

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Consett on 11th December 2006 at 4.30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Councillor A. Watson (Chairman)

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors W. Stelling, W.J. Tyrie and C. Bell.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

There were no apologies for absence.

77. 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 8th December 2006 are attached for information. (Appendix 'A')

78. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

79. MINUTES

That the minutes of the meeting held 13th November 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

It was noted that a call-in request had been received with reference to Minute No. 72 "Phase II of the Equipped Play Strategy". The Monitoring Officer had declined the request. As yet no appeal against the decision had been received.

80. COUNCIL PERFORMANCE – REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE SECOND QUARTER 2006/07

Councillor Malone presented the report which informed Members of the performance of the red, amber and green rated Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) for the second quarter of 2006/07.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 8th December 2006.

Options: Whether or not to commission further reports into the performance of any of the Best Value Performance Indicators.

RESOLVED: That the information contained in the report regarding Best Value Performance Indicators be noted.

Reasons: That the Best Value Performance Indicators continue to be monitored using the Risk Assessment Performance Management Framework.

81. MORTGAGES

Councillor Huntley presented the report which requested that Members consider as to whether or not after the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer to Derwentside Homes, mortgages will be granted to new applicants and also to consider the future administration of the current portfolio of 26 mortgages.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 8th December 2006.

Options: Whether or not to continue to grant mortgages to tenants.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council cease to offer mortgages to tenants with the effective date being 23rd October 2006 to coincide with the suspension of the Right to Buy Scheme.
2. That Members authorise officers to investigate the outsourcing of the management of existing mortgages.

Reasons:

1. The continuation of the current scheme would mean that the Authority had to set aside a sum each year from Capital Resources to fund the provision of mortgages to applicants wishing to exercise their right to buy.
2. It was not considered efficient to train staff to deal with the current system or to buy a new system due to the small number of mortgages that will be left with Derwentside District Council.

82. DURHAM CITY PLANNING FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT: PREFERRED HOUSING SITES CONSULTATION

Councillor Johnson presented the report which informed Members of the publication of the City of Durham's Planning for Housing (Preferred Housing Sites) Development Plan Document (DPD) and to identify the potential impact that the document may have on Derwentside.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 8th December 2006.

Options: Whether or not to agree to make representations to City of Durham regarding housing allocations.

RESOLVED: That agreement be granted to submit representations to City of Durham based on the contents of the report.

Reasons: To ensure that the City of Durham are made aware of this Council's concerns over the use of the RSS Panel Report's recommended housing allocations in its Planning for Housing (Preferred Housing Sites) DPD.

83. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT SERVICE AND ACTUAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2005/06

Councillor Huntley presented the report which covered the treasury activity for 2005/06. The report also covered the actual Prudential Indicators for 2005/06 in accordance with the requirements of the Prudential Code.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 8th December 2006.

Options: Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals for treasury management as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the actual 2005/06 prudential indicators within the report be approved.
2. That the treasury management stewardship report for 2005/06 be approved.

Reasons: The annual treasury report is a requirement of the Council's reporting procedures.

84. TWIN BINS OPERATION CHANGES

Councillor Johnson presented the report which asked Members to consider the options for transport to our new Recyclates processor.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 8th December 2006.

Discussion took place on the LPSA grant awarded to the Council and in response to Councillor Watson's questions he was advised that the 1st instalment of the LPSA reward grant of £125,000 was received this year. The Chairman suggested that a statement be released to the Press regarding the receipt of the reward grant and its use.

Options: Whether or not to change the transport arrangements for recyclates.

RESOLVED:

1. That Option A as detailed in the report be agreed e.g. approve the 'in-house' provision.
2. That a statement be released to the Press regarding the receipt of the reward grant and its use.

Reason: This is considered the most economically advantageous option when the resale value of the equipment is considered.

85. DERWENTSIDE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: ANNUAL REPORT

Councillor Johnson presented the report which advised Members of the preparation of the Council's second Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) covering the period 2005/06.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 8th December 2006.

Councillor Llewellyn raised questions regarding employment land and affordable housing issues. In response the Development Manager advised that these concerns would be considered during discussions with Planning Officers. Councillor Malone raised concerns regarding the criteria for the de-allocation of sites. In response the Development Manager advised that these site had been de-allocated for various reasons including housing as stated in the report.

Options: Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals to submit to GONE.

RESOLVED: That Members agree the contents of the 2005/06 Annual Monitoring Report and permit its submission to GONE before the deadline of 31st December 2006.

Reasons: Monitoring was an essential part of any development planning process. The AMR was an important tool to assess the effectiveness of existing planning policies and to inform new ones that develop as part of the Local Development Framework.

86. COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Councillor Llewellyn presented the report which requested that Members confirm the allocation of funding for a Community Economic Development Initiative (CEDI) in Derwentside.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 8th December 2006.

Options: Whether to submit a business case for a CEDI for Annfield Plain and New Kyo or propose a different course of action.

RESOLVED: That Option (i) on the report be agreed and that a business case is prepared to provide a CEDI at Annfield Plain and New Kyo.

Reasons:

1. The CEDI programme presents a good opportunity for focussed economic development activity in Annfield Plain and New Kyo.
2. The resources available from the CEDI can be used to lever in further support and improve economic activity in the area.

87. SINGLE STATUS

Councillor Huntley presented the report which provided an outline of the process of harmonisation of terms and conditions, offered a position statement and highlighted outstanding issues. It also sought agreement from Members to the appeals process identified within the report.

Councillor Watson referred to paragraph 3 of the report which stated that the current Single Status agreement within Derwentside does not include reference to Chief Officers and craft employees. Although locally craft employees had been consulted on this matter, nationally the instruction was for them not to be included in Single Status arrangements and therefore despite a local willingness to do so, the Council were not in a position to apply wage harmonisation through Job Evaluation for these employees. However, at a local level, Chief Officers were willing to be involved in the process and were happy to be evaluated on the basis of advice taken from the North East Provincial Employers Organisation. The inclusion of Chief Officers in this process would be advantageous to the Council bearing in mind the requirement to retain senior officers. He then went on to recommend to the Executive that on the basis of this mutually agreed local

arrangement with the officers affected, as determined by the Head of Paid Service, and using the North East Provisional Employers Organisation for independent advice, these posts should be included in the Job Evaluation process with changes formally implemented from 1st April 2007.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 8th December 2006.

Options: Whether to agree, amend or reject the appeals process and the additional recommendation detailed above.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Appeals process as detailed in the report be agreed.
2. That on the basis of this mutually agreed local arrangement with the officers affected, as determined by the Head of Paid Service, and using the North East Provisional Employers Organisation for independent advice, these posts should be included in the Job Evaluation process with changes formally implemented from 1st April 2007.

Reasons: To harmonise the terms and conditions for employees and to agree the appeals process.

88. STANLEY AREA DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK UPDATE

Councillor Llewellyn presented the report which set out the current position with the Stanley Area Development Framework (ADF) and requested confirmation of the project management arrangements for the implementation of a series of interventions at Craghead, funded from the Single Housing Investment Pot (SHIP). He also advised that a meeting had been arranged with the Ward Members for Stanley on 19th December 2006 to discuss the final draft before it was considered by Council in January.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 8th December 2006.

Options:

1. Continue the programme to prepare an ADF and extend the appointment of David Cumberland Housing Regeneration Limited to provide project management of SHIP 1 and 2 at Craghead.
2. Continue the programme to prepare an ADF but seek to appoint a Council Officer to provide project management of SHIP 1 and 2 at Craghead.
3. Continue the programme to prepare an ADF but seek competitive tenders for the appointment of external consultants to provide project management of SHIP 1 and 2 at Craghead.

RESOLVED: That Option 1 on the report be agreed - to continue the programme to prepare an ADF and extend the appointment of David Cumberland

Housing Regeneration Limited to provide project management of SHIP1 and 2 at Craghead.

Reasons:

1. The programme to prepare a revised ADF for Stanley was well advanced and close to completion.
2. The use of existing consultants will provide immediate project management support to utilise SHIP resources at Craghead.

89. CORPORATE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2007-2010

Councillor Malone presented the report, the purpose of which was to provide Members with an explanation regarding the considerations and steps required in order to update the Corporate Procurement Strategy for the Financial Years of 2007-2010 and request the participation of Members in its development,

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 8th December 2006.

Options: Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposed schedule as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: That the proposed schedule for the development of the Corporate Procurement Strategy 2007-2010 be approved.

Reasons:

1. The Corporate Procurement Strategy will be an important strategy to ensure that strategic procurement management continues to contribute to the corporate objectives set out in the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan.
2. The engagement of key stakeholders in the development of the new strategy was very important and the input of Members and Officers was considered essential.

90. EXCLUSION

On the motion of Councillor W. Armstrong, seconded by Councillor M. Malone 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 3 of the Local Government Act 1972 (As Amended).

91. PROBABLE OUTTURN 2006/07 AND BUDGET UPDATE 2007/08

Councillor Huntley presented the report which advised Members on the Probable Outturn of the 2006/07 General Fund and the projected effect on available

reserves. The latest information on the Capital Programme and a brief update on the progress of the General Fund budget for 2007/08 was also included.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 8th December 2006.

Options: Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals in the report regarding financial affairs of the Council.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Probable Outturn positions of the General Fund and Capital Programme be received by Members.
2. That the progress on the 2007/08 General Fund Budget be noted by Members.

Reasons: The financial position needs to be monitored to ensure budget spend does not exceed the levels outlined in the report.

92. TANFIELD LEA NORTH INDUSTRIAL ESTATE – MASTER PLANNING

Councillor Llewellyn presented the report which outlined proposals to undertake a Master Planning exercise for Tanfield Lea North Industrial Estate.

Councillor Malone referred to the Comeleon building at Tanfield Lea and commented that there was no representation from the IT Directorate to answer any questions from Members. He therefore requested that as a priority the Executive Director ensure that in future a representative from each Directorate be present at Executive.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 8th December 2006

Options: Whether to support the proposals in the report or suggest an alternative approach to developing a Master Plan for the Industrial Estate.

RESOLVED: That the progression of a Master Plan for Tanfield Lea North Industrial Estate as detailed in the report be agreed subject to requisite funding being made available by One NorthEast.

Reasons: Tanfield Lea North Industrial Estate has the potential to make a further economic impact and completion of a Master Plan, taking in the views of key land owners and developers, would provide an appropriate framework for planning future development and regeneration of the estate.

93. STANLEY TOWN CENTRE – JOINT FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Councillor Llewellyn presented the report which outlined proposals to establish the feasibility of, and develop options / proposals relating to, the joint development of District and County Council facilities and services in Stanley town centre. Stanley town centre had been the subject of a number of recent investments including completion of the new Louisa Centre Pool and construction of a new Bus Station. Works to complete the Front Street “breakthrough” to provide a new entrance to the Bus Station are currently underway, the PCT has committed to developing a new health Centre on the Thorneyholme Terrace car park and a Development Agreement for a major redevelopment of the Core Retail Area in Stanley is currently being drafted for consideration by Members in January 2007.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 8th December 2006

Options: Whether to progress, amend or reject the proposals in the report regarding Stanley town centre.

RESOLVED: That agreement be granted to progress joint facilities development planning in Stanley town centre as described in the report.

Reasons: This would represent an appropriate initial way forward in seeking to improve local service quality and efficiency; improve the quality and utilisation of assets and support the regeneration of Stanley town centre.

94. ST. PIUS X R.C. CHURCH SITE, MOORSIDE

Councillor Huntley presented the report which requested Members consider an application to amend a restrictive covenant to allow the development of the site of St. Pius X R.C. Church at Moorside for residential purposes and a new church.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 8th December 2006

Options: Whether to agree or reject the request regarding the restrictive covenant.

RESOLVED: That the request to amend the covenant be approved subject to a payment based on 30% of the uplift in value.

Reason: This would enable the Council to obtain best consideration to support its own projects for the benefit of the community.

95. FORMER DRIFT MINE AT HAMSTERLEY

Councillor Huntley presented the report which advised Members of the current situation at the former Hamsterley Drift Mine.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 8th December 2006

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the action taken as detailed in the report be endorsed.
2. That the remediation works as outlined in the report be undertaken as quickly as possible following verification of the works by an appointed expert.

Reason: That a permanent solution to the problem is facilitated in the shortest possible time.

96. CARELINE

Councillor Armstrong presented the report which requested Members to consider the acceptance of a 3 year contract (with the option for a further 2 years) for provision of Community Alarms (known as Careline) by the Council.
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The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 8th December 2006

Options: Whether to accept or reject the recommendations in the report regarding the contract.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contract offer from Durham & District Supporting People Partnership be accepted and this be reported retrospectively to Full Council.
2. That Councillor W. Armstrong be nominated to be part of the Evaluation Panel for selection of the control centre supplier.

Reasons: By accepting the offer from Durham & District Supporting People Partnership it means that the Council can build on the success of the Careline Service. It also allows for the replacement of equipment and through this ensures that the service would be competitive in any future contracts.

CONCLUSION OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 5.19 p.m.