

**THE MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF EASINGTON
HELD ON FRIDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2008**

Present: Councillor Mrs. M. Nugent (Chair)

Councillors Mrs M Baird, E Bell, Mrs G Bleasdale,
B Burn, R Burnip, A Collinson, Mrs E M Connor,
R Davison, Mrs S Forster, Mrs J Freak, H High,
A J Holmes, T Longstaff, D Maddison, Mrs J Maslin,
Mrs J Maitland, Mrs S Mason, K McGonnell,
D Milsom, D Myers, A Napier, Mrs A Naylor,
C Patching, G Pinkney, D Raine, F Shaw,
Mrs B A Sloan, P Stradling, R Taylor,
T Unsworth, C Walker and Mrs V M Williams

1. GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR 2008/9 AND THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN FOR 2008/9 TO 2010/11

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services which sought approval to the general fund estimates for 2008/9 and the indicative medium term financial plan for 2008/9 to 2010/11, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the robustness of the budget and adequacy of the reserves as set out in Appendix 1, be noted;
- (b) the indicative medium term financial plan for the period 2008/9 to 2010/11 as set out in Paragraph 5, be agreed. The financial forecasts were set out in Appendix 5;
- (c) the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy incorporating the Council's overall borrowing limits as set out in Appendix 6, be agreed;
- (d) the minimum revenue provision of 4% be agreed in respect of the repayment of debt as set out in Appendix 6/2. The provision was reflected within the general fund revenue budgets;
- (e) the prudential indicators as set out in Appendix 7/1, be agreed;
- (f) the schedule of charges for Environmental Services as set out in Appendix 11, be agreed;
- (g) an overall budget of £19,355,710 as set out in Appendix 8, be agreed;
- (h) a budget requirement of £21,455,506 for the purposes of calculating the collection fund demand as set out in Paragraph 7.3, be agreed;
- (i) the sum of £9,104,371 be demanded from the Collection Fund for the year 2008/9 as set out in Paragraph 8.2. The demand relating to the District of Easington was £4,791,455;

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- (j) the Band D Council Tax for 2008/9 be agreed at £177.48. Schedules of amounts of Council Tax for the year 2008/2009 be presented to a further meeting of the Council to be held on 6 March 2008. The schedule to form the basis of the appropriate statutory resolutions to be put to that meeting following the consultation process with representatives of the business community, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

2. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET FOR 2008 - 2009 AND FUTURE YEARS**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services on the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2008 - 2009 and future years, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The purpose of the report was to agree the HRA budget proposals, the % weekly dwelling average rent increase and the net HRA Management Fee for East Durham Homes.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the HRA budget proposals for 2008 - 2009 and future years as set out in the report, be agreed;
- (b) the 2008 - 2009 net HRA Management Fee for East Durham Homes be agreed at £10.77m;
- (c) the average dwelling rent increase of 4.5%, be agreed for 2008 - 2009.

3. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2008/2009 AND BEYOND**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Resources which gave details of the proposed Capital Programme for 2008/9 and beyond, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The purpose of the report was for the Council to agree a Capital Investment Programme for 2008/9 and to identify the allocation of resources to future spending commitments in 2009/10 and 2010/11. This was in order to complete various programmes and sustain improvements related to the physical development and regeneration of the District over the next three years. The proposed programme for the first year 2008/2009 amounted to £16,099,000.

Attached at Appendix 1 to the report was a Capital Expenditure Statement that detailed the proposed schemes that were to be brought forward in line with the Council's Corporate Plan priorities over the period 2008/9 to 2010/11 and included the allocation of resources to future spending commitments.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the report and the Capital Expenditure Statement 2008/9 to 2010/11, be approved;
- (b) a Capital Programme of £16,099,000 be agreed for 2008/2009 and be allocated as follows:-

Strategic Sites and Premises	£1,055,000
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Physical Renaissance	£1,530,000
East Durham Homes - Decent Homes Works	£6,835,000
East Durham Homes - Non-Decent Homes Works	£ 765,000
Council Led Schemes	£4,379,000
Asset Management and Minor Works	£1,335,000
Contingencies	£ 200,000

- (c) approval be granted to commit realised capital receipts to the value of £19,585,000 to support actions related to affordable housing and regeneration activities over the three year period 2008/9 to 2010/11;
- (d) a copy of the report and Capital Expenditure Statement be forwarded to Durham County Council in relation to the planning for the introduction of a single all-purpose authority for County Durham from April 2009;
- (e) reports be presented to Executive as necessary on individual schemes within the Capital Expenditure Statement in accordance with the Council's Constitution and Financial Regulations.

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION - TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Executive which sought approval to Council appointments during the transitional period of the Local Government Review process, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

It was reported that following the Government's announcement of the 'minded' decision to introduce a unitary system of local government in County Durham, an Order giving effect to that decision had been laid in Parliament and was expected to come into force in the near future. Members were advised by the Monitoring Officer that the draft Structural Change Order was expected to be considered by the House of Commons on Tuesday 26 February 2008.

During the transitional period, Durham County Council would have an additional statutory function of preparing for, and facilitating, the economic, effective, efficient and timely transfer of the District Councils' functions, property rights and liabilities.

During the first transitional period from the day on which the Order came into effect until the fourth day after the May 2008 elections, the transitional functions were to be discharged by a Committee of the County Council's executive to be known as the Implementation Executive. During the second transitional period from the fourth day after the elections until 1st April 2009, these functions would be discharged by the newly elected Council's Executive.

The membership of the Implementation Executive which was prescribed in the draft Order and set out in the report required one Member to be appointed from each District/Borough Council. It was suggested that the Leader of the Council be appointed as the Council's representative on this.

In relation to Overview and Scrutiny, the Order enabled the County and District Councils to establish a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) to review the decisions of the Implementation Executive and prepare reports and recommendations to the Executive. The proposed membership of the JOSC was set out in the report and it was suggested that the Chair of Scrutiny Management Board be appointed as the Council's representative on this.

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The draft Order also provided for a team of officers drawn from the County and District Councils to assist the Implementation Executive. It was suggested that the Chief Executive be appointed as the Council's representative on this Joint Implementation Team.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the Leader of the Council be appointed as the Council's representative on the Implementation Executive;
- (b) the Chair of Scrutiny Management Board be appointed as the Council's representative on the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (c) the Chief Executive be appointed as the Council's representative on the Joint Implementation Team.

5. TRANSITIONAL PLAN FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Chief Executive which sought approval of the Transitional Plan which had been developed as a working document to guide the work of the Council during the year 2008/9, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The Assistant Chief Executive advised that during the transitional period the Council had a duty to continue to deliver its vision and provide excellent services for Easington people, whilst working hard to shape the new unitary Council in terms of governance, models of engagement and service delivery, and continued emphasis on the regeneration of East Durham.

To support the Council in doing this, a Transitional Plan had been developed setting out priorities which had been agreed for focus over the coming year, some of which had a life beyond Vesting Day for the new Council in April 2009.

In prioritising activities, areas of the Corporate Plan which would receive the Council's greatest investment of energy and resource had been singled out. All priorities identified satisfied the principle that they would benefit the new Council. In developing them the Council was mindful of the medium term position as the new authority would be considering its vision and delivery mechanisms beyond the immediate 13 month transition period. The activities proposed allowed services to be sustained and regeneration activity to continue in the medium term.

The ten key priorities identified were set out in Section 4.2 in the report and the Transitional Plan was attached at Appendix 1 for Members consideration.

The Plan was a living document and it was likely that it would need to be revised and updated to take account of progress throughout the transitional period. It was therefore proposed that authority for agreeing minor changes be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, with any substantial changes brought back to Members for consideration.

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RESOLVED that:

- (a) the Transitional Plan be approved as a working statement of priorities for 2008/9 linked to the Corporate Plan, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital Strategy and Performance Management Framework;
- (b) authority for agreeing any minor changes to the Plan be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council;
- (c) a copy of the Transitional Plan be sent to Durham County Council for information.

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