

## **EXECUTIVE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Consett on Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2005 at 4.30 pm.

## **PRESENT**

Councillor A. Watson, Chair

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

## **IN ATTENDANCE**

Councillors A. Atkinson, C. Bell and W. Stelling.

The Chair advised that representatives of Durham County Council would be attending to answer questions on Item 3 on the Agenda. Item 3 would be taken later on the Agenda.

### **33. REVIEW OF SCRUTINY BOARD DEBATE**

A list of items discussed at Scrutiny Board were circulated, the Chair advised that the comments, if any, would be referred to as each agenda item was discussed.

### **34. MINUTES – 15<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2005**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2005 were agreed as a correct record.

### **35. REVISED DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

Councillor Huntley presented the report which sought agreement of the Executive to approve changes to the Council's Disciplinary Procedure to incorporate recent requirements published under the banner of the Employment Act 2002.

It was reported that Councillor Bell had highlighted the last sentence on page 12 of Appendix 1 "The decision of the Disciplining Manager will, where practical, be announced at the hearing and confirmed in writing within five working days of the hearing".

In response, the Divisional Head of Human Resources advised that this had been included to allow flexibility to cover various circumstances that may arise during a disciplinary situation.

It was noted that there were no Scrutiny Board comments on this report.

**Option:** Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals in the Disciplinary Procedure.

**RESOLVED:** that the revised Disciplinary Procedure as attached to the report be agreed.

**Reason:** To comply with the recent requirements published under the Banner of the Employment Act 2002.

**36. STANLEY BLUES FESTIVAL – REPORT ON THE 2005 FESTIVAL AND FINAL PHASE OF TRANSFER TO STANLEY BLUES LTD.**

Councillor Taylor presented the report which had two purposes, (i) to brief Members on the outcomes of this year's Stanley Blues Festival following the decision approved at Executive on 8<sup>th</sup> March to formally hand over all management and delivery responsibilities to Stanley Blues Ltd and (ii) to request approval for the final tranche of the legacy payment to be made, as described in the Agreement between this Council and Stanley Blues Ltd.

It was noted that there were no Scrutiny Board comments on this report.

**Option:** Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals in the report regarding Stanley Blues Festival.

**RESOLVED:** that:-

- (1) The successful outcomes of the Stanley Blues Festival 2005, following its' transfer to Stanley Blues Ltd be noted.
- (2) Payment of the final tranche of the legacy payment to Stanley Blues Ltd as set out in the Agreement be approved.
- (3) Stanley Blues Ltd be invited to give a presentation to the next available meeting of the Strong Communities Scrutiny Panel.

**Reasons:**

- (1) The 2005 Stanley Blues Festival proved to be another great success, and retained its' place as a major Blues Music Festival for the District and the wider region, rooted in Stanley but attracting visitors from across the UK and abroad.
- (2) The hand-over of the festival to Stanley Blues Ltd had been successfully achieved, and the practical event planning and delivery were smoothly transferred to the new company who now have a firm base of experience on which to build and develop the event in the future.

### **37. REVENUE OUTTURN 2004/05**

Councillor Huntley presented the report which advised Members on the Authority's Revenue Outturn for the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005 and also summarised the positions of both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account as well as showing the final figures for the DSO areas of operation.

Councillor Llewellyn commented on the previous year deficit regarding DSO accounts and asked questions on whether the authority was moving towards a more positive position.

In response, the Director of Finance advised that the position last year was the result of one-off redundancies and stock write off which would not affect the position this year. The Executive Director advised that last year one or two exceptional items had contributed significantly to the position however, he emphasised that overall the DSO were performing and trading very well.

It was noted that there were no Scrutiny Board comments on this report.

**Option:** Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals in the report regarding Revenue Outturn 2004/05.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be received and the write-off of obsolete stock during the year within the DSO be approved.

**Reason:** Improvements to the stores arrangements had identified this obsolete stock.

### **38. CAPITAL PROGRAMME FINANCING 2004/05**

Councillor Huntley presented the report which informed Members of the final Capital Expenditure for 2004/05 and requested approval for the financing of that expenditure. It also informed Members of the slippage on the Capital Programme and identified resources to cover the slippage.

It was noted that there were no Scrutiny Board comments on this report.

**Option:** Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals in the report for the financing of the 2004/05 capital expenditure.

**RESOLVED:** that:-

- (1) The financing of the 2004/05 capital expenditure as detailed in the report be approved.
- (2) Agreement for the slippage position and the resources to be carried forward be agreed.

**Reason:** To allow the authority to plan financial expenditure in view of limited resources.

**39. DERWENTSIDE COMMUNITY CCTV – CONTINUED ROLL-OUT**

Councillor Malone presented the report which outlined the analysis completed for the next stage of roll-out for the Council's Community CCTV initiative. The primary focus of the report was on the outstanding Phase 3 Wards, although reference was made to proposals for Wards in the early phases of the initiative.

Scrutiny Board had stressed the need for continual Ward Member involvement in this scheme and other community safety initiatives in the future.

**Options:** Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals in the report regarding the continued roll-out of CCTV.

**RESOLVED:** that:-

- (1) The installation of the additional cameras to the Council's Community CCTV initiative as summarised in Appendix II of the report be agreed.
- (2) The allocation of £12,000 Capital and £3,000 Revenue (until March 2008) in the Ebchester and Medomsley Ward for community safety measures be agreed, the allocation of which to be subject to consultation with Local Ward Members.
- (3) A comprehensive review of the Community CCTV initiative in 2007/08 be agreed.
- (4) A further report to be prepared on the outcome of negotiations with the Community CCTV Initiative's monitoring provider.

**Reason:** In order to progress the Council's CCTV initiative

**40. RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT ON THE PROPOSED EVERY CHILD MATTERS MODEL FOR INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

The Chair introduced D. Jones, Acting Director of Social Care and Health and A. Johnson, Head of Education Services at Durham County Council who had been invited into the meeting to answer any questions regarding the Consultation Document on the Every Child Matters Model.

Councillor Taylor presented the report which represented to the Executive the proposed Council's response to the Consultation Document from the County Durham Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) on the model for integrated children's services.

Councillor Taylor made the following comments/suggestions:

- (a) Page 14. – Local Children’s Board should include young person representative, e.g. from Young People’s Forum.
- (b) Need to ask young people how they would like to be involved in the project. If a Young People’s Forum is not in existence area arrangements should be made for a Young Peoples Forum or similar organisation to be set up.
- (c) Page 14. Children’s Executive Board – suggest 1 voluntary sector representative (to represent all 7 authorities) be included.
- (d) Page 19. SWOT analysis. Do not think that political influence is a problem.
- (e) Implementation should not be funded by local tax payers – money should come from Central Government.

In response, D. Jones welcomed the comments especially the comments that young people should be involved/consulted on how they wish to participate in the process. Regarding funding, the Government had not put in any additional resources, it was expected that existing funding would be re-focused.

Councillor Watson asked questions regarding Surestart funding and was advised that this was ring-fenced to April 2007, however, services may have to be re-shaped to meet core children’s centre services.

In response to Councillor Johnson’s question, Councillor Watson asked whether the ‘Connexions’ would be re-designed.

A. Johnson advised that a Green Paper had been issued in July 2005 regarding integration of children’s services and there was a possibility that Connexions would be re-designed.

Councillor Malone referred to Page 16, Paragraph 9.2 regarding the format of any Executive and was concerned that as partners met in isolation it would be difficult to consult properly on this issue.

In response, A. Johnson advised that there was good synergy in the Local Area Agreements and this was an excellent tool to help to build on the work of the LSP, YPF and SPICE project.

The Chair thanked D. Jones and A. Johnson for their attendance at the meeting.

It was noted that there were no Scrutiny Board comments on this report.

**Option:** Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposed Council response to the Every Child matters Model Consultation Paper.

**RESOLVED:** that the proposed Council response to the Every Child Matters Model Consultation be agreed as detailed in the report with the addition of the comments made by Councillor Taylor.

**Reason:** To enable the authority to contribute to the consultation process.

#### **41. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** on the motion of Councillor Armstrong seconded by Councillor A. Taylor 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 Paragraph 8.

#### **42. REVIEW OF WELFARE ADVICE**

Councillor Huntley presented the report which sought approval for the extension of the current initiatives to bring welfare and debt advice into the community.

It was noted that there were no Scrutiny Board comments on this report.

Councillor Watson commented that this was an excellent report and suggested that Officers issue a press release regarding the proposals for welfare and debt advice.

**Option:** Whether to agree, reject or amend the recommendations in the report regarding welfare advice.

**RESOLVED:** that:-

- (1) The "Benefiting the Community" Initiative be supported.
- (2) The funding of 50% of the cost of the Welfare Rights worker at Scale SO1 be agreed. Yearly amount equalling circa £20,000.
- (3) A two year initiative to jointly fund a Debt Advice Worker with the C.A.B. be agreed, circa £15,000.
- (4) Money supporting these initiatives to be financed from the additional revenues outlined in the report.
- (5) A regular evaluation of the impact and success of these initiatives on both residents and resources required to deliver these initiatives be reported to Members.
- (6) A press release regarding these initiatives be produced and released at the appropriate time.

**Reasons:**

- (1) To comply with the Corporate Plan and Corporate Improvement Plan to maximise take-up of benefits thereby reducing poverty.
- (2) The government expects Local Authorities to undertake benefit take-up campaigns and is actively seeking ways in which debt advice can be given face-to-face.

**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 9 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **43. DISPOSAL OF OLDER INDUSTRIAL PORTFOLIO**

Councillor Huntley presented the report which advised Members of the tenders received in relation to the disposal of the Older Industrial Portfolio.

Councillor Malone raised a number of questions regarding any protection of terms and conditions for existing tenants of these units.

In response, the Director of Development and Asset Management advised as follows:-

- (a) The Council was seeking to dispose of its older industrial properties as there was no longer a strategic reason for retaining them and the resources to support the Council's Capital Programme, including the development of modern business properties, could be raised. The proposal to dispose of the older property portfolio had been given detailed consideration through the Council's Scrutiny Process.
- (b) The purchaser would have legal responsibilities to tenants. The highest tenderer had indicated that, if successful in being awarded the tender, they would seek to appoint a local manager for the estates.
- (c) A covenant would be attached to the disposal agreement to preserve the sites and premises for their existing use.
- (d) Tenants enjoyed legal protection and security of tenure under Landlord and Tenant legislation, ensuring that they had the same rights as when Council tenants.
- (e) It was already Council policy to set the rent for premises at market levels and a new landlord would likely continue with this approach. Arbitration and tribunal processes existed if landlords sought to impose unreasonable rent rises.

**Option:** Whether or not to award the tender to the highest tender received.

It was noted that there were no Scrutiny Board comments on this report.

**RESOLVED:** that authority be granted to dispose of the Older Industrial Portfolio to the highest tender received for the portfolio as a whole and to hold the second highest tender received for the entire portfolio in reserve, in the event of the sale not proceeding.

**Reason:** In order to allow the Council to maximise the return from its assets.

### **CONCLUSION OF MEETING**

The meeting closed 5.35 pm

**Chair.**