

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Consett on 13th November 2006 at 4.30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Councillor A. Watson

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors W. Tyrie, R. Ord, W. Proud and C. Bell.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apologies for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor J. Huntley.

62. 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. A copy of the notes of the Board meeting held 10th November are attached for information. (Appendix 'A').

63. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A Watson declared an interest in Item 9 on the Agenda.- North East Assembly / Association of North East Councils, as he advised he was Chair of the North East Regional Assembly.

64. MINUTES

That the minutes of the meeting held 16th October 2006 be agreed as a correct record.

65. PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

Councillor A. Taylor presented the report which sought approval to adopt the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) which was set out in Appendix 1 to the report and to enable officers to begin implementing the Action Plan.

The Chair referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 10th November 2006.

Options: Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposed Playing Pitch Strategy.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Playing Pitch Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be adopted by the Authority.
2. The Playing Pitch Strategy be distributed to all key stakeholders involved including voluntary sports clubs, Sports Specific Development Groups and the Schools Sports Partnership.
3. That officers begin working in partnership with all key stakeholders on implementing the Action Plan as contained within the Playing Pitch Strategy.

Reasons:

1. The Playing Pitch Strategy sets out a vision to provide high quality playing pitches and changing facilities to enable greater use and enjoyment by all members of the community.
2. Strategic challenges are discussed and the action plan details the way forward to meet the challenges ahead relating to playing pitch provision in the district, with junior pitches clearly identified as a priority.
3. The strategy acts as a lever to attract significant external funding.
4. The implementation of this strategy will support improvements to pitches, improve outcomes for users and key stakeholders and will help achieve cross cutting agenda objectives.

66. STANLEY AREA DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (ADF)

Councillor Llewellyn presented the report which set out the current position regarding the Stanley Area Development Framework (ADF). The report advised that the immediate task of the co-ordination group was to agree the Engagement Plan and to establish a series of sub-groups across the settlements of Craghead, New Kyo, South Moor and Quaking Houses. These groups had been established combining local Community Partnerships, local residents action groups and local members. The work of the groups was progressing and are all coming to Stage Three of the Engagement Plan and starting to test possible solutions to ideas and issues on how to improve housing settlements in the ADF area.

At the initial Co-ordination Group, representatives had raised the issue of No Place being included in the revised ADF. The Group had agreed to explore this request and agreed that the consultants would consider the potential in include No Place and other areas in the revised ADF.

English Partnerships were in constant dialogue with the Council and the appointed consultants to update progress with the revised ADF. It was anticipated that the Durham Coalfields Partnership, with the support of English Partnerships will consider a County-wide proposal for settlement renewal during January 2007. It was likely that the outcome of this would not be known until after March 2007.

Councillor Malone requested clarification regarding the issue of No Place and in response the Development Manager advised that at a public meeting held the previous week it had been agreed with local members that the timescale did not allow for inclusion of No Place at this point, however, a request would be made for consideration of No Place in a future phase of the development.

The Chair referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 10th November 2006.

Options:

1. To agree to maintain the programme to prepare a revised ADF for Stanley.
2. To propose different courses of action to support delivery of the revised ADF for Stanley.

RESOLVED: That the programme to prepare a revised ADF for Stanley is maintained.

Reason: In order to progress the revised Stanley ADF.

67. HOME VISITING OFFICER POST

Councillor Malone presented the report which informed Members that the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had offered Derwentside District Council £15,000 funding for this financial year, if the Council were to provide match funding in order to recruit a Home Visiting Officer to be located within the Council's Housing Team.

In response to Councillor Malone's questions officers advised that the 'accessible prevention fund' was not included in the £15,000 funding, the Council already had an existing statutory homelessness budget. Councillor Malone emphasised that this post was for one year and there was a need to examine whether the post had been successful following the 1st year assessment.

The Chair referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 10th November 2006.

Options: Whether to agree or reject the proposals for a Home Visiting Officer Post.

RESOLVED: That approval be granted for the appointment of a Home Visiting Officer on a one year fixed term basis with a view to possible extension and that £16,500 of funding be released from the Council's General Fund for this purpose.

Reason: To implement recommendations of DCLG and to implement a component of the Council's Housing Options Projects Plan in order to improve the Council's Homelessness service.

68. REPLACEMENT TOILETS AT ALLENSFORD COUNTRY PARK

Councillor Taylor presented the report which advised that the existing public toilets at Allensford Country Park were in a very poor condition, requiring substantial refurbishment or replacement.

The Chair referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 10th November 2006.

Options:

1. Close public toilets at Allensford Country Park.
2. Continue existing provision – no refurbishment or replacement.
3. Refurbish existing toilets.
4. Replace with new provision.

Councillor Watson referred to the notes of Scrutiny Board which suggested that a charge be place on the use of the facilities.

Councillor Christer asked whether the use of the new style automated toilets had been considered. In response officers advised that the use of automated facilities had been considered but had not been suitable for this site.

RESOLVED:

1. That Option 4 on the report to replace the toilets at Allensford with new provision be agreed.
2. That a facilities charge of 20p per visit be agreed, as this is in line with the public toilets at Consett and Stanley Bus Stations.

Reasons:

1. This provides the best use of capital resources and maximises the quality of toilet facilities provided.
2. This enables a potential revenue saving of £7,000.
3. This provides clear separation between the services, utilities and wastewater operated by Burtree Ltd and the Council.
4. This provides a new, vandal-proof facility with an expected lifespan of some twenty years.
5. This allows full compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act.

Prior to consideration of the following item Councillor A. Watson declared an interest as he was Chair of the North East Regional Assembly. He left the meeting at this point and took no part in the discussion or decision made.

69. PENSION GUARANTEE: NORTH EAST ASSEMBLY / ASSOCIATION OF NORTH EAST COUNCILS

Councillor Malone presented the report which requested Members to consider agreeing to act as guarantor for the pension liabilities of the North East Assembly and the Association of North East Councils. The request had been made to all 25 local authorities in the region and formed part of the process of both organisations moving towards becoming incorporated bodies.

Members were referred to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 10th November 2006.

Options: Whether to agree or reject the request to act as guarantor.

RESOLVED: That the request to act as part guarantor for the pension liabilities of the North East Assembly and the Association of North East Councils be agreed.

Reasons: The financial risk associated with such an agreement is minor based on the current calculation of the fund balance and, as a member authority Derwentside District Council potentially benefits from the work carried out on behalf of the region.

Councillor Watson returned to the meeting at this point.

70. DERWENTSIDE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL – SCOPING REPORT

Councillor Johnson presented the report which informed Members of the completion of the Scoping Report for the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Local Development Framework (LDF).

The Chair referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 10th November 2006.

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

RESOLVED: That approval be granted to the contents of the Derwentside Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for public consultation commencing on 17th November 2006.

Reason: To fulfil the statutory obligation to undertake public consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

71. DERWENTSIDE COMPACT AND PROCUREMENT CONCORDAT FOR THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

Councillor Watson presented the report which sought endorsement of a Compact and Procurement Concordat between the Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector. The report informed Members of the impact of adopting these documents and the benefits they will bring.

The Chair referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 10th November 2006.

Options: Whether to agree, amend or reject the concordat.

RESOLVED: That the Derwentside Compact and the Voluntary and Community Sector Concordat be endorsed.

Reasons:

1. The Derwentside Compact and Voluntary and Community Sector Concordat have the support of the Voluntary and Community Sector represented by the CVS and the Development Trust Association.
2. This is a significant opportunity for the Council to demonstrate its support for and commitment to the Voluntary and Community Sector and Social and Community Enterprises in the local area.

72. PHASE II OF THE EQUIPPED PLAY STRATEGY

Councillor Taylor presented the report which advised that the Council had recently agreed to extend the Equipped Play Strategy and create new provisions in the wards of Burnhope; Burnopfield; Dipton; Tanfield; Ebchester & Medomsley. Consultation had taken place with ward members and within communities to choose the preferred locations for the play areas.

She highlighted that since the dispatch of the agenda, further correspondence had been received regarding the proposed site at Dipton. Firstly she advised that a document received from Councillor Ord a local Ward Member for Dipton which gave details of the consultation process undertaken and references to 51 letters of support and also details of 19 telephone calls of support from local residents for the proposed site at The Bute Arms.

She also advised that notification had been received that the site at the 'Car Park' was the preferred site for some other residents.

The Acting Head of Leisure Services then proceeded to give a short presentation of the advantages and disadvantages of each of the six sites considered in the Dipton area, namely:

- Communal Room
- Community Centre
- Car Park
- Wordsworth Gardens
- Gas Works
- Bute Arms

Lengthy discussion took place on the consultation process carried out in Dipton and in response the Acting Head of Leisure Services advised that the same consultation process had been carried out in all areas e.g. the residents nearest to the proposed sites had been notified that the area had been considered for a play area with the local Ward Member asked to liaise with residents in the local community. Councillor Malone suggested that a more comprehensive consultation process was required in the Dipton area to include a wider sample of the residents and not just the properties immediately adjacent to the site. Councillor Christer agreed with these comments and that additional consultation time was required. The Executive Director confirmed that the same consultation procedure (as outlined in the report) had been carried out in all of the wards under discussion and that the concerns regarding consultation referred only to the Dipton ward. The Acting Head of Leisure advised that any time extension for consultation would have an impact on the timing of the installation of the play equipment, and in order to minimise delay it was suggested that additional consultation take place in the Dipton area, with the final decision on the site of the play area to rest with the Portfolio Holder for Strong Communities.

Discussion also took place on the choice of play equipment and in response to questions the Acting Head of Leisure advised that once the contractor had been chosen via the procurement process, then there would be the opportunity for further consultation with local communities regarding the choice of play equipment for each ward.

The Chair referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 10th November 2006.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the £12,000 earmarked to provide diversionary activities and prevent anti-social behaviour in Ebchester & Medomsley be used to provide play equipment.
2. That officers progress the installation of new local play areas in the locations detailed in Appendix A with the exception of Dipton which will be subject of an additional consultation process as 5 and 6 below.

3. The procurement method for Phase II of the Play Strategy be continued as detailed in paragraph 3.3.3 of the report.
4. That the specified budget for Local Play Areas be £40,000 with the exception of Medomsley and Hamsterley where it will be £26,000 per site.
5. That further consultation take place in the Dipton area with local ward councillors and residents regarding the location of the play area – with the consultation to be completed by January 2007.
6. The final decision for the location of the Dipton play area be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Strong Communities.

Reasons:

1. Consultation with residents and work within the Strong Communities Scrutiny Panel has continually requested a more balanced provision of play areas across the District.
2. Appropriate locations had been secured in partnership with local residents.
3. The specific needs of Ebchester and Medomsley have been taken into account, which enabled an appropriate use of funds identified to reduce anti-social behaviour.
4. An appropriate procurement method has been identified which allows maximum input from communities whilst still obtaining best value.
5. Significant increases in equipment costs over the last eight years has led to a need to increase the budgeted amount for local play installation.

73. ADULT COMMUNITY CARE PARTNERSHIP BOARD AND INTEGRATED TEAMS

Councillor Armstrong presented the report which updated Members on the Adult Community Care Partnership Board. The report also provided information on the proposals for Integrated Teams and to request approval to progress development of east and west integrated adult community care teams for the Derwentside locality.

The Project Co-ordinator had prepared a full options paper attached to the report as Appendix 1, the report supported the findings of the Options Appraisal that the establishment of two integrated teams would be the preferred option in terms of cost and strengths as detailed in the SWOT analysis.

The Chair referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 10th November 2006.

Options: To either agree or reject the East and West Integrated Community Team Model.

RESOLVED:

1. That Option 9.5 in the report be agreed, to support the formation of a 2-team, East and West Integrated Community Team model.
2. That Members note and agree that in the short to medium term it was not possible to physically locate housing department staff in integrated teams, but

that should the Council be successful with the VIP bid then work will be done to explore the use of the mobile wardens within integrate teams.

3. That Members agree that officers will continue to work with the partner agencies to develop the integrated team operational details and milestones.

Reasons:

1. To improve the health and social well being of vulnerable adults within the Derwentside locality.
2. To ensure that all users and carers receive the most effective and efficient care services that can be provided for them.
3. To ensure that high quality, cost effective adult care services can be jointly planned, commissioned and delivered for the benefit of those users and carers who need them.
4. Integration will help the Partnership to provide 'suitable, easily accessible services without "organisational barriers". This was the aspiration expressed by local people in consultations conducted in 2003 and 2004. It will also meet Government mandates to provide increasingly efficient and effective services through integration and through joined-up working by agencies involved in the commissioning and delivery of those services.

74. EXCLUSION

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 10 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED).

75. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2006/07 REVIEW

Councillor Watson presented the report which advised Members of changes to capital programmed bids, request approval for new bids and to show how resources had been allocated to priorities.

The Chair referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 10th November 2006.

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

RESOLVED: That the information contained in the report be noted.

Reasons: To allow the limited available resources to be monitored and utilised in the most effective way, allowing the Council to mobilise the most essential projects.

76. TANFIELD LEA BUSINESS CENTRE

Councillor Llewellyn presented the report which provided an update on development proposals for Tanfield Lea North Industrial Estate, in particular on the proposed Tanfield Lea Business Centre.

The Chair referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 10th November 2006.

Options: Whether to agree or reject the proposals in the report for the project.

RESOLVED: That Option 1 on the report be approved – to allocate the extra resource required.

Reasons:

1. Even with the extra resource, this project still represented the best return available to the Council.
2. This project is the first stage in developing a vision for Tanfield Lea Business Park and the wider Tanfield Lea North Industrial Estate.
3. The Business Centre will be iconic and highly specified and will act as a catalyst for further Council and private sector developments.

CONCLUSION OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 6.11 p.m.