

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Consett on Monday, 7th July, 2003 at 4.30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Councillor A. Watson, Chair

Councillors W. Armstrong, Mrs. E.J. Coulson, O. Johnson, D.G. Llewellyn, M.J. Malone and A. Taylor.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor J. Huntley.

9. MINUTES

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 2nd June, 2003 were agreed as a correct record.

10. CARELINE/CCTV – JOINT ARRANGEMENT

Councillor M.J. Malone presented the report which requested permission for Officers to explore the provision of a joint Careline/CCTV facility with Chester-le-Street District Council and other interested partners.

Option: Whether or not to agree for Officers to explore partnership working for the provision of Careline and CCTV facilities.

RESOLVED: that: Derwentside explore a partnership agreement with Chester-le-Street District Council and other interested parties on the joint provision of Careline and CCTV services.

Reason: The development of partnership working was actively encouraged in the Best Value Inspector's report on Careline.

11. **ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR BILL**

Councillor A. Watson presented the report, which advised on the publication of the Anti-Social Behaviour Bill, outlined its provisions, new powers, duties and assessed the implications for the Council.

Option: Whether or not to agree with the recommendations in the report regarding the Anti-Social Behaviour Bill and comments on the consultation paper from the Department of Works and Pensions proposing Housing Benefit sanctions.

RESOLVED:

Anti-Social Behaviour Bill:

- (1) The report be noted;
- (2) A time limit working group be established comprising of:-
 - The Leader of the Council
 - Portfolio Holder
 - Chair of Scrutiny
 - One representative from the Independent Group of Councillors
 - Community Safety and Information Officer plus an Officer from each of the following divisions:-
 - Housing
 - Environmental Services
 - Environmental Health
 - Planning
 - Corporate Policy

To lead on co-ordinating:-

- The existing and proposed activities to tackle anti-social behaviour to enable them to be embedded, implemented, monitored and reviewed formally and systematically at a directorate and corporate level, and as such, incorporated into the Council's Enforcement Concordat;
- The monitoring of performance on the activity indicators

- identified for their respective directorates.
 - The establishment of milestones and in-built systems for monitoring and evaluating directorate targets and initiatives that have been developed to tackle anti-social behaviour.
 - The co-ordination of ongoing consultative processes for assessing needs and demands in relation to tackling anti-social behaviour in the community.
- (3) A local indicator be introduced – Performance on Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour. This would include any agreed indicators being monitored using the Council's Performance Management Framework, and published each June in the Best Value Performance Plan, along with regular progress reports on performance to the Scrutiny Panel.

Proposed removal of Housing Benefit in respect of Anti-Social Behaviour

- (4) The report be noted, and the comments set out be adopted as those of the Council.

Reason: To ensure that the Council's policies and procedures are amended to take into account the provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Bill.

12 PARTNERSHIP BOARDS

Councillor A. Watson presented the report which invited Members to consider proposals to improve services to elderly and other vulnerable adults by changing the way Social Services, Primary Care Trusts and Local Authorities work together within County Durham.

Options:

- (1) Retain the status quo and do not sign up to take the initiative forward.
- (2) Accept the principal and work towards a more formal agreement over 12-18 months.
- (3) Accept the partnership as a way forward and commit the Council fully to the proposals with a financial commitment in partnership with others within 12 months.

RESOLVED: that the Council:-

- (1) Agree to the principles of developing a Partnership Board and develop the terms of reference or constitution which partners will be expected to develop.
- (2) Agree to seek NRF funding for a post to support the Derwentside Partnership or, if this is not available, to seek funding from the Council's Corporate Development Reserve. This would be on the understanding that all partners had signed up to this proposal and shared any costs.
- (3) Agree to develop the Partnership and fully commit the Council to the establishment of the board within 12 months.

Reasons:

- (1) The development of a Partnership Board follows the Government's strategy in developing services to the user in a more efficient manner and also tries to remove the restrictions in cross-boundary working.
- (2) This supports the Corporate Aim to work with others to improve the health of the population and reduce inequalities.

**13. CRAGHEAD SETTLEMENT RENEWAL INITIATIVE (SRI)
CASH FLOW ARRANGEMENTS**

Councillor A. Taylor presented a report which provided details of Craghead Area Partnership's Settlement Renewal Initiative (SRI) which is being implemented over a three year timescale from 2002-2004. The purpose of the report was to request that the Council becomes the accountable body for the SRI from 2003-2005.

Options:

- (1) The Council cash flows the project but Craghead Area Partnership remains the accountable body.
- (2) The Council becomes the accountable body.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (1) Derwentside District Council become the accountable body, is awarded contracts directly and takes on a formal monitoring role as detailed in the report.

Reason: If the Council do not support this the SRI would be unable to continue as Craghead Area Partnership as a community organisation, is not in a position to cash flow the full programme of proposed projects and would be unable to implement the full SRI without the Council acting in this capacity.

14. COMMUNITY SAFETY CORPORATE PLAN

Councillor A. Watson presented a report which outlined the Council's activities in responding to its duties under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Members were asked to consider adopting a Community Safety Corporate Plan which accords with the Derwentside Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership strategy 2002-05.

Option: Whether or not to adopt the Community Safety Corporate Plan.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (1) The Community Safety Corporate Plan be approved.
- (2) The plan be used as a basis for developing directorate service plans to enable the Council's Crime and Disorder reduction activities to be embedded, implemented, monitored and reviewed formally and systematically at a Directorate and Corporate level.
- (3) A working group of Officers be identified in each Directorate to monitor performance on the activity indicators identified for their respective Directorates.
- (4) The above Officers comprise a time-limited working group to:-
 - Determine milestones and in-built systems for monitoring and evaluating Directorate targets and initiatives that have been developed to reduce crime and disorder.
 - Develop an ongoing consultative process for assessing needs and demands in relation to crime and disorder reduction in the community.
 - The activity indicators included in the plan be designated as local performance indicators and included as such in the Performance Management Framework.

Reason: The Council has statutory duties to help tackle Crime and Disorder, and a commitment in its Corporate Plan 2002-05 to work with others to make Derwentside a safer place. The plan aims to ensure that all initiatives flow from and are subject to, clear

strategic direction and scrutiny, enabling the Council to continue to meet its statutory duties and policy aspirations.

15. LEISURE GRANTS REVIEW – FUNDING OFFICER POST

Prior to consideration of this item, the Executive Director advised that the Scrutiny Board had requested that the report be considered by Overview and Scrutiny prior to consideration by the Executive.

RESOLVED: that the report be forwarded to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for debate and their comments and subsequently returned to the Executive for further consideration.

Reason: In order to allow Members of Overview and Scrutiny to comment on the report.

16. EU REGIONAL POLICY REVIEW

Councillor D.G. Llewellyn presented the report which requested that Members endorse a response made on behalf of the Council to the Government's Consultation, Paper 'A Modern Regional Policy for the United Kingdom'.

Option: Whether or not to endorse the response as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: that the response as detailed in the report to the Government's Consultation Paper 'A Modern Regional Policy for the United Kingdom' be endorsed.

Reasons:

- (1) The deadline for comments on the Government's proposal was 4th July, 2003.
- (2) Simplification of regional programme management and administrative arrangements to reduce bureaucracy and increase flexibility was necessary to ensure a more effective regional policy which is able to meet local needs. The principle of aligning EU and UK Regional Policy is therefore to be welcomed.

17. CUSTOMER SERVICES BEST VALUE INSPECTION

Councillor A. Taylor presented the report, the purpose of which was to appraise Members of the content of the Best Value Inspection of Customer Services and draw attention to the recommendations contained therein.

Option: Whether or not to adopt the recommendations made by the Best Value Inspection report.

RESOLVED: that the recommendations of the Inspection Report be incorporated into a revised Best Value Improvement Plan as well as the ongoing review of the service improvement options for customer service.

Reason: This is in line with the ethos of Best Value and the need to demonstrate step changes to bring about fundamental improvements to the service.

18. DERWENTSIDE FESTIVALS 2003 PROGRESS REPORT

Councillor A. Watson presented the report which (a) provided a brief update on progress made so far in securing and planning the Stanley Blues Festival and Allensford Festival for 2003 and (b) projected additional financial and organisational consequences of holding the Allensford Festival at Allensford Park and to seek a decision on contingency funding for this event.

Options: Whether or not to agree to the proposed event organisations and cost implications of both Festivals as identified in the report.

RESOLVED:

- (1) The progress made to date regarding the financing and organisation of the two Derwentside Festivals be noted.
- (2) The involvement of the Council as lead partner (and Licensee) in the management and promotion of Stanley Blues Festival on the Kings Head Playing Fields, Stanley on 2nd August, 2003 and the Allensford Festival at Allensford Park 23-25th August 2003 be endorsed.
- (3) In light of the shortfall of the expected amount of external funding, Officers attempt to minimise costs in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council together with the Portfolio Holder.

- (4) The recommendations for the Park and Ride Scheme were not agreed.
- (5) That Officers arrange for surveys to be carried out at both Festivals and as part of a Citizens Panel questionnaire, to ascertain peoples' preference for future Festivals provision in the District.
- (6) The Executive Director to communicate with the Emergency Services regarding the arrangements for the Festivals.

19. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED on the motion of Councillor W. Armstrong, seconded by Councillor M.J.Malone, that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act (as amended).

20. DERWENTSIDE TRAINING - CONTRACTS REVIEW

Councillor E. Coulson presented the report which outlined the current position regarding Derwentside Training's contracts, outlined operating implications relating to this position and suggested interim operational arrangements relating to Derwentside Training.

Options:

- (1) Cease all operations on 31st July, 2003.
- (2) Retain entire service with Council subsidy.
- (3) Seek to retain delivery of Gateway to work contracts only.
- (4) Seek to retain delivery of Gateway to work contracts and staff capacity to both provide management support and on a time-limited basis, explore alternative training opportunities/contracts.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (1) the fixed term contracts of employees currently delivering Business Administration and Miscellaneous contracts be terminated on 31st July, 2003.
- (2) A review of progress in identifying, investigating, assessing, planning and re-sourcing other training opportunities/contracts be

conducted during October/November 2003 with a view to determining the operation of Derwentside Training beyond 31st December, 2003.

- (3) The Director of Development and Asset Management be authorised to agree any further interim arrangements/contracts to deliver this option.
- (4) That a meeting be arranged with County Durham Learning Skills Council to discuss these issues and that H Armstrong M.P. and K Jones M.P. be briefed on the position.

Reasons:

- (1) Derwentside Training has a number of clear, proven training delivery strengths which, as far as is feasible, should be retained in the interests of providing the best choice/provision of local training to meet skills development needs within Derwentside.
- (2) There is an existing Employment Service contract.
- (3) There is a potential to develop additional areas of training operation.
- (4) There is a need to operate within the annual funding available to the operation whilst at the same time, seeking to diversify/expand its activities.

21. GATEHOUSE INDUSTRIAL UNITS

Councillor A. Watson presented the report which requested that Members consider options for the future of the Gatehouse Industrial Units on Berry Edge Industrial Estate, Consett.

Options:

- (1) Retain Units of Industrial Purposes
- (2) Seek to dispose of site for residential development
- (3) Declare units surplus to requirements but retain until sports development opportunity is determined.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (1) the Council declare the units surplus to requirements but retain until the sports development opportunity is determined.
- (2) The principle of the Gatehouse Units being declared surplus to requirements and the site on which the units are currently based

- being redeveloped be agreed.
- (3) The Gatehouse units being retained for existing use until the preferred option for redevelopment of the site is determined.
 - (4) Officers be authorised to take appropriate steps to ensure that the Gatehouse site is available for redevelopment once a preferred alternative use is agreed.
 - (5) Officers be authorised to enter into negotiations with existing occupiers with a view to:-
 - Securing availability of the site once required; and
 - Helping to identify alternative property availability.
 - (6) Officer advise Derwentside Industrial Development Agency (DIDA) that the Council will not at this stage be engaging in the joint disposal of sites at Berry Edge but would wish to work with DIDA to help their proposed site disposal to proceed.

Reasons:

- (1) The Gatehouse units currently have nominal economic value, and increasing maintenance liability and detract from the aesthetics of the neighbouring area.
- (2) A major sports development within the area would likely be of substantial benefit and it was considered important to allow this opportunity to be explored before a final decision was made on the alternative use to which the Gatehouse site should be put.

22. REGENERATION OF HILL TOP VIEW ESTATE

Councillor A. Watson presented the report which requested that Members consider options for the regeneration of Hilltop View Estate, Langley Park.

Options:

- (1) No demolition
- (2) Total demolition of all 91 dwellings, with cleared site being marketed for redevelopment with properties for sale.
- (3) Selective demolition of Numbers 1-15 and 29-86 (68 houses and 10 flats) with 13 houses retained (numbers 16-28).
- (4) Selective demolition of 54 houses and 10 flats – Numbers 20-78, 27 houses to be retained – numbers 1-19 and 79-86.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (1) The selective demolition of 54 houses and 10 flats (numbers 20-78) and the retention of 27 houses (numbers 1-19 and 79-86) Hilltop View Estate, Langley Park be agreed.
- (2) That the implementation of Compulsory Purchase Orders, where necessary, be agreed.
- (3) The need for some inward investment in the remaining Council properties be agreed, subject to consultation with residents and a future report being submitted to the Executive.

Reason:

- (1) This will allow a number of residents the choice to remain on the estate, whilst reducing the overall rented stock in that immediate area. This rationalisation of Council housing combined with inward investment of the remaining stock will produce a more cohesive sustainable community in that section of the village.
- (2) This allows capacity to re-house those families displaced and yet still releases a substantial amount of land for re-development purposes.

CONCLUSION OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 5.16 p.m.

Chair.