sacriston which was an opportunity for residents in greatest need to acquire a new home at low cost. She noted that the homes are available now.

#### Energy Efficiency

It was announced that Chester-le-Street District Council came 5th nationally (out of all Councils) in a survey conducted by British Gas on public awareness of energy efficiency within the home. It was based on people taking up measures rather than their knowledge and what they could do about it. She said that this shows that a lot of the work the Council has been doing under its affordable warmth strategy and cosy scheme has been successful in part. She added that the challenge is now to take this awareness and ensure residents apply it by installing measures such as cavity wall and loft insulation in their homes. Councillor IS Smith observed that it gave the Council a good foundation to work from, one it did not have in the past.

#### Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of Housing Stock (LSVT) Consultation

Councillor IS Smith announced that there had been a record turn out for the Council's Home Choice Exhibition, with more than 1000 tenants attending. She explained that the Council will be giving tenants a further opportunity to see the type of improvements possible with greater investment.

She stated that the Council would be opening show homes across the District at Edmondsley, Perkinsville, Bournmoor, Sacriston and Chester-le-Street and that they will be open every day for 2 weeks starting Monday 16 October 2006.

Councillor IS Smith expressed the hope that everyone will take the opportunity to see what can be achieved with greater investment.

(e) Personnel and Communications

There was no report from Councillor SCL Westrip.

**62 AUDIT COMMISSION FRAMEWORK FOR COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FROM 2006**

Consideration was given to a report from the Assistant Chief Executive detailing the new process for seeking re-categorisation under Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and indicating what the Council's application for re-categorisation ought to include.

The Assistant Chief Executive spoke to the report.

The Council RESOLVED:

- “1. That an application for re-categorisation be submitted by the 2 October 2006 deadline.
2. That the content of the application as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report be agreed subject to any final amendments being delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive.”

**63 POLITICAL BALANCE REVIEW**

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on a review of political balance arrangements following the election of Councillor DA Rand and her acceptance as a member of the Labour Group.

The Council RESOLVED:

- “1. That the review of the representation of different political groups, as detailed in the report, be noted.

2. That those arrangements regarding political balance and the disapplication of the political balance arrangements, and the allocation of seats which existed immediately prior to this latest duty to review the representation of different political groups, be reinstated.”

#### **64 AFFORDABLE HOMES NOMINATION POLICY**

A report was submitted from the Head of Regeneration advising that the Leader of the Council had made a decision using the urgent powers procedure as set out in Part 4D Paragraph 4 of the Council’s Constitution to adopt and implement the Affordable Homes Nomination Policy for the Holly Crescent, Sacriston, development and other future schemes, subject to future evaluation, and liaison with the Safe and Healthy Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the actions taken by the Leader of the Council in invoking the urgent powers procedure under Part 4D of the Constitution to adopt and implement the Affordable Homes Nomination Policy, be endorsed.”

#### **65 CHESTER-LE-STREET LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – ADOPTION OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT.**

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Regeneration seeking the adoption of the Chester-le-Street Local Development Framework Statement of Community Involvement.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the Statement of Community Involvement as detailed on the appendix to the report, be adopted.”

#### **66 2005/06 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Consideration was given to a report from the Director of Resources seeking approval to the amended 2005/06 Statement of Accounts, following audit. Copies of the Statement of Accounts and pages with amendments had previously been circulated to Members.

The Director of Resources spoke to the report and advised that a Corporate Governance Steering Group had been set up.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the 2005/06 Statement of Accounts as amended following audit, be approved.”

## **67 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2005/06**

Consideration was given to a report from the Accountancy Manager detailing the Council's treasury activity for 2005/06 and the Prudential Indicators for 2005/06.

The Council RESOLVED:

- “1. That the actual 2005/06 Prudential Indicators, detailed in the report, be approved.
2. That the Treasury Management Stewardship report for 2005/06 be noted.”

## **68 THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT**

Consideration was given to the Annual Governance Report covering the audit of the Council for the year ended 31 March 2006. The report was presented by Steve Nicklin, District Auditor, and Caroline Tyrell, Audit Manager.

The Council RESOLVED:

- “1. That the recommendations in the report and the action plan appended thereto be noted.
2. That authority be granted for the Letter of Representation to be signed on behalf of the Council.”

## **69 ADDITIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR FRAUD INVESTIGATORS, INTERVENTION OFFICERS AND INTERNAL AUDITORS.**

Consideration was given to a report from the Revenues and Benefits Manager seeking approval to an additional Code of Conduct for Fraud Investigators, Intervention Officers and Internal Auditors that will address the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate's recommendation to update the current Code to reflect legislation and regulations as well as meeting a key enabler within the Housing and Council Tax Benefit Performance Standards.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the additional Code of Conduct, as appended to the report, be adopted.”

## **70 LARGE SCALE VOLUNTARY TRANSFER OF HOUSING STOCK (LSVT) – CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Consideration was given to a report from the Director of Community Services seeking approval to arrangements to avoid conflicts of interest during the LSVT (Large Scale Voluntary Transfer) process.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that the Council's Standards Committee had endorsed arrangements as detailed on the draft protocol appended to the report.

The Council RESOLVED:

- “1. That the draft Protocol as appended to the report be approved.
2. That the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be requested to prepare and issue appropriate guidance for both staff and elected members.”

## **71 CURRENT TENANT RENT ARREARS POLICY**

Consideration was given to a report from the Director of Community Services seeking approval to the Current Tenant Rent Arrears Policy.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the Current Tenant Rent Arrears Policy as detailed on the appendix to the report be adopted.”

## **72 HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS – CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR**

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Organisational Development seeking approval to holiday arrangements for the Christmas and New Year period 2006/07.

The Council RESOLVED:

- “1. That a concessionary day holiday be awarded on Friday 29 December 2006 and the holiday for the Christmas and New Year period be as detailed in the report.
2. That those employees who are required to work on extra statutory holidays be granted time in lieu to be taken at a later date in consultation with the appropriate Service Team Manager.
3. That a report be submitted to Members in due course detailing emergency cover arrangements for the holiday period.”



### **73 KEY DECISIONS**

The Leader advised that Members had been provided with a list of the key decisions made by the Executive since the last Council meeting.

### **74 COMMON SEAL**

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the action of the Officer in affixing the Common Seal of the Council to the following documents be confirmed:

Transfer in relation to Phase 2a, Pelton Fell  
Deed of Release relating to 1, 19 and 87 Whitehill Crescent, Pelton Fell and 6 Shakespeare Terrace, Pelton Fell  
Nominations Agreement relating to Phase 2a, Pelton Fell  
Transfer in duplicate relating to 21 Ridley Avenue, Chester-le-Street  
Transfer in duplicate relating to 4 Lyne Close, Perkinsville  
Deed of Release of covenants in respect of land to rear of 27 Lyndhurst Avenue  
Agreement in duplicate sample stock survey – Housing Condition  
Transfer in duplicate in respect of 76 Marigold Crescent, Bournmoor  
Form DS1 in respect of 11 Jacques Terrace, Chester-le-Street  
Transfer in duplicate in respect of 86 The Brooms, Ouston  
Licence in duplicate under S144 and S177 of the Highways Act 1980 affecting Red Rose Terrace  
Lease in duplicate relating to 2 Front Street, Edmondsley  
Section 104 Agreement in duplicate relating to Woodlands, Ouston  
Six parts of Section 38 Agreement in connection with land at Pelton”

### **75 CHARITY NIGHT**

Following the conclusion of the business, the Chair advised that there was charity night organised for Saturday 30 September at Sacriston WMC in aid of his Charity Appeal.

The meeting terminated at 7.55pm