

## **EXECUTIVE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Consett on Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> November 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**

Councillor J. Pickersgill.

## **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

### **60. 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.

### **61. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2005 were agreed as a correct record.

The Executive Director referred to Minute 50 and advised Members that contact had been made with Mr. Tunstall of Durham County Council. Members were advised that Mr. Tunstall was in the process of arranging an officer meeting.

### **62. CITY OF DURHAM COUNCIL – CONSULTATION ON LDF DOCUMENTS**

Councillor Johnson presented the report, which set out a proposed scheme of delegation for future consultations on adjoining the authority's Local Development Framework documents. It was advised that there are a number of stages to the preparation of Development Plan Documents (DPD's) and given that each authority is preparing two or three DPD's then the number of

consultation exercises that will require a response from the Council will be significant.

Members were advised that it was suggested that the Director of Environmental Services, in conjunction with the portfolio holder for Environment use delegated responsibility to deal with these documents.

It was advised that Scrutiny Board had made comment relating to section 3.5 of the report that referred to a requirement for a Statement of Community Involvement and the need for the authority to be seen to be actively involving all stakeholders in consultation.

**Options:** Whether to agree, amend or reject the recommendations in the report.

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (1) Members note the preferred options Durham City have chosen and how these relate to Derwentside District and that no formal response to the document is required.
- (2) Members agree the proposed scheme of delegation for future consultation on Local Development Framework documents produced by neighbouring authorities.

**Reason:** To establish a scheme of delegation for future consultations on adjoining authority's Local Development Framework documents.

### **63. DERWENTSIDE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: INTERIM PLANNING POLICY ON NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

Councillor Johnson presented the report, which considered the implications of the Submission Draft Regional Spatial Strategy in respect of new housing development in Derwentside and considers the need to produce an Interim Planning Policy on new housing development, to update Local Plan policy in the light of government guidance and changing circumstances.

It was further advised that although non-statutory, an interim policy could be used to help determine relevant planning applications alongside the adopted Local Plan.

The Development Plans Manager circulated an addendum to the report advising of amendments to the Interim Planning Policy (IPP1).

Members were advised that a suggested policy and criteria would give priority to 'Brownfield' sites and provision of affordable housing. It was further advised that 'Greenfield' sites allocated in the plan would need to be considered in

relation to the Councils regeneration strategies or the need to sustain the role of a main town centre.

Councillor Johnson advised that there would need to be a consultation exercise undertaken on any proposed policy before it could be recommended for adoption.

Councillor Llewellyn requested clarification relating to the land within the Shotley Bridge Hospital site as to whether this land was included in the existing plan. In response to Councillor Llewellyn, the Development Plans Managers advised that this land was accounted for within the existing plan.

Councillor Watson advised that Scrutiny Board noted the need to ensure that other agencies were fulfilling their obligations that arose as a consequence of Planning Policy. Scrutiny Board also suggested that every effort was made to ensure that the authority's ability to determine applications was not lost.

**Options:** Whether to agree or disagree with the need for an interim planning policy to manage the supply of housing and land more effectively.

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (1) Members note the implications for Derwentside.
- (2) Members agree to the draft Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development.
- (3) Members agree to carry out a consultation exercise prior to considering a policy adoption.

**Reason:** In order to manage the supply of housing and land more effectively.

#### **64. TOWN AND VILLAGE CENTRE REGENERATION**

Councillor Watson presented the report, which sought Member approval to agree a framework for the allocation of resources totalling £1.5 million from the Capital Programme to assist the regeneration of town and village centres across the district.

Members were advised of the sum identified within the capital budget for allocation in 2004/05 for town and village centre regeneration initiatives. It was further advised that decisions relating to the allocation of resources, recognition had been given to the availability of complementary funding from other agencies and individuals in particular Durham County Council under its Urban Renaissance Programme, Stanley Green Corridor Neighbourhood Partnership and individual property owners.

In reply to a question from Councillor Llewellyn relating to the contribution of the County Council, the Development Plans Manager advised of the County Council contribution over a 3-year period and also made reference to

elements of match funding with examples of existing regeneration areas given.

Councillor Watson advised that Scrutiny Board had noted that this was, at the present time, an un-resourced bid. It was advised that the Scrutiny Board had suggested the need to continue to support and compliment other agencies activities, with particular reference being made to Durham County Councils Urban Renaissance Programme. The Scrutiny Board had also suggested the need to focus on priority town and village centres.

**Options:** Whether to agree, amend or reject the recommendations in the report.

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (1) Members accept the approach that has been adopted in relation to town and village centre initiatives.
- (2) For future projects, factors outlined in the report are taken into account when decisions are being taken in relation to the availability of local authority funding.
- (3) The allocation of funding is dependent upon further reports being considered on the merits of individual projects.
- (4) Resources available for town and village centre regeneration be allocated in line with indicators contained within the report.

**Reason:** To continue to regenerate town and village centres in accordance with corporate objectives.

## **65. CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED MERGER OF COUNTY DURHAM & DARLINGTON AND TEES & NORTH YORKSHIRE NHS TRUSTS**

Councillor Watson presented the report, which sought Executives response to the proposed merger of the County Durham & Darlington and Tees & North Yorkshire NHS trusts.

Councillor Watson advised that the Council had recently been consulted on the proposed merger, with views sought by 14<sup>th</sup> November, following which the results will be reported to the County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authority in December 2005.

It was advised that the issue had been considered on a number of occasions by the Health Scrutiny Panel in conjunction with the Chief Executive of County Durham and Darlington Priority Services Trust who attended to present on the proposed merger.

Following the publication of the official consultation document, the majority view of Health Scrutiny was to reject the change. This conclusion was reached on the basis that members felt:

- Derwentside would ultimately lose out as a result of the change and resources would be relocated to the south of the County or Teesside;
- Alternatives should have been explored more extensively including the potential of an amalgamation with Tyneside based services, which would be more local to the residents of Derwentside;
- There were insufficient answers as to the critical issue stated in the consultation paper as to where and on what scale local people are having to go out with the current trust area for services.

Members were further advised that since receipt of the consultation paper the Council has been copied into a letter from Kevan Jones MP expressing his opposition to the proposed merger. The reasons cited by Kevan Jones include:

- The new trust would cover too large a geographical area;
- The areas covered by the new trust might not receive equal shares of the available resources;
- The current arrangements are more than satisfactory and there is not a strong case for change.

The Director of Corporate Administration and Policy further advised that the Health Scrutiny Panel suggested that representation be made to ensure the authority has a representative on the board.

Councillor Watson advised that the Scrutiny Board had endorsed the comments of the Health Scrutiny Panel and further confirmed opposition to the proposal.

**Options:** To agree a suitable response from the Council relating to the consultation document regarding the proposed merger of the County Durham & Darlington and Tees & North Yorkshire NHS trusts.

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (1) Members endorse the comments made by Health Scrutiny and a suitable response is submitted on this basis.

**Reason:** To respond to the consultation document relating to the proposed merger of the County Durham & Darlington and Tees & North Yorkshire NHS trusts.

**66. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** On the motion of Councillor M.J. Malone seconded by Councillor D. 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 9 of the Local Government Act 1972.

**67. DERWENTSIDE TRUST FOR SPORT AND THE ARTS**

Councillor Taylor presented the report, which recommended the establishment of a new charitable non-profit distributing organisation for both the activities of Derwentside Leisure Limited and those currently delivered directly by Derwentside Leisure Services.

It was advised that the scope of the services to be transferred from the District Council is based on an assessment of service synergy, financial benefit and disengagement issues concluding that the management of the following services should form part of the transfer: -

- Empire Theatre
- Lamplight Arts Centre
- Arts Development
- Marketing
- Sports Development Services
- Activity Services
- Out of School Clubs
- Playing Pitches

It was further advised that essentially this would leave the following services within the scope of the authority if a transfer took place: -

- Parks
- Open Spaces
- Equipped Play Areas
- Allensford Country Park
- Communal Rooms
- Woodland Afforestation

Councillor Taylor illustrated a clear set of objectives against which any transfer should be measured against in order to allow a clear assessment of the benefit of any proposed transfer.

Councillor Watson advised of the comments made by the Scrutiny Board, which supported the proposal to establish a Shadow Board but suggested that the District Council representation be increased to four, with one representative place being offered to the opposition Members.

The Scrutiny Board also suggested the need for the scrutiny process to be fully involved in the process. It was also suggested that existing members of the Derwentside Leisure Limited Board be excluded from membership of a shadow board due to a conflict of interest.

The Divisional Head of Leisure advised relating to the comments made by Scrutiny Board with particular reference made to membership of the Shadow Board.

The Divisional Head of Leisure responded to a question from Councillor Llewellyn relating to the chosen form of organisation. Members were advised that the proposed form of organisation was best fit and had taxation and financial benefits.

Councillor Llewellyn referred to a number of areas detailed in section 3 of the report for exclusion from the proposed transfer and suggested that consideration be given to them.

Councillor Malone referred to a number of areas that should be given important consideration, namely, cost savings, procurement, Gershon and efficiency.

**Option:** Whether or not to approve the proposals detailed in the report for Officers to investigate the possibility of the transfer of Leisure Services.

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (1) Members endorse a charitable Non Profit Distributing Organisation as the preferred vehicle.
- (2) A detailed Service Delivery Plan is prepared in relation to the provision of services via a charitable NPDO, to include further consideration of those services excluded in Section 3.2 of the report.
- (3) Reports based upon the key decisions be prepared in line with the schedule proposed in section 5.6 of this report, to include a second seminar and furthermore the portfolio holder and chair decide upon the make up of the working groups.
- (4) The framework of working groups recommended in Section 4 of this report be implemented in order to progress matters.
- (5) Members approve the establishment of a Shadow Board of the nature outlined in section 4.1 of this report and propose, through the appropriate method, 5 representatives prior to incorporation of which 1 must be an opposition Member.

**Reason:** To provide Officers with a clear steer as to Members aspirations and intent thus allowing them to provide detailed information, based specifically on the preferred arrangement for future consideration. Members may, if not fully satisfied, at a future date decide not to proceed with the transfer.

## **CONCLUSION OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 5.50 pm.

**Chair.**