

## **EXECUTIVE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Consett on Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2004 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.

### **126. MINUTES**

Provided the resolution for minute number 124 is included, the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2004 were agreed as a correct record.

### **127. CORPORATE COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN 2004**

Councillor J. Huntley presented the report which requested approval of the final draft of the Corporate Community Safety Plan, including the list of Performance Indicators to be collected commencing April, 2004.

#### **Option:**

- (1) Whether or not to agree the Corporate Community Safety Plan 2004 as submitted or require further work to be carried out.

**RESOLVED:** that the Corporate Community Safety Plan as submitted be approved and incorporated into the Council's Corporate Management Process for monitoring, review and improvement and accordingly, collection of the indicators contained therein be commenced as from April, 2004.

#### **Reasons:**

- (1) To comply with statute
- (2) To enable the Council to contribute effectively to the corporate aim of working with others to make Derwentside a safer place in which to live and work.
- (3) To ensure that the process accords with the Council's Corporate and Performance Management Framework.
- (4) To address identified weaknesses in monitoring both the

performance of the strategy at a corporate level, and the Council's response to its obligations under S.17 of the Crime and Disorder Act.

## **128. RENT INCENTIVE SCHEME**

Councillor J. Huntley presented the report which recommended implementation of a twice yearly draw with a first prize of £250, a second prize of £100, a third prize of £50 and four fourth prizes of £25 for the Council House tenants who have a clear or credited rent account at the time of the draw.

Councillor Watson commented that this was a good incentive scheme which would reward loyal and responsible tenants who pay their rent on time. Scrutiny Board had also expressed a wish that it may be worthwhile investigating the possibility of a similar scheme for Council Tax.

**Option:** Whether or not to agree to implement the Rent Incentive Scheme as detailed in the report.

**RESOLVED:** that approval be granted of the introduction of a rent payment incentive scheme and the method of financing the scheme as detailed in the report be agreed.

### **Reasons:**

- (1) As a way of rewarding good tenants.
- (2) An incentive to encourage tenants to pay their rent.
- (3) To reduce rent arrears.
- (4) To act as a building block for further incentive schemes.
- (5) To promote sustainable communities.

## **129. CORPORATE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY**

Councillor E.J. Coulson presented the report which proposed the adoption of a Corporate Procurement Strategy. In addition, she requested consideration of an addendum adding a further recommendation relating to the acquisition and development of an appropriate project and contract management system.

**Option:** Whether or not to adopt the strategy as submitted or to require further work to be undertaken before a final decision is made.

**RESOLVED:** that:-

- (1) The Corporate Procurement Strategy be adopted.
- (2) The required work be undertaken in order to enable procurement of an appropriate project and contract management system.

**Reasons:**

- (1) Opportunities will be created to develop new approaches to procurement which can enhance service savings/impacts.
- (2) Investment requirements associated with this enhanced service area would be resourced through savings targets against existing budgets, details of which will be set out in future reports.

**130. FESTIVALS PROGRAMME 2004**

Councillor A. Taylor presented the report which set out the proposals from the Festivals Working Group for a programme of Festivals activity in Derwentside during Summer 2004. The report also summarised the on-going work which the Festivals Working Group is undertaking in relation to the longer-term strategy for Festivals.

**Option:** Whether or not to agree to the proposals from the Festivals Working Group as detailed in the report.

**RESOLVED:** that:-

- (1) The venue for the new Festival for the Consett area be agreed as Blackhill and Consett Heritage Park.
- (2) Subject to the above, the remaining format and broad content of a 'Derwentside Festivals' package for 2004 as described in Section 3 of the report be approved.
- (3) The sum of £30,000 from the identified reserve be made available to Festival organisers with immediate effect.
- (4) The outline budget for the two events within the 'Derwentside Festivals' package set out in Section 3 of the report be accepted as a first draft.
- (5) The request by the Festivals Working Group to continue to meet in order to perform a steering and monitoring role for the Festivals in 2004 and also to fulfil other aspects of the original terms of reference be agreed.

**Reasons:**

- (1) The estimate for preparing the Berry Edge site would absorb costs in excess of £3,000, costs which would not be absorbed at Consett and Blackhill Park.
- (2) The Festivals Working Group has sought to produce a viable set of recommendations to meet the aspirations of Members and District residents within the resources available. Members were advised that there were a number of risks inherent in the packages set out in the report.

**RESOLVED:** on the motion of Councillor W. Armstrong, seconded by Councillor D.G. Llewellyn 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 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act (as amended).

**131. LAND AND PROPERTY DIVISION RESTRUCTURING**

(Not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs 1, 7, 8 and 9).

Councillor E.J. Coulson presented the report which requested that Members consider a restructuring of the land and Property Division to improve service effectiveness and efficiency and enable delivery of the Division's Service Plan.

**Options:**

- (1) No change to existing structure.
- (2) Adopt the restructuring proposals as set out in the report.
- (3) Require an alternative structure to be developed/adopted.

**RESOLVED:** that the restructuring proposals be agreed and authority granted to implement the Land and Property Division structure as proposed in the report.

**Reason:** The proposed structure would most appropriately support improvements in service efficiency and effectiveness.

**132. NON-HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2003/04**

(Not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 8)

Councillor E.J. Coulson presented the report which asked Members to consider changing the financing profile of the 2003/04 Non-Housing Capital Programme which would replenish revenue reserves.

Councillor Malone commented on the reference to securing Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and in response the Director of Finance advised that following despatch of the agenda information had been received that in the future the Police would be funding these orders and therefore the item could now be removed from the record.

**Option:** Whether or not to agree to the proposal to change the financing profile of the 2003/04 Non-Housing Capital Programme.

**RESOLVED:** that the amendment of the financing of the Non-Housing Capital Programme for 2003/04 be agreed.

**Reasons:**

- (1) The requested amendment will allow for some flexibility in the authority's revenue reserves.
- (2) It will also utilise capital resources that have accrued since the original programme was approved.

**133. DERWENTSIDE TRAINING – OPERATIONAL REVIEW**

(Not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs 1, 7, 8 and 9).

Councillor E.J. Coulson presented the report which provided an update on progress made by Derwentside Training in seeking to expand and diversify its training activities.

Councillor Watson commented that Derwentside Training had responded to challenges and produced a good facility at Villa Real and suggested that Members of the Executive visit the premises to show their appreciation and to celebrate the success of the project.

**Options:**

- (1) Support the continuation and development of Derwentside Training as proposed in the report.
- (2) Cease the operation of Derwentside Training.

**RESOLVED:** that:-

- (1) arrangements be made for the Executive Members to visit Derwentside Training to view the training and development

- facilities;
- (2) the continuation and development of Derwentside Training as detailed in the report be approved.
  - (3) surpluses generated by Derwentside Training during 2003/04 be used to support training delivery and development during 2004/05 and 2005/06;
  - (4) the post holder as detailed in the report slotted into the vacant post of Training Services Manager;
  - (5) an additional Training Officer post be established;
  - (6) requirements for a Finance Officer post and further capacity to support training delivery and engagement with disaffected young people be established, specified, graded and the subject of a further report;
  - (7) the Director of Development and Asset Management be authorised to agree any further arrangements/contracts which will support the development and financial viability of Derwentside Training.

**Reasons:**

- (1) Derwentside Training has responded well to the challenges it faced during early 2003 and the Executive wished to show their appreciation and to celebrate that success.
- (2) Derwentside Training has demonstrated:-
  - (a) Its ability to deliver/develop training provision which addressed local skills needs,
  - (b) Its ability to be self-financing, the support of training contractors; and the achievement of requisite levels of customer satisfaction/retention.

**The Chair advised that Item 9 on the Agenda – Building Systems Section Management Report had been withdrawn.**

**134. CONSETT MARKETS**

(Not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs 8 and 9).

Councillor D.G. Llewellyn presented the report and asked Members to consider the results of the tendering process of the Consett General and Flea Market operations.

Councillors were advised that assessment of the merits of each of the five applications received had been undertaken. The highest bid for the licence fee for the market had included a number of suggested variations to the items detailed in the tender specification. Acceptance of any of the

variations could be considered to be unfair to other applicants who could claim that they may well have submitted a higher tender if the market operation was being offered on a different basis. It was therefore recommended that the highest bid be accepted subject to that bidder agreeing to abide by the terms of the tender specification, otherwise the second highest bid should be accepted.

Councillor Watson commented that it was not appropriate for tenderers to be suggesting unacceptable variations to the operational terms of the contract and was concerned that this could both be seen as unfair to other tenderers and lead to unacceptable delay in renegotiating terms for the licence.

**Options:** To accept the highest bid, subject to the bidder agreeing to abide by the terms of the tender specification, or accept the highest bid that had been submitted which did not propose variations to terms.

**RESOLVED:** that the contract be awarded to the highest bid that had been submitted which did not propose variations to terms.

**Reasons:**

- (1) Under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council has the discretion as to whether to accept the best possible price for lettings of less than 7 years.
- (2) Acceptance of the highest tender would involve entering into negotiations regarding the market operation and licence terms. The changes proposed are unacceptable and rather than getting involved in further possibly lengthy and abortive negotiations it was considered that the tender for Derwentside Market Traders be accepted.

**In accordance with Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the Chairman agreed that the following item of business be considered as a decision was required urgently regarding the undertaking of surveys in respect of the non-traditional housing properties.**

**135. NON-TRADITIONAL HOUSING WITHIN DERWENTSIDE**

(Not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 9).

Councillor J. Huntley presented the report, which asked Members to consider carrying out survey work on non-traditional housing within Derwentside.

Options:

- (a) Whether or not to carry out survey works to 77 properties of Drury type construction in Leadgate and
- (b) Whether or not to carry out remedial works to 81 Dunelm Walk and 23 Dunelm Way as required.

**RESOLVED:** that:-

- (1) A full survey be carried out on the remaining 77 properties including those 35 non-Council, as soon as practical, with the estimate costs being met from the Regeneration Budget.
- (2) A further report be submitted to detail the findings of the survey, together with proposals for remedial works.
- (3) The two properties highlighted in the WSP be repaired as soon as possible, to be funded from the repairs and maintenance budget.

**Reasons:**

- (1) That each of the three separate surveys carried out on these type properties have found varying levels of deterioration, which will ultimately lead to structural failure if not addressed.
- (2) By virtue of the type of construction, whereby adjoining properties share structural posts and the 'pepper pot' dispersal of the 35 non-Council properties, it is essential that these private houses be included in any survey works.

### **CONCLUSION OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 5.22 p.m.

**Chair.**