

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING

OF THE EXECUTIVE

HELD ON TUESDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2008

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

Apology: Councillors Mrs J Freak, G Patterson and
F Shaw

- 1 **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 5 February 2008, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.

- 2 **REVIEW OF LICENSING POLICY UNDER THE LICENSING ACT 2003**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Health which sought approval of the revised Licensing Policy under the Licensing Act 2003, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Members were advised that the Licensing Act 2003 required every Licensing Authority to have a Licensing Policy. The Policy was drawn up with regard to the Act and guidance from the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

Revisions to the Policy must take into account the latest guidance by the Secretary of State. Revised guidance was issued in June 2007 following the relevant consultation, which included local authorities. The subsequent revision took into consideration concerns raised by local authorities and other groups of matters identified as requiring clarification or amendment in the original guidance.

Details of the main revisions to the guidance were outlined in the report.

RESOLVED that the revised Licensing Policy be approved and submitted to Full Council for adoption.

- 3 **EASINGTON VILLAGE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Regeneration which sought approval for the Easington Village Conservation Area Appraisal and revised designated boundaries, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Members were advised that the Council had a duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to determine which parts of the authority's area were of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it was desirable to preserve or enhance. This should be reviewed from time to time through the preparation of appraisals for all conservation areas, to provide a sound basis for their designation and management, and to ensure that planning decisions were based on an informed understanding of the local historic environment. This was the first review of Easington Village since the Conservation Area was designated in 1974.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the Conservation Area Appraisal of Easington Village be approved
- (ii) the designated revised boundaries to the Easington Village Conservation Area under the terms of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 be approved.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS TO PIT HEAPS SITE, WINGATE

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Regeneration which sought approval to provide a financial contribution to an environmental improvement scheme, being undertaken by Groundwork East Durham on Council owned land in Wingate, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Members were advised that the Wingate Play Strategy was undertaken by Groundwork East Durham on behalf of Wingate Parish Council. The aim of the Strategy was to improve the opportunities for play for all ages within Wingate. The study looked at the potential for play improvements within the parish boundary and highlighted the Pit Heaps as a key site for informal play.

The cost of the work was £148,000. Durham County Council were providing £20,000 from the Local Transport Plan, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund was contributing £118,000 and it was suggested that the Council make a contribution of £10,000.

The Council would take responsibility for the future maintenance of the site including un-adopted paths, fencing, car park and planting areas. Durham County Council would take on maintenance responsibility for the adopted paths.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the environmental improvements scheme in Wingate be approved and a contribution of £10,000 to the scheme be made from the 2007/2008 Liveability Budget
- (ii) Landlord's consent be granted for the works being undertaken by Groundwork East Durham on land in Wingate.

5 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY REVIEW

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Executive which gave details of a review of the Council's Health and Safety Policy, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

It was explained that Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 required employers to prepare and keep under review a Health and Safety Policy. The existing Health and Safety Policy was adopted in February 2004 and included a commitment to a review at least every two years. The last formal review of the Policy in February 2006 concluded that it represented a sound framework for the management of health and safety at work and since that time only minor amendments had been made.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the Health and Safety Policy review be noted,

- (ii) subject to the issuing of amendments regarding the changes outlined in sections 4.5 and 4.6 the current policy be approved until 31 March 2009.

6 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, following consultation with the Proper Officer, agreed that four items of business, not shown on the Agenda, be considered as a matter of urgency. However due to the exempt nature of one of the items of business it be considered following the exclusion of the press and public.

7 CHILDREN'S PLAY PROGRAMME – PLAY PARK IN THE COMMUNITY (AOB)

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Social Inclusion and Culture which advised that an application submitted to the Big Lottery Fund to improve play provision in the District had been approved and the allocation for three years commencing 2008/2009 was £292,480, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The purpose of the report was to seek endorsement of a Play Strategy for the District.

Members were advised that in November 2005 the Big Lottery allocated funding to local authorities to create, improve and develop local play opportunities. The grant was targeted at benefiting young people under the age of 18. As a pre-requisite to the funding local authorities were required to develop a Play Strategy.

In December 2006, the Council commissioned Groundwork East Durham to produce a Play Strategy for the District. In order to assist in the development of the Strategy a Play Partnership was formed, consisting of a wide range of local representatives.

Organisations and groups along with Town/Parish Councils were asked to submit ideas of projects. These were presented to children and young people who were asked to rate them in accordance to their own preference. The results of the consultation were assessed and five projects were chosen to form the portfolio submitted to the Big Lottery.

The application, entitled Play Park in the Community, the play strategy and the portfolio of projects were submitted to the Big Lottery and in December 2007 confirmation was received that the application was successful.

Although the Play Strategy was developed as a pre-requisite to the Big Lottery application process, the £292,480 awarded was allocated for a portfolio of projects. The portfolio was made up of five projects, only three of which required financial input from the Council, details of which were outlined in the report.

The Play Partnership would be responsible for delivery of the portfolio of projects and become a sub group of the East Durham Children's Trust Board.

Once the projects had been developed the Strategic Funding Group would appraise them on behalf of the East Durham Local Strategic Partnership.

The Council as the Accountable Body would issue grant offer letters to the individual projects and the project sponsors would be responsible for the day to day management of their projects, budgets and staff.

A launch event would be held on 12 March 2008 and the Council would be represented.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the District Play Strategy be approved
- (i) approval of the Big Lottery grant of £292,480 be noted and the Councils funding contribution to the schemes identified in the report, be approved.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN (AOB)

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Liveability which sought approval of the District of Easington Climate Change Action Plan, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

It was explained that the Council was a signatory to the Local Authority Declaration on Climate Change and had previously made a commitment through the Corporate Plan to produce a Climate Change Action Plan in order to maximise district wide reductions in carbon dioxide emissions by reducing energy consumption, encouraging renewable energy and raising awareness amongst residents.

RESOLVED that the District of Easington Climate Change Action Plan be approved.

9 COUNTY DURHAM GROWTH POINT BID: EAST AND SOUTH DURHAM (AOB)

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Regeneration which sought approval of a Growth Bid expression of interest submitted by the Durham Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership Board that had a focus on the areas of East Durham (Easington District) and South Durham (Sedgefield and Wear Valley Districts), a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Members were advised that following the publication of the Housing Green Paper in July 2007, the Government announced that it would be inviting expression of interest proposals for additional Growth Points in the North of England. These Growth Points would help the Government meet its housing delivery targets and be used to overcome worsening affordability in the housing market. The Government acknowledged that much of this Growth would be in areas where the challenge was to balance growth alongside regeneration, including continuing housing market renewal.

The Growth Bid for East and South Durham was co-ordinated through the Durham Housing and Neighbourhoods Partnership Board. Following consideration of the bidding criteria, a proposal was developed that sought to focus new housing provision in sustainable locations able to support accelerated employment together with supporting investment in quality of place and connectivity.

In terms of localities, the Bid expression was prioritised in line with the County Durham Sub Regional Housing Strategy to promote housing investment in the former Durham Coalfield Communities, the subject of the first phase of a planned Housing Market Renewal programme in association with English Partnerships. It was also reflective of the representations submitted by the County Durham authorities during the North East Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) process over the planned levels of house building in the county. The Growth Point submission was seen as a means to secure additional housing provision to support the regeneration proposals for East and South Durham in line with RSS policy objectives.

The Growth Point concentrated on two economic corridors in line with the draft County Durham Economic Strategy and sought to deliver a number of outcomes, details of which were outlined in the report.

Within Easington, the bid focused on Peterlee and areas covered by the Coalfield Housing Market Renewal Programme including the priority settlements of Easington Colliery and Dawdon. Work had already been undertaken to develop the Peterlee area development framework masterplan, setting out plans for residential growth within the existing urban area and redevelopment of the Town Centre. The Growth Bid was intended to support and accelerate the implementation of these programmes and masterplans, by addressing the need for infrastructure necessary to release sites for development.

RESOLVED that the County Durham Growth bid Expression of Interest submitted by the Durham Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership Board be approved.

10 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraph 4, Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

11 DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES (AOB)

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Executive which sought approval to retain the services of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services to support the transition to the new Unitary Council, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) approval be granted to retain the services of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services until 31 December 2008.
- (ii) the Director of Finance and Corporate Services be awarded Early Retirement/Voluntary Redundancy in accordance with the Council's Scheme with effect from 31 December 2008 and awarded a redundancy payment in accordance with the provisions of the scheme.
- (iii) the cost of the proposals be met from savings in corporate management costs.