

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Consett on Monday, 3rd November, 2003 at 4.30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Councillor A. Watson, Chair

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

72. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the following meeting be agreed as a correct record.

Executive held on 6th October, 2003

73. AIR QUALITY REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

Councillor W. Armstrong presented the report which informed Members of the findings of the Update and Screening Assessment recently undertaken by the consultants Faber Maunsell as the first stage in the authority's Air Quality Review. The review is required to be undertaken periodically under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. This study was commissioned in March 2003 by District Councils within County Durham.

Option: Whether or not to accept the Update and Screening Assessment.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (1) the Update and Screening Assessment and its findings be accepted;
- (2) this authority enter into the statutory consultation procedure with regard to the Update and Screening Assessment;
- (3) That a survey of the Esh Winning area (contained within Derwentside) be carried out to establish the exact position with regard to solid fuel burning in that area;
- (4) a further report on the situation within Esh Winning be considered by the Executive, once the survey has been completed.

Reasons: Agreement to this and subsequent action on these recommendations will result in the authority meeting its

obligations with regard to Air Quality Review and Assessment and to comply under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.

74. GRANT AID REQUEST:ALZHEIMER'S DEMENTIA CARE AND RESEARCH SOCIETY

Councillor W. Armstrong presented the report which asked Members to consider a request for grant aid received from the Alzheimer's Dementia Care and Research Society, Derwentside Branch. The Alzheimer's Society were bidding for £5,000 from this Council to assist in the provision of new technology to support their activities in Derwentside.

Option: Whether or not to grant the request from the Alzheimer's Society for grant aid.

RESOLVED: that the request from the Alzheimer's Society for grant aid of up to £5,000 for the purchase of computer hardware and accessibility be approved. Funding of the grant to be sourced from the Council's Community Initiative Fund.

Reasons: The Derwentside Branch of the Alzheimer's Society is an organisation which has objectives which are compatible with Derwentside District Council's Corporate Plan, and without access to the grant aid requested, vulnerable people within the Derwentside Community will receive a poorer level of service, have less access to information and, as a consequence will continue to suffer from higher levels of social isolation than other members of the community.

75. SCRUTINY BOARD

The Executive Director advised that at the Scrutiny Board meeting held on 31st October, 2003, no Executive reports had been called in. Scrutiny Board had requested that the Executive consider the recommendations of Scrutiny when considering items J and K on the Executive agenda.

76. IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT (IEG) EXPENDITURE

Councillor M. Malone presented the report which advised Members of how last year's IEG funds had been spent and to seek approval of the proposed expenditure for this financial year IEG 2.

Option: Whether or not to approve the expenditure detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: that the expenditure as detailed in the report be approved.

Reasons: To help the Council meet the E-Government targets.

77. ILLEGAL OFF-ROAD MOTORCYCLING

Councillor J. Huntley presented the report which proposed joint measures to tackle off-road motorcycling in Derwentside both through prevention and enforcement and by encouraging riders to take a more responsible approach to their activities. Regarding Option 4, Councillor Huntley stated that she had already received representations from Consett South and Castleside Ward Members who were experiencing a particular problem in their area.

Options:

- (1) Prioritise sites within NRF wards, to enable submission of the NRF bid for £20,000
- (2) Seek funding to extend the works to other NRF sites.
- (3) Extend the works to non-NRF sites.
- (4) Identify potential sites within Derwentside where this activity could take place.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (1) the Council confirms that it does not allow any unauthorised vehicular activity on Council land;
- (2) a working group comprising representatives of the Directorates of Economic and Community Development (including Community Safety), Environmental Services (i.e. General Services and Development Control) and Finance (i.e. Risk Management) be established to progress a joint approach to tackling this problem as set out in Options 1-3 above.
- (3) the list of sites set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved as a basis for developing a programme of works to limit access to selected areas and that Council Members and members of the Community Network be consulted on these suggested sites;
- (4) following the consultation exercise referred to above, a bid in respect of the £20,000 offered by the LSP for signage and access limitation works be submitted accordingly by this Council on behalf of the Derwentside Crime and Disorder Partnership;
- (5) the Working Group referred to above continue to identify new sites in NRF areas and to strengthen works in existing areas identified if necessary to ensure that the grant is expended within the set timescale.
- (6) the working group be similarly requested to identify and cost sites throughout the District where this problem exists and which would benefit from these measures;
- (7) Scrutiny be requested to consider and identify potential sites within Derwentside where this activity could take place as a

means of encouraging a more responsible approach to this activity.

Reasons: The projects contribute towards:-

- (1) Securing the priority objective to reduce the fear of crime, as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.
- (2) Implementing the Derwentside Crime and Disorder Strategy 2002/05 and related strategies, based on the principles of Best Value, cost effectiveness and awareness of community needs, both as a Council and as a member of the Derwentside Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.
- (3) Joint working and integration with other Countywide initiatives, including SRB6 and NRF.

78. CIPFA'S TREASURY MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SERVICES

Councillor Watson presented the report which asked Members to consider the adoption of the new Treasury Management Code, which will govern the Council's Treasury Management function.

Option: Whether or not to adopt the new Treasury Management Code.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (1) the revised CIPFA Code of Practice for treasury Management in the Public Services be adopted;
- (2) the clauses are formally adopted;
- (3) the Treasury Management Policy Statement is approved;
- (4) the Policy on interest rate exposure is approved.

Reasons:

- (1) The Council need to have in place formal and comprehensive objectives, policies and practices, strategies and reporting arrangements for the effective management and control of their treasury management activities.
- (2) The Council's policies and practices should make clear that the effective management of risk, having regard to return, is prime objective of the Treasury Management activities.
- (3) The Council acknowledge that the pursuits of Best Value in Treasury Management, and the use of suitable performance measures are valid and important tools for responsible organisations to employ in support of their business and service objectives; and that within the context of effective risk management, our Treasury Management policies and practices should reflect this.

79. GRANT AID REQUEST: DARLINGTON AND DURHAM COUNTY RACIAL EQUALITY COUNCIL

Councillor J. Huntley presented the report which advised of an application for funding from the Darlington and Durham Racial Equality Council. The application has been made to a number of statutory bodies in the County and is requested to meet a funding shortfall in their annual running costs of approximately £54,000.

Option: Whether or not to contribute towards funding the Darlington and Durham Racial Equality Council.

RESOLVED: that the Executive Director be empowered to provide up to £5,000 towards the Darlington and Durham County Racial Equality Council's running costs in the current financial year, and funding for the following two financial years (up to £5,000 p.a.) is considered as part of the budget process. Funding for this contribution to be met from the Council's Community Initiative Fund.

Reason: Without the support set out in the report the closure of the Darlington and Durham County Racial Equality Council is a real prospect. The provision of support to the agency, whose vision is compatible with the Council's Corporate Plan, would significantly enhance the Council's ability to meet its duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

80. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: on the motion of Councillor W. Armstrong, seconded by Councillor O. Johnson 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 1,7,8,9 and 11.

81. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN – BUDGET PRIORITIES AND NONE-PRIORITIES

Councillor A. Watson presented the report, which requested that Members consider proposals for the development of its medium term financial strategy by identifying high and non-priorities for future budget consideration.

Option: Whether or not to agree to the high and low priority issues as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: that the proposals outlined in the report and the review of services as outlined in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 be agreed.

Reason: To allow for the development of the medium term financial plan, potentially creating financial capacity to be reinvested into higher priority services.

82. REPLACEMENT OF MAILING EQUIPMENT

Councillor A. Watson presented the report which advised that the Council's mailing equipment was in need of urgent replacement. The purpose of the report was to seek approval for the investment in new mailing equipment for the authority.

Options:

- (1) Investment in new mailing equipment.
- (2) Pay for mailing to be done externally.
- (3) Mail all documents manually.

RESOLVED: that approval be granted for the acquisition of new mailing equipment as detailed in the report and that the Director of Finance be authorised to seek the best quotation for leasing the equipment.

Reasons:

- (1) The Council's mailing equipment is approximately 14 years old, becoming unreliable and almost impossible to maintain as parts are now obsolete.
- (2) InPrint now produces large amounts of variable data printing for various departments most of which require mailing. It is therefore logical that any replacement mailing equipment would be better utilised by being sited with the printing function. Sourcing this service externally would lead to a very disjointed service and not make economic sense.
- (3) The sheer volume of variable data produced by InPrint does not make manual mailing a feasible option.

83. PROACTIVE HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CUSTOMER SERVICE OUTLETS

Councillor J. Huntley presented the report which highlighted the need to improve Housing Management Performance and proposed options for achieving this improvement. Included in this approach was the retention of localised customer service outlets and the improvement of this service by combining all front of house services in one division. This report had been forwarded to Overview and Scrutiny for their comments and the

Executive considered the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 21st October, 2003 relating to the report. **The report had also been considered by Scrutiny Board who had commented that these issues needed to be kept under review under Best Value.**

Option: Whether or not to agree the changes to Housing services as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (1) Following the guidance of Overview and Scrutiny, the recommendations within the report could not be agreed.
- (2) A further review of the situation to be carried out over the next six months.
- (3) Further information on options for pro-active Housing Management be submitted to a future meeting.

Reasons: These issues had been forwarded to Overview and Scrutiny for consideration and following their recommendations it was agreed that the report's recommendations could not be agreed, but accepted that the principles contained and the options available for service improvement would be reviewed over the next six months.

CONCLUSION OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 5.10 p.m.

Chair.