

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Consett on Monday, 6th February 2006 at 4.30 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor A. Watson, Chair

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor W. Tyrie.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor C. Christer.

93. 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.

94. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 9th January 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Councillor Llewellyn referred to Minute Number 86 – and advised that the L.E.G.I. bid had progressed beyond the first stage. A presentation was to be made on 6th February as part of the shortlisting process for bids.

95. COURT COSTS

Councillor Huntley presented the report which requested approval to increase the amount of court costs for obtaining a liability order for unpaid Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates. The proposal was to increase the costs from £35.00 to £40.00 from 1st April 2006. These increases were proposed in

response to the decision made by the Court Service to increase their charges with effect from 10th January 2006.

It was noted that Scrutiny Board had considered the report and agreed that there were no significant issues to report.

Option: Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals in the report to increase the amount of court costs.

RESOLVED: That the increase in court costs from £35.00 to £40.00 as detailed in the report be agreed.

Reasons: This revised charge will cover the increased charge from the court and will also cover joint and several liability cases.

96. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT IN ENGLISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT: THE FUTURE

Councillor Watson presented the report which informed Members of the discussion paper published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on the 15th December 2005 which set out the Government's current views on the future of the conduct regime for Local Government. The report also requested Members views, if any, in relation to the proposals in the report.

Councillor Watson commented that the Council had finite resources and should seek some assurances that the Government intended to make reasonable resources available to meet the additional costs incurred to implement these proposals. He also commented that it may prove difficult to recruit independent representatives and suggested that a payment for allowances be included to encourage recruitment.

It was noted that Scrutiny Board had considered the report and requested that the following comments be submitted in relation to the consultation document:

- A. Issues surrounding the potential resource implications of the consultation document.
- B. Issues relating to the ability to appoint independent Chairs or Members to the proposed structure.

Options: Whether or not to respond to the discussion paper.

RESOLVED: That the following comments be incorporated into the Council's response to the ODPM's discussion paper entitled Standards of Conduct in English Local Government: The Future:

1. The Council has finite resources and should seek some assurances that the Government intended to make reasonable resources available to meet the additional costs incurred to implement these proposals.

2. That it may prove difficult to recruit independent representatives and suggest that a payment for allowances be included to encourage recruitment.

Reason:

1. To take an active part in the consultation process.

97. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: On the motion of Councillor W. Armstrong 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 items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 12 of the Local Government Act 1972.

98. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2005/06 REVIEW

Councillor Huntley presented the report which appraised Members of changes to capital programme bids, requested approval for new bids and demonstrated how resources had been allocated to priorities. This was a regular quarterly update and a further report was scheduled for April 2006.

She highlighted that the following two projects would be referred to Scrutiny for consideration of the project outline:

- Allensford Toilets Demolition and Replacement.
- Leisure Road Signage.

She also informed the Executive that the Members on-line project was progressing and a pilot scheme involving the Learning Scrutiny Panel was scheduled to commence shortly.

It was noted that Scrutiny Board had considered the report and agreed that there were no significant issues to report.

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

RESOLVED: that the additions to the unresourced prioritised list (attached as Appendix 1 to the report) be agreed.

Reason: To allow the Corporate Asset Management Group to ensure that the Council's resources are utilised to mobilise the most essential projects.

99. STANLEY TOWN CENTRE – PHASE 2 REGENERATION

Councillor Llewellyn presented the report which requested Members to confirm the Council's position on options to:

- A) progress a private sector proposal for a major development in the Stanley Core Retail area; and
- B) Facilitate this by accommodating development of a new Stanley Medical Centre on an alternative to the former Stanley Bus Station site.

In response to Councillor Armstrong's question regarding possible Compulsory Purchase Orders the Head of Land & Property advised that Officers would carry out the work however, all the costs would be underwritten by the private developer.

Councillor Taylor thanked Officers for their work on bringing forward this project and commented that this was the type of development the community in Stanley had asked for.

It was noted that Scrutiny Board had welcomed the report.

Options:

1. Agree to progress work on the submitted proposal and the revised proposals for new health facilities.
2. Reject the proposal and continue with existing plans.
3. Progress revised proposals for new health facilities and re-market the former Stanley Bus Station site.

RESOLVED:

1. That Option 1 on the report be agreed – to progress work on the submitted proposal and the revised proposals for new health facilities.
2. Once additional details are finalised then a further report be submitted on the proposals, including details for the scheme's proposed content, specification, costings, timing, risks and consultation arrangements.

Reasons:

1. This option provides the best opportunity to secure a significant new town centre development for Stanley.
2. To increase local economic and community benefits.

CONCLUSION OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 4.52 p.m.