

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Consett on 12th June 2006 at 4.30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Councillor A. Watson, Chair.

Councillors: W. Armstrong, J Huntley, O. Johnson, D.G. Lewellyn and A. Taylor

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor W Tyrie

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors C.D. Christer and M. Malone.

6. 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 items was discussed. A copy of the notes of the Board meeting held on 9th June 2006 are attached for information (Appendix A)

7. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 15th May 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

8. TRANSFORMATIONAL STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Councillor Watson presented the report which set out the three key themes that the Transformational Strategy will focus on:

- To plan for future workforce requirements in a systematic and proactive way to assist in meeting the Council's key challenges.

- To develop the skills of employees at all levels to develop a high performance culture and provide better services for the people of Derwentside.
- To seek to engage with others in working towards the national and local vision of efficiencies through partnership working.

Councillor Llewellyn commented on the current workforce profile and the possible loss of high level knowledge and skills in response the Divisional Head of Human Resources advised that this issue had been identified as a possible problem and therefore training in these areas would be given a high priority.

The Executive Director commented that a lot of hard work had been put into this document and that the authority would be facing significant changes and challenges in the future, the emphasis of the report was to help guide the organisation through this period of change.

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

RESOLVED: That the content of the report be noted and the proposals as set out in the Transformational Plan appended to the report be agreed.

Reason: By bringing people management to the forefront of strategic thinking, the Council will need to make the most of the people it employs and must have a plan which brings together how to achieve a well-skilled, well-motivated, high performing workforce delivering excellent services. Such a plan must be linked to service and corporate plans.

9. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME FOR THE DERWENTSIDE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Councillor Johnson presented the report which sought approval for the Council's revised Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS identified the documents that are to be prepared for the District's new Local Development Framework (LDF) and the timetables for their preparation. The LDS also includes a list of those policies that the Council wishes to save beyond September 2007 until the Core Strategy and Development Control DPD's are adopted.

The report was also official recognition of the commencement of work on the preparation of the Core Strategy and Development Control Development Plan Documents, meeting the milestones identified in the LDS.

In response to Councillor Llewellyn's questions regarding the existing Local Plan Policies for Housing Sites, the Principal Planning Officer advised that any future planning applications would be considered against the government guidance in

PPG3 and these policies are being saved to avoid a policy vacuum while the new local development framework documents are being produced.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the revised Local Development Scheme be approved.
2. That the commencement of the work on the Core Strategy and Development Control Development Plan Documents be acknowledged.

Reason: The principal reason for revising the Local Development Scheme has been the slippage in the preparation of the Regional Spatial Strategy. The revised LDS has been designed to reflect the Council's available resources and fulfils the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 12, which guides the contents of Local Development Frameworks documents.

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

Councillor Johnson presented the report which informed of the preparation of the Submission 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 the consideration of planning applications.

Councillor Watson raised the comments made by Scrutiny Board regarding the wording of the final bullet point of 3.15 on page 21 to be amended as follows:

- "Any request to amend conditions imposed by the Development Control Committee must be referred back to Development Control for determination".

The Executive Director advised that Scrutiny Board, had felt that this particular bullet point had needed further clarification and had requested that the wording be amended. In response the Director of Environmental Services advised that the wording had already been agreed by Council however, to clarify this point he advised that the planning procedures would be operated as requested by Scrutiny Board and any variations of conditions imposed by the Development Control Committee would be referred back to Development Control for determination and not determined under delegated powers.

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

RESOLVED: That the contents of the Submission draft Derwentside Statement of Community Involvement for public consultation, commencing 7th July 2006 be approved.

Reason: The SCI sets out how the community and other stakeholders can get involved in decisions on planning applications for development in the District by setting out exactly how neighbours and other members of the public will be told about new proposals and how they can make their views known to the Council.

11. DIVERSITY & EQUALITY POSITION REPORT

Councillor Watson presented the report which provided Members with a position statement in relation to how it is achieving its obligations both legally and within the corporate aims and objectives which have been set with regard to diversity. The report gave options

Options:

1. Appoint a new officer who can dedicate her/his time to the equality agenda, initially for a fixed term contract.
2. Share an officer between two or more authorities.
3. Link with the University of Durham for a 2 year paid placement.
4. Appoint a consultant to do the job.

RESOLVED: That Option 3 on the report be agreed – To link with the University of Durham for a 2 year paid placement.

Reasons: This would enable the Council to take the opportunity to have a post-graduate placement for a period of 2 years. This would provide a time limited resource that could either be used by the Council or in conjunction with Wear Valley District who have expressed an interest in partnering the project.

CONCLUSION OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 4.55 p.m.