

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Consett on Tuesday 7th September 2004 at 4.30 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor A Watson, (Chair)

Councillors W. Armstrong, C Christer, J Huntley, O Johnson, D G Llewellyn, M. J. Malone and A Taylor.

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors C Watson, W J Tyrie, J Pickersgill, D I Barnett, K English and R Ord.

43. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 2nd August 2004 be approved and adopted.

44. MATTERS ARISING

Councillor Watson referred to Minute Number 39 (Disposal of current Stanley Bus Station site) and advised that after considering advice it had been decided that all bidders for the site be invited to make a presentation to Members of the Council together with members of the Stanley Steering Group with all attendees abiding by the confidentiality procedures relating to meetings. The presentation to be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre Consett on Friday 17th September 2004 at 1.00 pm.

45. COUNCIL PERFORMANCE – REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE FIRST QUARTER 2004/05

Councillor M. Malone presented the report the purpose of which was to inform Members of the performance for the 25 key Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) for:

- Year end 2003/04 within County Durham
- First quarter of 2004/05
- Action plans developed to improve performance for those poorly performing indicators identified at the year end 2003/04.

Option: Whether to accept, reject or commission further reports into areas of poor performing indicators.

RESOLVED: that the content of the report regarding Best Value Performance Indicator information be noted and that Scrutiny Panels be asked to re-consider poorly performing areas with a view to establishing action plans for improvement.

Reason: To embed a performance management culture within the organisation.

46. SUPPORT TO DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

Councillor J. Huntley presented the report which sought support for an annual contribution to the Durham Association of Parish and Town Councils. The Association have approached the authority for financial support to be used in the appointment of a full-time Secretary to enhance the role in administering the Parishes. Recent correspondence with the Association suggests that other authorities in the County have agreed to contribute to the funding of the full-time secretary.

Option: Whether to support, reject or amend the proposals in the report for financial assistance. The contribution being sought from local authorities is £14,000 of which Derwentside is being asked to pay one fifth (£2,800).

RESOLVED: That the request to support the appointment of a full-time secretary to Durham Association of Parish and Town Councils with a financial contribution of £2,800 be agreed.

Reason: The size and role of the Parish and Town Councils within the Durham County area varies across from District to District. Collectively they play an important role in the delivery of local services, a role that is expected to develop as changes to the local government structure are implemented.

47. CCTV – PHASE 1 EVALUATION/PHASE 3 ROLL OUT

Councillor M. Malone presented the report which sought approval for the continued roll-out of the Council's community CCTV initiative as well as outlining the results from the recent evaluation of the pilot stage.

The evaluation, as outlined in the report, was carried out to primarily gauge the impact the cameras were having on fear of crime levels within the pilot wards of Leadgate, Blackhill and South Stanley. The results from the survey (which involved the circulation of 480 questionnaires)

were extremely encouraging – 93% of the respondents felt that the cameras were an important initiative and 70% said it made them feel safer. The evaluation, copies which had been placed in the Members' Library, also highlighted the increased use that the police are making of the system and the value they place upon it. Councillor Malone commented that he had received an e-mail from the Police which advised that their officers had been impressed with the video quality of the CCTV system and had requested that Council officers be congratulated on their good work in operating the system.

Based on these findings, the report recommended that the system is rolled-out to the remaining nine Wards which are still to receive community CCTV cameras. The report recommended that this roll-out is completed on a two stage basis, with the wards of Benfieldside, Cornsay, Ebchester and Medomsley being addressed in the second phase due to connectivity issues in these areas. This recommendation was made despite orders for all three wards being placed with BT to connect them to DurhamNet, based on past practice, the timeframe for this connection could be anything up to a year. Therefore it was proposed to deal with this matter in stages, and not to withdraw the scheme completely from these wards as had been incorrectly stated recently in the press. However, subsequent to the report being printed it was reported that the outstanding work has been completed and there is now connectivity with these three wards.

Consequently, it was recommended that all nine wards listed in the report are dealt with in a single phase on the proviso that officers are allowed time to test the resilience of the connections within Benfieldside, Cornsay, Ebchester and Medomsley that may result in a delay in these wards coming online.

With the above connections now being made, and based on any analysis of the scheme's revenue budget it can be confirmed that where local Members feel it is justified, each ward will receive three CCTV cameras. This is based on the understanding that as the site surveys are yet to commence, it may be necessary to request an increase in the capital funding required for the installation of the cameras.

With the above amendments it was recommended that the Council's Community CCTV initiative is rolled-out in unison to the remaining nine wards.

It was noted that Scrutiny Board had expressed concerns regarding possible changes to agreed parameters for the scheme, the Executive Director had advised of potential changes to recommendations as a consequence of negotiations with BT on connectivity issues which could result in reduction in cost. Scrutiny Board had expressed concerns that any potential decisions not to implement the current programme for CCTV suggesting that this may result in the report being called-in.

Option: Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals in the report regarding the community CCTV initiative.

RESOLVED: that all nine wards listed in the report are dealt with in a single phase on the proviso that Officers are allowed time to test the resilience of the connections within Befieldside, Cornsay, Ebchester and Medomsley that may result in a delay in these wards coming online.

Reason: The lack of infrastructure in some areas raises additional connectivity issues which often require the Council to utilise alternative forms of connectivity to the norm used in the vast majority of community CCTV cameras i.e. direct 'hard' wire' connections to each CCTV camera as opposed to 'wireless'/radio wave connections. The use of which requires additional testing work to help ensure the pre-paid connection actually works following the often substantial capital work required to get the wire to the pole.

48. DERWENTSIDE CRIME AND DISORDER STRATEGY – PRIORITIES FOR CONSULTATION

Councillor C. Christer presented the report which requested that Members consider the Council's proposed priority crime and disorder concerns on which to consult the public. Subject to consultation and final approval, these would be the priority concerns to be tackled in the Derwentside Crime and Disorder Strategy 2005-2008.

It was noted that Scrutiny Board had requested that the Police be invited to attend a future Scrutiny Panel to discuss concerns regarding communications, support, flexibility and response to issues by the Police Authority throughout the area.

Options:

- (1) To approve the priorities as proposed in the report.
- (2) To put forward alternative priorities.

RESOLVED: that the interim priorities for inclusion in the statutory public consultation exercise as set out in Section 3 of the report be agreed and that the Derwentside Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership be informed accordingly.

Reasons:

- (1) The proposing of priorities would comply with statute and enable the Council to contribute effectively to its corporate aim of working with others to make Derwentside a safer place in which to live and work.
- (2) The suggested issues had been identified as agreed National

priorities and/or as issues/priorities within Corporate and Service plans.

49. DERWENTSIDE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2004

Councillor O. Johnson presented the Annual Report for the Derwentside District Local Plan and advised of progress and achievements in implementing the adopted development plan. The attached report was the eighth report in a series since the adoption of the Plan in January 1997. It also explained the Government's reform of the planning system, which replaces Local Plans with Local Development Frameworks and changes in strategic guidance where Government Planning Policy Guidance is being replaced by Planning Policy Statements.

Option: Whether to agree, reject or amend the proposals contained in the Eighth Annual Report for the Derwentside District Local Plan.

RESOLVED: that the Eighth Annual Report for the Derwentside District Local Plan be published.

Reason: To inform interested parties about the progress in implementing the policies and proposals of the Plan.

50. NORTH EAST COMMUNITY FOREST STRATEGY AND REVISED MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT FOR THE GREAT NORTH FOREST

Councillor O. Johnson presented the report which dealt with the future of Community Forests in the North East and a revised Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) for the Council's continued involvement with the Great North Forest (GNF).

Option: Whether or not to contribute to a Forest budget and adopt a three-year agreement as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: that the Strategic Plan Summary for the North East Community ~Forests (NECF) be noted and the new Memorandum of Agreement be agreed as a basis for this Council's continued commitment to the Great North Forest.

Reason: Community Forests are an investment for the future. Many of their environmental, social and economic outputs are already visible, but their full benefits will only emerge as new landscapes develop and mature. Although well established, Community Forests are less than a third of the way through their ambitious programmes of environmental and social

renewal.

51. CREATION OF HEAD OF POLICY POST

Councillor M Malone presented the report which sought approval for the creation of a Head of Policy post within the Council's Corporate Strategy Unit.

Option: Whether to approve, reject or amend the proposals in the report for changes to posts within the Council's Corporate Strategy Unit.

RESOLVED: that the recommendation in the report to agree to the creation of a Head of Policy post within the Corporate Strategy Unit at the grade of PO16-19 and appointment to that position, where there is more than one applicant by the Appointments Committee be agreed.

Reason: Since the establishment of the Council's new management arrangements there has been a significant increase in the duties and expectations placed on the Corporate Strategy Unit. These include the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process, the need for enhanced performance management framework, the Beacon Award and new and enhanced corporate initiatives.

52. PARKING IMPROVEMENTS TO GLOUCESTER ROAD, DELVES LANE

Councillor Armstrong presented the report which sought approval for Capital Expenditure to carry out works to the front of 4-70 Gloucester Road, Delves Lane. The residents of the above had experienced difficulties due to the conflict between the public transport services and the need to park private cars close to their homes which has resulted in damage to the grass verges and the resultant deterioration of the appearance of the area. A joint project between Derwentside District Council and Durham County Council and also consultation with residents had developed this project which involved 'hardening' the grass verges by installing bitmac paving, which will provide a car parking facility.

Councillor Taylor suggested that Durham County Council be requested to conduct a general audit of car parking requirements within Derwentside and that this authority attempt/encourage residents to lobby the highways authority or band together to obtain improvements to car parking facilities. Councillor Watson agreed with this suggestion and proposed that these issues be raised at a meeting with Durham County Council.

Options:

- (1) The Council agree to meet 50% of the costs of the work (£18,000) with costs to be met from the Capital Programme for this financial year.
- (2) The Council ask the County Council to add the works to the outstanding requests.
- (3) The Council consider other provision for off-street parking.

RESOLVED: that the Council agree to meet 50% of the costs of the work (£18,000) with costs to be met from the Capital Programme for this financial year.

Reason: The scheme will provide a car parking facility that meets the following objectives:-

- (1) Stops damage to grassed verges.
- (2) Improve traffic and public transport traffic through the estate.
- (3) Provides car parking which is safer for residents by making provision which is overlooked by themselves and off the road surface

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, 7, 8 and 9 of schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

53. LARGE SCALE VOLUNTARY STOCK TRANSFER – PROJECT PLAN AND INDICATIVE COSTS

Councillor C. Christer presented the report which advised of the Project Plan and estimated costs of a Large Scale Voluntary Transfer following the decision by the Council on 13th July 2004 to pursue stock transfer of Council homes in Derwentside.

Options: Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals contained in the recommendations which were designed to implement the previously agreed course of action.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (1) The contents of the project plan and associated indicative costs be noted.
- (2) The reappointment of HACAS Chapman Hendy as lead

consultants for the Council and TPAS as the Independent Tenant Advisor be agreed.

- (3) The appointment of specialist public relations/communications advisors to develop the communications strategy which will include newsletters, the formal offer document, videos and opinion testing; legal advisors to provide specialist legal advice particularly in connection with the Council's formal offer to tenants be agreed.
- (4) Note that regular briefings will continue to be provided for all stakeholders throughout the next phase of the project.
- (5) A provision of £335,000 be made in HRA balances (£180,000) And General Fund balance (£155,00) as a provision for abortive costs in the event of a 'NO' vote.

Reasons:

- (1) To ensure that the Council adheres to the project timetable and that process is adequately resourced both in terms of employee requirements and consultancy services.
- (2) To ensure that all stakeholders understand the process and that unified support and an active and informed dialogue can be sustained between the Council, tenants and the wider community
- (3) To ensure that adequate financial provision is made for abortive costs.

54. STANLEY BUS STATION PROJECT – PROGRESS REPORT

Councillor Llewellyn presented the report which updated Members on progress of the Stanley Bus Station project which advised that all work scheduled to be undertaken during the first phase of the project (as summarised in Appendix 1) had been completed. Update information was also given on:

- Progress since last report
- Road closures
- Construction costs
- Property acquisition
- Disposal of current bus station site
- Construction commencement date

Options:

- (1) Accept the report and authorise the project to progress as set out in the report.
- (2) Require the provision of further information on any elements of the report before agreeing how to progress.
- (3) Require amendments to the current Project Plan.

In response to Councillor Taylor's question regarding notice boards the Director of Environmental Services advised that one notice board was in place and that a suitable site was being sought for the second. Councillor Taylor commented that as the notice boards would be a temporary measure for the purposes of giving up-dates on the Stanley Bus Station she would prefer the notice board to be placed outside the Council Offices in Front Street, Stanley.

RESOLVED: that the report be accepted and authorisation be granted for the project to progress as set out in the report.

Reasons:

- (1) The project is currently progressing to plan.
- (2) Major risks have been identified and are being monitored.
- (3) The project budget now provides for a major contingency provision.

55. DISPOSAL OF HOUSING SITE IN MOORSIDE TO ENDEAVOUR HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Councillor Christer presented the report which sought approval for the disposal of a housing site within the Moorside Estate to enable the provision of eight bungalows, as part of the regeneration strategy for the area.

Councillor Watson suggested and it was agreed that a covenant be attached to ensure that the land sold would only be used for social housing.

Options:

- (1) The disposal of building plots to Endeavour Housing Association for the development of eight two-bedroom bungalows (one of which is to have wheelchair access) as indicated in Appendix 1.
- (2) Disposal of the full site, with a requirement to provide eight bungalow units to rent (including one wheelchair access unit).
- (3) Disposal of full site for redevelopment with housing for sale.

RESOLVED: that the disposal of the land to Endeavour Housing Association for the development of eight bungalows, one of which is wheelchair accessible be agreed subject to a covenant being attached to the sale to ensure that the land would be used for social housing purposes only.

Reasons:

- (1) The scheme should not be considered in isolation but in the wider context of the Council's role of not only social housing provider,

but also that of enabler.

This provision of affordable rented two-bedroom bungalow accommodation was one of the conditions of the agreement to demolish the 136 properties involved in the Moorside Regeneration Scheme.

- (2) This development is the next step of the actual regeneration of the Moorside Estate and in so doing contributes to the Council's Corporate Aims "To work with others to deliver a place with strong, cohesive communities and to work with others to create an attractive, sustainable environment.

56. DISPOSAL OF LAND AT DELVES LANE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, CONSETT

Councillor Huntley presented the report which presented Members with a request from a company to purchase a site on the Delves Lane Industrial Estate. Councillor Huntley also confirmed that the proposed acquirers of the land had now been confirmed as Mr W. Metcalf and his son Mr G. Metcalf, jointly.

Options:

- (1) Proceed with a disposal to the Company if possible or to individuals representing the Company.
- (2) Withdraw from the sale and invite offers from other parties who have recently shown an interest in the site.

RESOLVED: that authority be granted to proceed with a disposal to Mr W. and Mr G. Metcalf as detailed in the report.

Reasons:

- (1) Failure to deal with the Company at all would result in a claim for work carried out on the site and possible adverse publicity regarding the loss of jobs.
- (2) In the circumstances, therefore as the Company has agreed to pay the full open market value of the site it is considered that it would be in the best interests of the Council to proceed with a disposal.

CONCLUSION OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 5.30 pm

Chair.