

**THE MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE HELD ON TUESDAY 16 OCTOBER 2007**

Present: Councillor A. Napier (Chair)
Councillors R. Crute, Mrs. J. Freak,
Mrs. E. Huntington, D. Myers, Mrs.
A. Naylor, G. Patterson and R.J. Todd

Apologies: Councillors P.G. Ward and F. Shaw

1. **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 25 September 2007, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.

2. **GENERAL FUND/HOUSING REVENUE - 2007/2008 MONITORING STATEMENT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Resources which gave details of the financial position for the period 1 April 2007 - 31 August 2007, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Members were advised of the revised forecast positions for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account, together with forthcoming issues arising from the 2008/2009 budget cycle and an update on the proposed introduction of the National Concessionary Fares Scheme from April 2008.

In response to Members concerns about the 2008/2009 grant settlement to be announced shortly by the Government, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services advised that a budget support reserve had been established within the Medium Term Financial Plan and this prudent planning would enable the Council to effectively manage any impact of the 2008/9 grant settlement.

With regard to concessionary fares, he considered that the agreement between the Durham Districts in relation to the current scheme placed the Council in a good financial position for when the national scheme was introduced in 2008.

In response to a further question in relation to the LABGI grant, he confirmed that this was to be reduced to £150m over the next 3 years with no grant allocation in year 1. The Council had made provision for this during the medium term financial planning process by treating the allocation as a 'windfall' and placing the grant award into a reserve ring-fenced for regeneration issues.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the information contained within the report, be noted.

3. **APPROPRIATION OF LAND AT ST. JOHNS SQUARE, SEAHAM**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Regeneration in relation to the appropriation of land at St. Johns Square, Seaham, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The Executive Member for Regeneration advised that the report sought authority for the appropriation for planning purposes of land owned by the Council at St. John's Square, Seaham under Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972, in order to enable the powers under Section 237 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to be used to facilitate the comprehensive redevelopment of St. John's Square. The area of land was shown in a plan circulated to Members.

He explained that the redevelopment would involve two large-scale public service buildings totalling 15,000 square metres to be constructed by Durham County Council and County Durham Primary Care Trust, providing a multi-purpose office/library and a new health care facility. The scheme would provide investment of around £15m and both developments would be complemented by high quality public realm and an element of residential and retail provision. As the District Council owned the majority of the land within the Square, it was essential that this landholding was made available in order to enable comprehensive redevelopment to be undertaken.

The report explained the provisions of Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 237 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, together with the reasons for appropriating the area of land.

RESOLVED that the land shown on the plan circulated be appropriated with immediate effect for planning purposes, to the extent that it was not already held for such purposes, pursuant to Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972.

4. ANY ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, Section 100B(4)(b) the Chair agreed that consideration be given to two items of business not shown on the Agenda as a matter of urgency, following consultation with the Proper Officer.

5. DISTRICT OF EASINGTON HEALTH GROUP (AOB)

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Health in relation to proposals to re-launch the Council's Health Group under new Terms of Reference and Membership. A copy of the report had been circulated to each Member.

The Executive Member for Health explained that a Corporate Health Group had been established in 1999 to lead on health issues for the Council and to facilitate joint working with the Easington Primary Care Trust (PCT) and other interested parties. Since early 2006, meetings of the Group had been suspended due to the reconfiguration process of the County's five Primary Care Trusts into a single County Durham PCT.

The Government's White Paper "Our Care Our Say" included specific reference to local government doing more to tackle inequalities and improve access to health services, and to ensure that resources were directed more towards a health improvement agenda. This was also evident in the 2006 Local Government White Paper "Strong and Prosperous Communities". The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill would give legislative effect to many of both White Papers' proposals, including placing new duties on upper tier local authorities, details of which were set out in the report.

The revised Health Group would provide a means by which the Council could contribute to the Government's objectives regarding the development of health and social care services and greater public involvement.

Details of the Group's specific responsibilities were set out in the report and the revised Terms of Reference to reflect the changes in remit and membership were attached at Appendix 1.

In response to Members' comments, the Director of Regeneration and Development confirmed that the Terms of Reference provided the flexibility for other Members and representatives from organisations to be invited to assist the Group as and when necessary. The Terms of Reference also referred to scrutiny arrangements, with a provision for reporting to the Scrutiny Management Board on significant health related issues, and in addition, the Members who represented the Council on the County Durham Joint Health Scrutiny Committee formed part of the Group's membership.

RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference for the Council's Health Group, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed.

6. PROGRESS WITH THE LEGI PROGRAMME AND BE ENTERPRISING COACHES (AOB)

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Regeneration which provided Members with an update on progress with the Be Enterprising Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) and the network of Be Enterprising Coaches. A copy of the report had been circulated to each Member.

The Executive Member reported that the Enterprising Communities LEGI programme for the Districts of Derwentside, Easington, Sedgefield and Wear Valley had been approved in February 2006 under Round 1 of the LEGI programme.

The vision of the programme was that by 2016, Derwentside, Easington, Sedgefield and Wear Valley Districts would be the most enterprising communities in the North East and the fastest improving area for enterprise and productivity in England.

The Executive Member outlined progress to date, which included the establishment of key high level targets for "Be Enterprising" by March 2009, as detailed in the report. In relation to the targets, he highlighted the importance of targetting schools in order to promote entrepreneurship and encourage more young people to consider starting a business or self-employment.

The majority of activity during Year 1 had focused on commissioning research and developing programme activities with a view to the full delivery phase of the programme commencing in Year 2 (2007/2008). A summary of the main achievements during Year 1 was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The programme had agreed to allocate significant resources to create a network of nineteen Be Enterprising Coaches across the four Districts. Nine coaches had been allocated to the Easington District and it had been agreed that the respective District Councils would take the lead in employing and managing the coaches to ensure that they fit in with local arrangements for the provision of business support. The coaches for Easington would therefore be part of East Durham Business Service. The report provided details of progress made in recruitment to these positions, together with operational aspects of the posts and how they were to be funded.

RESOLVED that progress with the Be Enterprising LEGI Programme and the network of Be Enterprising Coaches for Easington District, be noted.