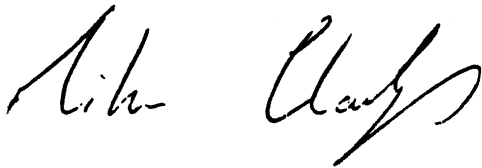


## Executive Leader & Deputy Leader Scrutiny

Councillors; J. I. Agnew, A. Atkinson, D. I. Barnett, G. Beckwith, D. Bennett, H. Christer, T. Clark, J. Docherty, B. Gray, D. Hicks, P. D. Hughes, L. Marshall, I. McElhone, D. V. McMahon, J. Nicholson, R. Ord, W. Stelling, O. L. Temple, M. Westgarth, T. Westgarth, J. Williams

Dear Councillor,

Your attendance is invited at a meeting of the Executive Leader & Deputy Leader Scrutiny to be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Consett on 30th January 2008 at 6:00 pm for consideration of the undernoted agenda.



MIKE CLARK

Chief Executive Officer

## Agenda

### 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any disclosure by Members of personal interests in matters on the agenda, identify the item on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Member regards the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.

### 2 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of this panel's meeting held on 31st October 2007 as a correct record. (Herewith 'A')

Attached Documents:

[MINUTES](#)

3. MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE

Attached are the minutes of the following Executive Meetings:

10th December 2007 (Herewith 'B')

14th January 2008 (Herewith 'C')

Attached Documents:

[MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE 'B'](#)  
[MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE 'C'](#)

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW

A) Update

The Chief Executive Officer will update Members in relation to the LGR process.

B) The Workings of G8

The Chief Executive Officer will update Members in relation to the operation of G8.

C) Partnership Working

The Chief Executive Officer will advise Members of the impact of LGR in relation to Partnership Working.

5. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT 2007/08

To consider the report of the Head of Human Resources. (To Follow Herewith 'D')

## **EXECUTIVE, LEADER / DEPUTY LEADER SCRUTINY**

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive, Leader / Deputy Leader Scrutiny Panel held in Comeleon House, Tanfield Industrial Estate, Tanfield on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007 at 6.00 p.m.

### **Present**

Councillor D. Hicks (Chair)

Councillors J.I. Agnew, G. Beckwith, T. Clark, J. Docherty, P.D. Hughes, L. Marshall, I. McElhone, J. Nicholson, W. Stelling, O.L. Temple, M. Westgarth, T. Westgarth, J. Williams.

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors D. I. Barnett, H. Christer, and B. Gray.

### **In Attendance**

Councillors T Parry, T Pattinson, D Walton and A Watson (Leader).

Councillor Alex Watson gave a brief introduction to the background and service that DurhamNet provides for Derwentside.

#### **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

#### **2. MINUTES**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meetings held 25<sup>th</sup> July 2007 and 20<sup>th</sup> September 2007 be agreed as a correct record.

#### **3. MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meetings held 10<sup>th</sup> September 2007 and 8<sup>th</sup> October 2007, the contents of which were noted and there was no comments to be made.

#### **4. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** On the motion of Councillor D. Hicks seconded by Councillor W. Stelling that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business

on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 (As Amended).

## **5. DURHAMNET**

The Chair welcomed to the meeting the Chief Executive of DurhamNet, Alan Hodgson who was in attendance to give a presentation on the current and future operations of DurhamNet.

The Chief Executive of DurhamNet went on to advise on the background of DurhamNet, DurhamNet identified a huge business opportunity in Derwentside whereas other telecommunication companies failed to and didn't want to invest into such a big rural challenge.

Alan Hodgson pointed out that Durham County Council and Derwentside District Council were the only Councils to partner with DurhamNet, providing revenue for DurhamNet to enable them to widen their telecoms infrastructure resulting in DurhamNet now being the main provider of Broadband for the majority of schools and Councils throughout Durham, Northumberland, Gateshead and Sunderland.

He also highlighted some of the main achievements of DurhamNet such as providing families in disadvantaged areas with access to free broadband in local community centres and providing systems to businesses such as North Durham NHS Trust, VCATS and NERTIPS. The Chief Executive of DurhamNet referred to examples of providing computers and free broadband to families in the South Stanley area which has effectively achieved better grades in the local school and has improved adult learning in this area.

He advised that DurhamNet hope to transform learning for the future generation and provide high quality using wireless technologies as a foundation, DurhamNet have secured £2.4million from ONE North East who support this project. He advised DurhamNet have helped Derwentside Council achieve 3 Beacon awards for supporting new businesses, Social Inclusion through ICT and positive youth engagement for the community and democratic process.

The Chief Executive of DurhamNet outlined some of the financial benefits for DurhamNet, he gave evidence of how the trading accounts have doubled from £330,000 in 2006/2007 to an estimate of £700,000 in 2007/2008, and that DurhamNet now provides £240,000 free of charge ICT services to communities.

The Chief Executive of DurhamNet gave the opportunity for Members to ask Questions.

Councillor Ian Agnew queried how to assess which areas receive the free computers and internet access. The Chief Executive of DurhamNet advised that

this is very much a tough decision but as they have 6000 users and try to achieve a turnaround of equipment every three years, he wishes to recover this equipment, have it 'cleaned' up by DurhamNet's Technicians and be able to use it in the community to provide the deprived households throughout the District with the IT facilities.

Councillor Janice Docherty queried the timescale and how Derwentside will receive future service first, the Chief Executive of DurhamNet reminded Members that Derwentside is priority for DurhamNet, that the infrastructure is already in place and it is easy for them to deploy in Derwentside.

Councillor Linda Marshall left the meeting at this point.

In response to Alan Hodgson's presentation the Chairman thanked DurhamNet for the invitation and wished them all the best for the future.

### **Conclusion of Meeting**

The meeting closed at 7.20 p.m.

### **Chair.**



## **EXECUTIVE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Consett on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2007 at 4.30 p.m.

## **PRESENT:**

Councillor A. Watson (Chairman)

Councillors: C.D. Christer, O. Johnson, D. Lavin, D.G. Llewellyn, M.J. Malone, C. Marshall and A. Taylor.

## **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence submitted.

## **42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor D. Llewellyn declared an interest in Item 9 on the agenda – he advised he had been appointed as the Council's representative on Derwentside Industrial Development Agency.

## **43. 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.

## **44. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> October 2007 be agreed as a correct record.

## **45. COUNCIL PERFORMANCE – REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE SECOND QUARTER 2007/08**

Councillor Malone presented the report which provided members with an update on performance for the Best Value Performance Indicators for the second quarter of 2007/08. Appendix 1 detailed the performance for all indicators and was included for members' information. The main text of the report concentrated upon areas where performance was a concern or where significant increases in performance had occurred. A detailed analysis of performance for all red risk indicators for the second quarter of 2007/08 was included in sections 3.6, 3.7 and

3.8. In addition significant falls or gains in performance for amber risk indicators were highlighted within sections 3.11 and 3.12 along with a short summary of performance for green rated indicators in section 3.14.

Quarter 2 Performance was detailed in Section 3 of the report. Of the 5 red risk indicators where performance for this quarter could be compared to that for the same period last year 3 had demonstrated an improvement in performance this quarter. On a positive note: recorded levels of violent crime have continued to fall throughout the first 6 months of 2007/08 and as a result this indicator has had the risk rating amended to amber for Quarter 3. Also sickness and absence levels were almost 22% lower than at the same period last year.

He highlighted the following:

- 55% of amber rated indicators have demonstrated an improvement in performance this quarter.
- 93% of green rated indicators had either continued to demonstrate an improvement in performance or retained their already high levels of performance. One exception to this was BVPI 128 which monitors the number vehicle crimes, this had demonstrated an increase in recorded crimes during the summer months. As a result the risk rating for this indicator has been changed from green to amber for Quarter 3.
- All red risk rated indicators had now completed action plans for 2007/08 and all action plans for Quarters 1 and 2 continue to be referred to the relevant Scrutiny Panels throughout the year.

Councillor Johnson referred to BVPI 82b and commented that the fall in performance was not due to the Council, the firm processing the recyclables was Premier Waste and they had experienced significant problems which had resulted in the authority not having access to the anaerobic digester at Thornley. This had resulted in a backlog and Derwentside not receiving credit for the recyclables.

The Divisional Head of General Services advised that there were two main issues firstly, the inability of the company to process the recyclables which would be addressed as the service was being put out to tender during Spring 2008. Secondly the ability of Premier to accept the waste from Derwentside, this had affected the performance figures as there was a backlog of approximately 1200 tonnes of waste collected by the Council which had not been processed by Premier and therefore, could not be included in the performance figures. The figures would look significantly better if each tonne collected was processed and dispatched in the same month as collection.

**Scrutiny Board Comments:** *Members welcomed the report, in particular the progress being made in relation to the red indicators. The Board also acknowledged the works being undertaken in relation to amber and green indicators.*



**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:** To ensure that any slippages in performance can be noted and indicators which posed concerns can be directed to the Action Planning and Scrutiny process.

#### **46. VEHICLE RENEWAL – CARELINE / COURIER SERVICE**

Councillor Lavin presented the report which requested Member consideration of the requirement for replacement vehicles for the Careline and Courier service. Members were requested to consider granting approval for the Council's Finance Department to secure the most advantageous terms for the Council, which for the Careline vehicles was likely to be over a five year period, whilst the Courier van was to be on an annual basis. Funding for the re-provision of these vehicles was earmarked within the Council's current budgets.

**Scrutiny Board Comments:** *The Scrutiny Board viewed the report and there were no issues of concern.*

**Options:** Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals in the report regarding vehicle renewal.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That approval be granted for the acquisition of those vehicles detailed in the report.
2. That funding for those vehicles be subject to an options appraisal by the Finance Directorate and the most advantageous option to the Council be selected over the specified period of time.

**Reason:** The existing vehicles are either at the end of their lease or had been on short term lease and following discussions with the Transport Manager it was thought prudent to acquire them on a longer term arrangement.

#### **47. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**ON THE MOTION OF COUNCILLOR M MALONE SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR JOHNSON THAT UNDER SECTION 100(A) 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 1 AND 3 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED).**

#### **48. REQUEST TO LEAVE THE AUTHORITY UNDER THE 85 YEAR RULE**

##### **Excluded under paragraph 1.**

Councilor Malone presented the report which asked Members to consider a request from an employee in the Corporate Administration and Policy Directorate to be allowed to leave the Authority under the 85 Year Rule.

**Scrutiny Board Comments:** The Scrutiny Board had viewed the report and there were no issues of concern.

**Options:** Whether to agree or reject the proposal.

**RESOLVED:** That the member of staff detailed in the report be allowed to leave the Authority under the 85 Year Rule and approval granted to recruit a new officer on a part-time basis.

**Reason:** Due to changing working practices and the administration support functions becoming increasingly ICT oriented.

#### **49. REQUEST TO RETIRE UNDER THE 85 YEAR RULE**

##### **Excluded under paragraph 1.**

Councillor Malone presented the report which asked Members to consider a request from an employee in the Grounds Maintenance Section to be allowed to take Early Retirement under the 85 Year Rule.

**Scrutiny Board Comments:** The Scrutiny Board had viewed the report and there were no issues of concern.

**Options :** Whether to agree or reject the proposal.

##### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the request to allow the employee to leave the Authority under the 85 Year Rule be declined.
2. That approval be granted for the employee detailed in the report to be allowed to leave the Authority with early access to pension on compassionate grounds.

##### **Reasons:**

1. There was sufficient supporting evidence on file to justify compassionate consideration of the request.
2. The case was considered genuine and as a caring Authority the case was supported on compassionate grounds.

**Prior to consideration of the following item Councillor D. Llewellyn declared an interest in Item 9 on the agenda as he had been appointed as**

the Council's representative on Derwentside Industrial Development Agency. It was agreed that he remain in the meeting.

**50. DERWENTSIDE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY LTD – MERGER PROPOSAL**

**Excluded under paragraph 3.**

Councillor Llewellyn presented the report which outlined a proposal submitted to the Council by Derwentside Industrial Development Agency LTD (DIDA) regarding the potential merger of economic development and business support services in Derwentside.

At the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held 16<sup>th</sup> October 2007 he had referred to a letter received from the Chairman of DIDA confirming that the DIDA Board had agreed to prepare an outline submission to the Council regarding the potential merger of economic development and business support services in Derwentside. This submission had now been received and had been appended to the report.

**Scrutiny Board Comments:** *Councillor L Marshall had declared an interest in relation to the report, left the meeting and took no part in the discussions thereon. The Deputy Chief Executive in presenting the report made reference to paragraph 3.1 and his role in relation to DIDA Board and to the fact that owing to his position he had declared an interest at the DIDA Board meeting when the issue had been debated.*

*Members of the Scrutiny Board supported the proposals included in the report whilst recognizing that the issue would be subject to a further report on the proposal.*

**Options:**

1. Reject the proposal on the basis that there is insufficient evidence and clarity regarding the benefits that could be achieved; or
2. Authorise further work being undertaken by the Council, individually and in conjunction with DIDA, to test a full business case for the proposal and to develop a business plan if appropriate. This would include early testing of the acceptability of the proposal in the context of potential Local Government Reorganisation.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That authorization be granted for further work being undertaken by the Council, individually and in conjunction with DIDA, to test a full business case for the proposal and to develop a business plan if appropriate; and
2. A further report, incorporating business plan details, is submitted to Members should a positive business case be demonstrated.

**Reason:** This decision was made on the basis that the proposal put forward by DIDA had the potential to generate additional benefits for local people, both in terms of further improving service outcomes and delivering financial efficiencies.

Further work however, needed to be undertaken to test the deliverability of those potential benefits.

## **51. LAND AT STATION YARD CONSETT**

### **Exempt under paragraph 3.**

Councillor Marshall presented the report which requested consideration of disposing of an area of land at Station Yard, Consett to enable the adjacent Medical Surgery to expand and to provide parking for use by the occupiers of Citizen's House as well as members of the public.

In response to questions the Divisional Head of Land & Property advised that as part of the agreement 12 public parking spaces, including 2 for the disabled would be provided on the site.

**Scrutiny Board Comments:** *The Scrutiny Board viewed the report and there were no issues of concern.*

### **Options:**

1. Proceed with a disposal.
2. Refuse to dispose of the site.

**RESOLVED:** That authority is granted to dispose of the site on the terms outlined in the report.

**Reasons:** That the disposal would enable the Medical Centre to be enhanced as well as providing twelve public parking spaces.

## **52. ANNOUNCEMENT – BIG LOTTERY FUND**

Councillor Taylor announced that the Council had been successful in being allocated the following grants from the Big Lottery Fund:

The grant, over three years, will fully fund two revenue projects:

- £115,237 will fund the salaries of two new part-time Play Rangers, who will work across the District for 20 hours per week.
- £90,249 will pay for the salaries of eight casually employed Natural Play Leaders, who will host free play sessions across the District according to need during school holiday periods.
- 

She requested that a letter be forwarded to all Members advising of this success however, it was important that Members were made aware that the Big Lottery Fund had requested an embargo on release of this information until after their press release which was scheduled to be issued on 18<sup>th</sup> December.

## **CONCLUSION OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 4.56 p.m.



## **EXECUTIVE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Consett on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2008 at 4.30 p.m.

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor A. Watson (Chairman)

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

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillors W. Stelling and W. Tyrie.

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors D. Lavin and C. Marshall.

### **53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

### **54. 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.

### **55. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held 10<sup>th</sup> December 2007 be agreed as a correct record.

### **56. TRIAL CO-LOCATION OF CARELINE WARDEN SERVICE TO SHOTLEY BRIDGE HOSPITAL**

Councillor Watson presented the report which invited Members to consider an 'in-principle' decision to trial the re-location of the Careline Service to Shotley Bridge Community Hospital. The intention, if Members were minded to support such a trial, would be to seek approval from the Shotley Bridge Stakeholder Group prior to going ahead with the trial. He considered that the relocation of services to this site was a good move and would help retain services at Shotley Bridge Hospital.

Councillor Taylor agreed with the above comments, she then raised questions regarding the monitoring of travel times for Careline staff during the trial. In response the Director of Corporate Policy and Administration advised that Scrutiny Board had raised similar concerns and as part of the monitoring process the travel times would be monitored and reported to Scrutiny. If Officers had any concerns regarding performance then appropriate action would be taken and if necessary, the trial could be terminated.

**Notes of Scrutiny Board – 8 January 2008 :** *“The Director of Corporate Policy and Administration advised that the report would be considered by the Environment & Health Scrutiny Panel held on 10<sup>th</sup> January and comments would be fed into the Executive at its meeting to be held on 14<sup>th</sup> January. Discussions on timing of the trial were not known at this stage. Councillor Hicks welcomed the proposals, which would assist in retaining facilities at Shotley Bridge. Councillor Hicks commented upon issues relating to staff signing on at the Morrison Busty Depot. It was noted that this would be included as part of the six monthly review of the trial.”*

**Options:** Whether or not to pursue an ‘in principle’ trial co-location of Careline Warden service to Shotley Bridge Hospital.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Council agree ‘in principle’ to pursue the relocation of the current mobile warden service to Shotley Bridge Hospital with the Shotley Bridge Hospital Stakeholder Group.
2. That the service carries forward a trial for a period of six months.
3. The Systems and Integration Manager presents an evaluation at the end of the trial.

**Reasons:**

1. The potential for improving the Careline service as outlined in the report made a compelling case to trial a re-location of the service.
2. The Executive shared the view that developing joint working arrangements would best ensure a positive future for the Careline service.
3. Following the Council’s agreement to take part in the Shotley Bridge Hospital Stakeholder group. This decision would conform with the authority’s view that the hospital had a viable future.
4. A positive step towards developing closer working arrangements with partners and enhancement of the service for the elderly and infirm of the District.

**57. GO WARM: DOMESTIC INSULATION AND FUEL POVERTY SCHEME**

Councillor Johnson presented the report, which described the ‘Go Warm’ scheme the purpose of which is aimed to reduce fuel poverty in the District and in other parts of the north-east. A household was said to be in fuel poverty if 10% or more of income was being spent on energy (heating fuel



and electricity). The report sought approval for the Council to endorse the DEFRA – funded ‘Go Warm’ scheme and to work alongside Domestic Energy Solutions to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty across the District. This would involve the targeting of areas with grants for home insulation, heating improvements, benefit entitlement checks and energy efficiency advice.

‘Go Warm’ proposed to reduce fuel poverty by addressing two of the main contributing factors:

- Improving insulation levels and heating efficiency of housing by channelling available grants (100% grants for those on qualifying benefits and 70% grants for other households).
- Increasing income levels of households by carrying out benefit entitlement checks and assisting residents to claim all the benefits to which they are entitled.

In response to questions from Councillor Taylor, the Director of Environmental Services advised that:

- Grants would be available free to people who met the criteria.
- Opportunity for as many households as possible to take up and benefit from insulation measures as the ‘Go Warm’ scheme rolls out through their area.
- A letter (including the ‘Go Warm’ and Council logo) was to be sent out to each house in advance of the visit in order to notify residents that they will be visited, and of the opportunities on offer.

Councillor Taylor requested that this scheme be actively promoted using the press and publications such as ‘In Derwentside’.

**Notes of Scrutiny Board – 8 January 2008:** *“The Director of Environmental Services commented upon discussions relating to the timing of the scheme. The Chief Executive advised that the scheme was subject to approval by the Council on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January. Members welcomed the report.”*

**Options:** Whether or not to endorse the ‘Go Warm’ scheme and funding from the Capital Programme as detailed in the report.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That agreement is granted to endorse the ‘Go Warm’ scheme and to work alongside Domestic Energy Solutions to deliver energy efficiency improvements in the District.
2. That the Capital Bid for the funding had been made and would be assessed against the Council’s corporate priorities. The scheme would be able to go forward when resources exist with the Capital Programme. The Asset Management Group would control release of the resources in the usual way.

**Reason:** The project would help the Council make measurable progress towards its Home Energy Conservation Act target to improve the energy efficiency of housing by 30% between 1996 and 2011. It will also reduce fuel poverty by assisting vulnerable households in the District to reduce heat loss from their homes, save money on fuel bills and take up benefits to which they are entitled.

## **58. EXTENSION OF GREEN WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE**

Councillor Johnson presented the report, which requested that Members consider an expansion of the Green Waste Collection Service and its contribution to national and regional initiatives.

In 2004 the Council had agreed to the introduction of a pilot Green Waste service, collecting from approximately 2,000 properties in the District. This was a voluntary pilot programme, which commenced collections in April 2005.

The Government had been given a directive from the European Union with regard to the amount of biodegradable waste it was permitted to place in landfill. This was to reduce the impact that landfill contributed to methane production. The Government had converted these targets to individual allowances for each Waste Disposal Authority (which was Durham County Council). There was a significant, and increasing penalty for exceeding the allowance of £150 per tonne. Services which reduced the amount of bio degradable waste (in this case garden waste) going to landfill ultimately help our residents to avoid this significant financial cost.

**Notes of Scrutiny Board – 8 January 2008:** *“The Director of Environmental Services commented upon proposals to roll out the project to a further 6,000 properties. Members questioned which properties in the District would benefit. The Director of Environmental Services indicated that this would be determined by an assessment of greatest usage for the service. It was noted that the service would not be extended to all areas at this stage. Councillor McMahan questioned whether a fortnightly collection service was required. The Director of Environmental Services advised that the current service appeared to support the levels suggested. Councillor L. Marshall expressed some concerns at the costs of the service. It was noted that the revenue costs were already available and this project related to capital costs.”*

**Options:** Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals in the report to expand the Green Waste Collection Service.

**RESOLVED:** That the Green Waste collection service remains on the Council’s priority list for service enhancement. The service to be expanded once the Capital needed to purchase the containers was

**identified in the Capital Programme. Release of the resources to be controlled by the Asset Management Group in the usual way.**

**Reason:** To enable the Council to contribute to the following targets:

- BVPI 199 Local Street & Environmental Cleanliness.
- Increase satisfaction with street cleanliness
- Increase the percentage of household arising recycled or composted targets.

**59. TOWN AND VILLAGE CENTRE REGENERATION – DEALING WITH DERELICT AND LONG TERM VACANT PROPERTIES**

Councillor Watson presented the report which sought approval to agree a framework for tackling long-term derelict and vacant properties across the District to assist the regeneration of town and village centres. It also sought support for a Capital bid for resources totalling £200,000 identified from the £1.5 million Capital Programme to assist in the regeneration of town and village centres, or 'Placemakers Scheme'.

The Council had adopted its Empty Property Strategy in 2003 and since that time 50 long-term vacant properties had been brought back into use or demolished across the District.

Councillor Llewellyn suggested that a selective licensing scheme may be useful to help with regard to private landlords. Councillor Christer commented that this would be useful for empty retail units.

In response to Councillor Taylor's questions regarding a programme of works the Director of Environmental Services advised that Officers had already identified and made priority lists of the empty properties across the District.

**Notes of Scrutiny Board – 8 January 2008:** *"Members considered the report and there were no issues of concern. Mr. Clark indicated that many of the 700 property owners would be encouraged to bring properties back on to the market. It was noted that some properties would be acquired under various guises i.e. C.P.O. Any monies which were received by disposing of such properties would be reinvested in the project. Councillor Marshall asked if organisations such as Craghead Development Trust could be considered for such schemes. Mr. Clark commented upon the impact of L.G.R. on future projects and the implications on the new Unitary Authority. Councillor McMahon welcomed the project."*

**Options:** Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals in the report for the Empty Property Strategy.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That a Capital Bid for £200,000 be agreed to provide a resource to support the Council's Empty Property Strategy to enable the use

of Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO) and Compulsory Purchase Orders. Any future compulsory purchase would be the subject of further reports.

2. That it be noted that the Capital Bid for the funding had been made and would be assessed against the Council's corporate priorities. The scheme would then be able to go forward when resources existed within the Capital Programme. Release of the resources to be controlled by the Asset Management Group in the usual way.
3. Agreement be granted for discussions to take place with Derwentside Homes as the preferred Strategic Partner to manage properties that have subject to an EDMO's on behalf of the Council

**Reasons:** The benefits of an Empty Properties Strategy include:-

- Reducing the impact of empty properties, removing the eyesore which had a detrimental affect on the community.
- Removing the focus for anti-social behaviour and vandalism.
- Re-using empty properties can aid the regeneration of an area and provide additional affordable housing.
- An increase in revenue through additional council tax.
- A reduction in enforcement activity by the Council.
- Halting the inevitable decline of an area.
- Protecting the value of properties in surrounding areas.

## **60. DERWENTSIDE PLACEMAKER SCHEME**

Councillor Taylor presented the report which sought approval to agree a framework for utilising the £1.5 million allocation within the Capital Programme for Town and Village Centre improvements, proposed to be called 'Derwentside Placemakers'. The project would work alongside the Capital Initiative Fund (CIF) which had been outlined to Members at the Council meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2007. The 'Placemakers' project would be aimed towards enhancing the physical fabric of localities within the District; unlike CIF it would be aimed at trying to achieve 'structural improvements' and would not be allocated on a Ward basis. The 'Placemakers' scheme would allow responses to be made to areas of long standing concern to the Council.

Councillor Taylor referred to paragraph 4.2 of the report and highlighted the reference to Stanley – Scott Street. She emphasised that she did not want this scheme removed from the project, however, this was an area used by a lot of pedestrians and she requested that prior to the scheme going ahead it be assessed further, particularly regarding the potential loss of green area.

**Notes of Scrutiny Board – 8 January 2008:** *'Members considered the report and there were no issues of concern. In answer to a question from Councillor Marshall, the Director of Environmental Services advised that the car parking issue for the Stanley area included in the report were outside the*

*proposed Modus and P.C.T. developments. Councillor Marshall asked that the assessment criteria once developed be reviewed by Scrutiny Panel.”*

**Options:** Whether to agree, amend or reject the proposals in the report for the ‘Placemakers Scheme’.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the allocation of £1.5 million from within the Capital Programme, in line with that indicated in paragraph 4.2 and 4.3 of the report be endorsed.
2. That the criteria and approach to be applied in the appraisal of individual projects considered eligible for funding through the Capital programme be noted.
3. That it be noted that the Capital Bid for the funding had been made and would be assessed against the Council’s corporate priorities. The schemes would then be able to go forward when resources existed within the Capital Programme. The Asset Management Group would control release of the resources in the usual way.
4. That prior to the commencement of the Stanley – Scott Street scheme detailed at paragraph 4.2 in the report, a further assessment be undertaken regarding the potential loss of green area.

**Reason:** In order to tackle long-term derelict and vacant properties across the District, which would assist the regeneration of town and village centres.

**CONCLUSION OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 4.59 p.m.