

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Consett on Monday, 3rd October 2005 at 4.30 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor A. Watson, Chair

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors J. Pickersgill and W.J. Tyrie.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor W. Armstrong.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair introduced W. Griffiths, (Chief Executive), H. Tucker (Director of Patient Services Clinical Governance & Nursing) and G. Miller (Risk Manager & Clinical Governance Co-ordinator) from the PCT who had been invited to give a presentation regarding Item 6 on the Agenda, 'PCT Health Check'. In view of this it was agreed to take Item 6 as the first item.

44. PCT HEALTH CHECK

W. Griffiths, Chief Executive of the PCT advised that the PCT was now subject to an Annual Health Check, key elements of which have parallels to the CPA process for local authorities – such as the preparation of a self-assessment. This would be the first year inspections had been introduced and the PCT have invited views on this self-assessment.

H. Tucker (Director of Patient Services Clinical Governance & Nursing) proceeded to give a presentation of the self-assessment based on the following topics:

- Assessing Performance
- Purpose of the Draft Declaration
- Safety
- Clinical & Cost Effectiveness
- Governance
- Patient Focus

- Accessible & Responsive Care
- Care Environment & Amenities
- Public Health
- Self Assessment Process

She commented that the greatest concerns surrounded the Care Environment and Amenities standards and advised that the PCT welcomed any feedback on these issues and the PCT wished to return next year to advise Members of the final declaration.

The Chair thanked the Officers for the presentation and advised that a similar presentation would be given to the Health Scrutiny Panel on 17th October 2005. He advised that the approach taken by the PCT on this self-assessment was indicative of their willingness to fully engage in a partnership approach to improve the health of Derwentside's residents. Throughout their time as a Trust (and even in their time as a Primary Care Group) the Council has found the approach to the involvement of patients and the public to be exemplary. This has been evident in the commitment to the Joint Area Forums to the current involvement with the Derwentside Partnership. There were also many 'on the ground' examples of this approach, perhaps the best example was the approach to the development of a new Health Centre for Stanley. Patient and public involvement had been central throughout the preparation of the Outline Business Case, resulting in a flagship building that will contribute to the ongoing regeneration of Stanley.

With regard to the areas for local government, comments suggested by the Healthcare Commission, whilst certain topics such as quality and suitability of patients' food are more relevant to the work of other health trusts, the Council can confirm that the PCT had been extremely active in communicating with the public on the services it offers. The Council is also not aware of any issues with the PCT's Complaints Procedure and can only assume it operates smoothly.

Finally, with regard to the Trust's progress on the Public Health agenda, given the extensive partnership working, exemplified by the joint appointment of the Director of Public Health, the Council fully supports the PCT's view that it is compliant with the questions posed in the self-assessment framework. In the short time that the PCT has had to become fully operational, it had succeeded in raising the public health agenda within the Council to a point where we are fully aware of the role we can play together to tackle the wider determinants of health. Unfortunately, going through this consultation exercise only amplified the disappointment that in all likelihood the productive joint working with Derwentside PCT will no longer be possible in the future given the changes outlined elsewhere on this agenda.

W Griffiths thanked the Chairman for this response.

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

Options: Whether or not to accept the draft self-assessment.

RESOLVED: That the comments expressed by the Chairman detailed above be forwarded as this Council's views on the draft self-assessment.

Reason: To contribute to the self-assessment process of the Derwentside PCT Health Check.

45. 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.

46. MINUTES – 6TH SEPTEMBER 2005

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th September 2005 were agreed as a correct record.

47. MAPPING SERVICES AGREEMENT

Councillor Johnson presented the report the purpose of which was to request retrospective permission to approve the signing of the Mapping Services Agreement. The report advised that the Agreement was signed in order to avoid a very large increase in costs for the Council, and in order to maintain the provision of map data to fulfil the requirement for the compilation of the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG), leading to the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG).

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

Options: Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals for retrospective permission.

RESOLVED: that the retrospective signing of the Mapping Services Agreement be approved.

Reasons:

- (1) The Authority did not expose itself to the large cost implication of having to enter alone into commercial agreements with service providers.
- (2) The Authority did not expose itself to possible breaches of copyright for the use of externally-owned information.
- (3) The three-way agreement between the service providers, LGIH and local authorities is called the Mapping Services Agreement and provides local authorities with the following benefits:
Significant bulk procurement discount on costs.
Central procurement has provided the leverage to obtain

preferred licensing terms for local government to meet all business and data exchange needs with other authorities.
A reduced procurement cost to local government by managing the procurement centrally.
Performance monitoring has been put in place to ensure service providers deliver appropriate levels of service. These performance measures have been linked to financial penalties.
A managed solution to multi-organisation data licensing to remove risk of copyright infringement by authorities.
Access to the gazetteer services, which will assist in meeting e-government IEG Priority Outcome commitments and efficiency gain requirements.

48. COMMISSIONING A PATIENT-LED NHS – DRAFT DISTRICT COUNCIL RESPONSE

Councillor Watson presented the report which updated Members on the Department of Health's proposals for 'Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS'. These proposals would lead to a number of significant changes to the infrastructure of health agencies that service the needs of Derwentside residents. The report set out a number of concerns with the proposals contained in the letter from the Department of Health (attached as Appendix A to the report) and suggested a number of points on which to form the basis of a response to the County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authority and the Secretary of State for Health.

Councillor Huntley commented that this was an excellent and well articulated response.

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

Options: Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals in the report for this Council's response to the above.

RESOLVED: that the points raised in Section 3 of the report, informed by a verbal update of the responses from local GP's to form the basis of a submission to the County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authority and the Secretary of State for Health, to be submitted jointly with other Durham Districts.

Reason: Although the Department of Health's 'Commissioning on Patient-Led NHS' paper is not a formal consultation paper, the issues it raises will be critical to our residents, directly affecting the greatest area of deprivation faced in the district – health.

49. REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE NORTH EAST SUBMISSION DRAFT

Councillor Johnson presented the report which considered the implications of the Submission Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) on which the Council had been formally consulted. The North East Assembly published the Consultation Draft RSS, which sets out a long-term strategy for the spatial development of the North East to 2021 and beyond, at the end of November 2004. At the meeting of the Executive on 7th February 2005 Officer recommendations were endorsed and a formal response was sent to the Regional Assembly, which included giving due recognition to the need for the RSS to support the growth of businesses, commercial/residential development and population in Derwentside.

Following consultation the strategy has been substantially revised. The Assembly has now submitted the Submission Draft Regional Spatial Strategy to the Secretary of State and invited this Council's comments. A presentation has already been given to the Environment Scrutiny Panel and a report presented to Development Control Committee outlining the content of the RSS and giving a summary of policies relating to Derwentside.

At Scrutiny Board, Councillor Charlton made reference to the lack of tangible outcomes in relation to transport arrangements. In relation to Economic Strategy, Councillor Charlton commented upon what he thought was a contradiction of opinion in paragraph 3.6 of the report relating to the exclusion of both inward investment and business growth and paragraph 2.1 (iii) to the report K (L.E.G.I.). Councillor Huntley also commented that this appears to be a contradiction with the L.E.G.I. report included later on this agenda.

Options: Whether to agree, amend or reject the recommendations in the report and to support or oppose the policies in the Submission Draft RSS.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (1) The implications for Derwentside and County Durham of the issues identified in the Submission Draft Regional Spatial Strategy be noted.
- (2) The formal comments attached as Appendix 1 to the report be agreed as the District Council's response to the North East Assembly's consultation.

Reasons:

- (1) The RSS has evolved noticeably yet again, in response to the previous concerns of the Durham authorities. However, certain important conflicts of interest still exist which have been referred to.
- (2) The RSS is a highly significant document as it forms part of the statutory development plans system.

50. ON-STREET PARKING/VERGE HARDENING

Councillor Johnson presented the report the purpose of which was (i) to advise on outstanding requests for provision of on-street parking by hardening of grass verges; (ii) to consider a proposal for Derwentside to contribute 50% of the costs of such works to Durham County Council and (iii) to consider requests from Burnopfield Ward Members for similar works within their Ward.

Scrutiny Board had agreed to support recommendation 4.1 in the report and to seek an early meeting with Durham County Council officials on the issue.

Councillor Watson advised that there needed to be a strategic approach to these issues, also none of the schemes were within the agreed 3 year capital programme.

Options: Whether to agree, reject or ask for amendments to the proposals for on-street parking/verge hardening as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: that:-

Recommendation 4.1 in the report be agreed - to not approve the provision of matched funding to verge hardening schemes detailed in the report with a condition that Officers seek an early meeting with Durham County Council to discuss prioritisation and a way of assessing the needs of all Wards across the District.

Reasons:

- (1) The works are not of sufficient priority to justify the expenditure against other capital schemes.
- (2) The prioritisation of the areas has not been carried out in a robust way with no opportunity for other locations to be considered.

51. OPTIONS ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE ALTERNATE WEEKLY COLLECTION IN THE REFUSE AND RECYCLING SERVICE

Councillor Johnson presented the report and advised that this scheme had been agreed by the Executive on 10th January 2005 and the current report contained further information giving a detailed breakdown of the options for delivering the service and costs. He also commented that there was a possibility of additional containers to be provided to residents to alleviate any storage problems.

It was noted that there were no Scrutiny Board comments on this report. However, at Scrutiny Board the Executive Director had commented that Executive would be seeking further investigation regarding alternative

collection methods i.e. bins/recycling bags to ensure service to households was both easier and acceptable.

Councillor Watson commented that it was important to get the message across to residents regarding recycling targets.

Options:

- (1) Go forward with the original scenario by identifying a processor which can deal with the mixed recyclates including glass.
- (2) The purchase of specialist recycling vehicles with a separate glass silo.
- (3) Amended Option with 2 additional small vehicles collecting glass.
- (4) Defer the roll-out of the service to allow other major issues to be resolved, specifically the LSVT of the housing stock.

RESOLVED: that: Option C (detailed at paragraph 4.4 on the report) the amended option to use standard refuse collection vehicles with two additional vehicles carrying out a separate glass collection service be agreed.

Reasons:

- (1) The vehicles are much more flexible in that they can be used to collect general refuse and recyclates which allows flexibility in interchanging the fleet i.e. in the event of breakdowns or the catastrophic loss of the fleet (which happened recently to Newcastle City Council through an arson attack), then replacement vehicles are readily available from the hire market.
- (2) The roll-out programme of the new technology waste diversion facilities through the County Council is not firmed up and any acceleration of that programme would mean that Derwentside would be required to deliver its waste to the new facilities that could render the large recycling vehicles redundant within the five-year lease period.

52. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: On the motion of Councillor M.J. Malone 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 Paragraphs 5, 7, 8, 9 & 14 of the Local Government Act 1972.

53. DISPOSAL OF LAND AT HARPERLEY & ROYALS ESTATE, CATCHGATE

Councillor Christer presented the report which advised Members of the tenders received in relation to the regeneration site within the Harperley and Royals Estate, Catchgate and to obtain approval to accept the tender.

Options: Whether to accept or reject the tender.

RESOLVED: that the tenderer as detailed in 4.1 of the report be accepted.

Reasons:

- (1) This scheme offers not only the best financial return but also appears to offer the best quality and design to address the long term regeneration of the estate and the sustainability of that and the wider Catchgate community.
- (2) These proposals contribute to the Council's Corporate Aims to 'Deliver a place with strong, cohesive communities' and to 'Create an attractive, sustainable environment' and meet the Housing Service Division objective to 'Ensure sustainability of estates through the regeneration process'.

54. COMMUNAL ROOMS – PROGRESS REPORT

Councillor Taylor presented the report which updated Members on the current outsourcing of Communal Room Management and to provide direction on the only remaining small communal room, Thornfield Road, The Grove.

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

Options:

- (1) Restart handover negotiations without waiting for an outcome to the investigation.
- (2) Continue to maintain the communal room, retaining its current usage. On receiving an outcome to the investigation, either restart handover negotiations or demolish, as per original programme.
- (3) Give the existing Management Committee notice to leave, prior to demolition, thus saving approximately £9,000 per annum.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (1) Officers complete the process of handover at thirteen of the communal rooms, making legacy payments of £5,000 per room on proof of sustainability.
- (2) Option 3, Paragraph 3.6.6. as detailed in the report be agreed.
- (3) Officers begin work on Phase Two of the programme, with both

Leadgate Community Centre and Citizens House.

Reason: In order to progress the outsourcing of Communal Room management and to prevent the Council incurring additional expenditure.

55. PRIORITY RE-HOUSING

Councillor Christer presented the report the purpose of which was to request Members to consider a priority case for rehousing outside of the Council's Allocation Policy.

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

Options:

- (1) Relet the property from the waiting list as normal to the applicant with the highest points or priority.
- (2) Relet the property outside of the Council's Allocation Policy as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED:

That the property be Relet as detailed in Paragraph 3.9 (iii) of the report.

Reasons:

- (1) The Council's Corporate Aim of improving the health of the population and reducing inequalities with the objective of improving the care and support for vulnerable groups will be met.
- (2) The Council's Corporate Aim of working with others to create an attractive, sustainable environment with the objective of providing a range of suitable housing which meets the needs and aspirations of current and prospective residents will be met.
- (3) Derwentside District Council's Allocation Policy aims to achieve a balance between assisting those in greatest need and ensuring there are opportunities for re-housing for all those who require it. The policy states that through the use of its stock it will ensure that the housing, care and support of vulnerable tenants are met.

56. LOCAL ENTERPRISE GROWTH INITIATIVE (LEGI)

Councillor Llewellyn presented the report which sets out what the Government wants to achieve by the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) and how this Council can proceed with a bid that will be of most benefit to Derwentside.

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

Councillor Watson commented that a collaborative bid for LEGI will be jointly developed by Derwentside, Easington, Sedgfield and Wear Valley District Councils and highlighted that Derwentside had been chosen to be the lead authority. He also complimented the Officers for the excellent work put into developing this report.

Options: Whether or not to endorse the proposal to develop a collaborative LEGI bid.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (1) Option 1 in the report be approved - the proposal to develop a collaborative Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) bid and that:
- (2) A LEGI bid being prepared by the Council in collaboration with the Districts of Easington, Sedgfield and Wear Valley.
- (3) The Director of Development and Asset Management use existing delegated powers to approve the LEGI bid on behalf of the Council in consultation with the Economy Portfolio holder.

Reasons: This approach

- (1) recognises that there are some common issues which each of the four Districts face which could benefit from a collaborative approach;
- (2) will maximise the chances of producing a successful LEGI bid;
- (3) will help to identify opportunities for joint-working and greater effectiveness and efficiency;
- (4) recognises that preparation of a collaborative Round 1 bid will require buying in capacity and expertise in order to produce the requisite baselines, outcomes targets and interventions.

57. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2006/07 TO 2010/11

Councillor Huntley presented the report which updated the Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan. This revision takes into account the decisions taken in agreeing the 2005/06 budgets and continued work on developing capital programme prioritisation. The information contained in the plan should form the basis of detailed work required in advance of setting spending plans for 2006/07 and any advance consultation the Council may want to take before finalising future resource allocation and priorities.

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

Councillor Watson highlighted that the Council was aiming for a 0% Council Tax rise for the financial year 2006/07 and 2007/08 and hoped that this would instil confidence in local Council Tax payers.

Councillor Llewellyn raised the issue of the Concessionary Fares Scheme. In response, the Director of Finance advised that Officers were still trying to clarify both the impact of the changes, options available and how the Government will distribute the funding it has set aside nationally to pay for the scheme.

The Director of Finance referred to paragraph 3.8 of the report and confirmed that the planned revaluation of properties for 2007 Council Tax Bills would not now take place. Any reforms on Local Government Finance are now unlikely to happen before 2010. This is regarded as unfortunate as there may have been benefits for Derwentside under the new revaluations.

Options: Whether to accept, amend or reject the proposals in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (1) The report be received and the current budget projections as summarised in Appendix 1 be approved, noting the changes in the previously reported proposals designed to bridge future budget deficits and create priority growth “headroom”, the revisions being attached at Appendix 2 and commented upon in paragraphs 3.4, 3.5 and 4.0. Further work should focus not only on the coming financial year but on the life of the plan overall.
- (2) The target of a 0% rise in Council Tax and the impact on the budget is confirmed as the main priority in the 2006-07 budget setting process.

Reasons:

- (1) To keep Members informed of the progress of the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- (2) To allow Members to confirm that their main priority in setting the 2006-07 budget was to achieve a 0% Council Tax rise.

58. PROPOSED JOINT WORKING AND COLLABORATIVE PROCUREMENT RELATIONSHIP WITH CHESTER-LE-STREET DISTRICT COUNCIL

Councillor Malone presented the report which advised Members of a proposed joint working and collaborative Corporate Procurement arrangement between Derwentside District Council and Chester-le-Street District Council.

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

Options:

- (1) Agree to the development of a formal collaborative approach to procurement with Chester-le-Street District Council.

- (2) Reject a formal collaborative approach and continue with existing arrangements.
- (3) Request amendments and further study into the proposals to address any Member queries.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (1) Option 1 be approved - Agree to the development of a formal collaborative approach to procurement with Chester-le-Street District Council and that:
- (2) Authority is granted to enter into a formal procurement collaboration arrangement with Chester-le-Street District Council, for an initial period of two years, as set out in the report; and
- (3) A review of the arrangement is completed after 12 months.

Reasons:

- (1) This option provides Derwentside District Council with increased savings opportunities/protection as a result of aggregating expenditure.
- (2) This would not involve the authority in additional net costs.
- (3) This option can help to realise clear synergies between the authority's two procurement/purchasing functions.
- (4) Provided opportunities for process efficiencies through the development of common systems, procedures, methods and contracts.
- (5) Supports implementation of the Derwentside Procurement Strategy.
- (6) Demonstrates local leadership and innovation.
- (7) Increases possibilities of additional NECE support.

59. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2005/06 REVIEW

Councillor Huntley presented the report which advised Members of the Capital Project Appraisal procedure, considered available resource and how it was to be allocated. It was intended that this would be the first of a regular quarterly update and that a further report would be prepared for the Executive meeting in January 2006.

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

Options: Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals in the report for the Capital Programme 2005.06.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (1) Agreement be granted to the additions to the unresourced

- prioritised list as detailed in Appendix 1.
- (2) Retrospective approval be granted to the expenditure incurred within the demolition of the Craghead Pumphouse.
 - (3) In making the recommendations Councillor Huntley also requested that the meetings of portfolio holders and relevant officer commence to consider financial and budgetary issues. The Executive members supported this proposal.

Reason: To develop the Capital Programme and align this with the strategic aims of the Council.

CONCLUSION OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 5.50 pm.

Chair.