

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Consett on Monday, 9th January 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.

83. 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.

84. MINUTES

Councillor Watson referred to Minute No.72 – County Durham Minerals & Waste Development Framework: Minerals Issues and Options Report – and requested that the dissatisfaction of the Executive be recorded that Durham County Council had approved an application for open cast coal extraction at Stoney Heap.

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2005 were agreed as a correct record.

85. DURHAM COALFIELDS SETTLEMENT STUDY AND STANLEY AREA DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (ADF)

Councillor Llewellyn presented the report which advised of the findings of the Durham Coalfield Settlement Study which had been undertaken by consultants Jacobs Babtie and requested Members to consider whether to

accept the document. Further to the results of the Jacobs Babbie report Members were also requested to consider the opportunity to develop an Area Development Framework for the wider Stanley area with funding being provided through the Councils existing SHIP allocation.

Councillor Johnson highlighted the similarity between this report and Item 5 on the Agenda and the Director of Environmental Services commented that it was important for Members to note that these were two separate but complementary items.

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

Options:

1. Whether to accept or reject the findings of the Jacobs Babbie report.
2. Whether or not to engage Llewellyn Davies or begin a new tendering process to develop Area Development Framework as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. **That the findings of the Jacobs Babbie report are noted and accepted.**
2. **That the Council retain the existing service provider, Llewellyn Davies, via negotiation, to develop an Area Development Framework for the wider Stanley area.**

Reasons:

1. To formally identify Stanley as a strategic focus for intervention.
2. To provide a platform for the development of more local and community based intervention, including housing intervention, in Stanley.
3. To open Stanley to further, significant, funding opportunities.
4. To take the opportunity to develop an in-depth programme of measures to improve the function and sustainability of Stanley.
5. An investment in the preparation of an Area Development Framework now may lead to substantial returns. English Partnerships, as the potential funder, support this course of action. It would allow the Council to meet the English Partnerships' deadline of the end of May 2006.
6. Use of alternative consultants may have been more expensive as they would not have undertaken the work already completed in Craghead.

**86. LOCAL ENTERPRISE GROWTH INITIATIVE (LEGI):
THE FINAL BID**

Councillor Llewellyn presented the report and advised that the meeting of the Executive on 3 October 2005 had agreed to a Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) bid being prepared by the Council in collaboration with the Districts of Easington, Sedgefield and Wear Valley. The report set out the progress in preparing the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) bid and outlined the next stage of the process.

Councillor Llewellyn advised that at the meeting on 3 October the issue of using existing delegated powers had been noted and therefore recommendation 5.1 (iii) was not required for decision.

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

Options:

1. Whether or not to continue with further collaborative work in advance of the announcement of Round One LEGI winners.
2. Await the outcome of the LEGI bid before continuing with further collaborative working.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Option 1 be agreed and the proposed collaborative working arrangements, in advance of the announcement of Round One LEGI winners be endorsed.**
- 2. The use of external consultants needed to support the development of future LEGI bids be agreed.**

Reasons: This option:-

1. Recognises the need to maintain collaborative working between the four districts.
2. Will maximise the chances of successfully delivering a successful Round One LEGI bid.
3. Will maximise the chances of successfully delivering a successful Round Two LEGI bid.
4. Recognises that preparation of a collaborative Round 2 bid will require buying in capacity and expertise in order to produce the requisite baselines, outcome targets and interventions.

**87. DERWENTSIDE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK:
DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Councillor Johnson presented the report which informed Members of the preparation of the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which forms part of the Local Development Framework (LDF). The document sets out how the community and other stakeholders will be involved in the preparation of the LDF and in the consideration of planning applications. He also highlighted that the consultation period had been amended to commence on 27 January 2006.

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

Options: Whether to approve, reject or make amendments to the draft statement of community involvement.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the draft Derwentside Statement of Community Involvement for public consultation commencing on 27th January 2006 be approved.

Reason: To enable the Council to meet its milestone in the Local Development Scheme.

88. 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 Paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act (as amended).

COUNCILLOR J HUNTLEY ENTERED THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

89. TANFIELD LEA BUSINESS PARK

Councillor Llewellyn presented the report which provided an update on Council led development proposals for a proposed Tanfield Lea Business Park within the existing Tanfield Lea North Industrial Estate.

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

Options: Whether or not to agree to the proposals in the report regarding Tanfield Lea Business Park.

RESOLVED: That agreement be granted to:

- 1. Develop the land and buildings as outlined on the plan attached to the report for a Tanfield Lea Business Park.**
- 2. Negotiate to purchase land in private ownership to be included as part of the Tanfield Lea Business Park.**
- 3. Prepare the appropriate strategy and development plan in order to proceed with a Compulsory Purchase Order to acquire land necessary to fully develop Tanfield Lea Business Park.**

Reasons:

1. These proposals will maximises the development potential of Tanfield Lea Business Park.
2. Meets key Corporate Economic Development aims and objectives for Derwentside.
3. Maximises the potential external public and private sector investment opportunities for Derwentside.

90. DISPOSAL OF THE GATEHOUSE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

Councillor Watson presented the report which detailed options for the disposal of the current Gatehouse Industrial Estate. At a meeting of the Executive held in July 2003 approval had been granted to declare the Gatehouse Industrial Estate surplus to requirements. In accordance with the Council's Land Disposal programme, the site had been advertised on the open market.

It was noted that Scrutiny Board had considered the report and a number of questions had been raised in relation to the various tenders submitted. Following discussions the Executive Director had suggested that options 3.5.2 be extended to read “.. in the event that the option fails to realise the best offer, officers be authorised to enter into negotiations with the other tenderers”

Options: Whether to accept or reject the recommendation in the report to dispose of the Gatehouse Industrial Estate.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the offer from the applicant listed at 3.5.1 on the report be accepted, however, in the event that the sale does not proceed, officers be authorised to enter negotiations with the other tenderers.**

Reason: To accept the highest tender submitted.

91. FORMER E-COMELEON BUILDING, TANFIELD LEA INDUSTRIAL ESTATE NORTH

Councillor Llewellyn presented the report which gave options for the future of the former e-comeleon Building, Tanfield Lea Industrial Estate North Industrial Estate

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

The Director of IT confirmed that the building would become the Headquarters for the proposed occupiers regional IT service.

Options: Whether to agree or reject the proposals in the report regarding the former e-comeleon building.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Option 2 on the report be agreed and that detailed terms are finalised with a view to the building being occupied by the party set out in Paragraph 3.1(i) of the report; and**
- 2. Officers seek to work with the other party in seeking to identify suitable alternative property or land in Derwentside on which the company's proposals could be accommodated.**

Reasons: This option

1. Provides an opportunity to develop further ICT related employment opportunities in Derwentside;
2. Is most compatible with plans for developing the immediate surrounding area; and
3. Presents the lowest risk in seeking to ensure a continuity of occupation and management of the building and surrounding land.

92. RATING REVALUATION

Councillor Huntley presented the report which requested approval to appoint an external contractor to provide professional services in relation to appealing against the Rateable Values in the 2005 Rating List in respect of the Council's Corporate Property Portfolio. This was a collaborative partnership between the seven District / Borough Councils in County Durham with Sedgefield Borough Council volunteering to carry out the tendering exercise thus saving this Council marketing and tendering costs.

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

Options: Whether or not to accept the recommendations in the report regarding the tender.

RESOLVED:

That authority be granted to appoint the party detailed in 3.1.1. of the report to provide professional services in relating to appealing against the Rateable Values in the 2005 Rating List.

Reasons:

1. The collaborative proposal demonstrates procurement and efficiency benefits with year on year cost improvements at a cost level lower than the current contractor could achieve and also avoids annual inflation increases of circa 2.5% per annum, and these values can be assessed annually and included in the Council's Annual Efficiency Statement.
2. The collaborative approach is consistent with the Corporate Procurement Strategy and Action Plan and the report is fully endorsed by the Corporate Procurement Manager.
3. This recommendation enables the Council to obtain the lowest cost and avoid tender costs and also demonstrates a collaborative approach in support of the Efficiency agenda.

CONCLUSION OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 5.12 p.m.