

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE REGENERATION SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

HELD ON MONDAY 25 JUNE 2007

Present: Councillor D Raine (Chair)
Councillors S Bishop, Mrs E M Connor,
Mrs S Forster, H High, A J Holmes,
Mrs B A Sloan and C Walker

Also Present: Councillor R Crute – Executive Member for Regeneration

Apologies: Councillors D J Taylor-Gooby and
M Routledge

- 1 **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 4 June 2007, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were **AGREED**.

MATTERS ARISING

**Brackenhill/Whitehouse Industrial Estate (AOB)
(Minute no 8 refers)**

The Scrutiny Support Manager explained that Brackenhill Business Park was owned by Durham County Council and Whitehouse Industrial Estate was owned by One NorthEast. The Highways Agency was responsible for the junctions onto the A19 and Durham County Council was responsible for highway access. He explained that he would endeavour to obtain a suitable date for all parties involved.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

- 2 **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE** held on 12 June 2007, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were submitted.

RESOLVED that the information contained within the Minutes, be noted.

- 3 **PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

There were no members of the public present.

- 4 **FEEDBACK FROM SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

At the last meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on 18 June 2007, the following issues were discussed:-

- (i) Staffing arrangements within the Planning and Building Control Services
- (ii) Scrutiny seminars at Darlington

Members of the committee who had applied for a place at the Scrutiny Seminars had been successfully booked. The seminars were free but non-attendance would levy a charge of £50.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

5 SERVICE UNIT PERFORMANCE REPORTING – REGENERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS UNIT

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Regeneration and Partnerships which provided information on the performance of the Regeneration and Partnerships Unit and updated the committee on the forthcoming staffing review of the service, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Details of the unit's performance from 1 January – 1 June 2007 was outlined in Appendix 1 to the report. Progress, achievement and non-achievements were also fully detailed.

The Head of Regeneration and Partnerships explained that the draft staffing review report that outlined the proposed changes to the unit and aligned it with the Mid Term Financial Plan until 2010, had been prepared and was currently out to consultation.

Members were advised that the service had continued to manage and facilitate large infrastructure, investment and development projects.

- East Durham Link Road/Hawthorn Business Park would be on site shortly and funding for stage 2 needed to be secured;
- Seaham Town Centre was ahead of schedule, the first shops opening in September/October;
- work was ongoing with English Partnerships to bring forward proposals for the Murton Colliery site;
- the second phase of work on the Peterlee Master planning was nearing completion;
- the recent enquiry to establish a Media Village on the Strategic Reserve Site south of Seaham had been worked upon.

The Head of Regeneration and Partnerships explained that work was ongoing with the major project team to maximise Single Programme funding for major projects developing in the district. The work would help inform the draft Regeneration Statement for East Durham and the draft Sub-Regional Economic Strategy for County Durham.

Following a competition in local schools, the former water works site was to be brought back into use as the "Healthworks". Redevelopment work started on site during May and was scheduled for completion in October 2007. The Easington/Horden Pathfinder sub-team would co-locate alongside other partner bodies on completion.

To date, efforts to establish a temporary office base in North Peterlee had not come to fruition, however the location of the North Peterlee team within new build premises was on schedule. The lead partner, East Durham Community Development Trust was currently evaluating tenders whilst the build time was estimated at 22 weeks. Members were advised that the function of community development would become further integrated into the activity of the Regeneration and Partnerships Unit and it was envisaged that the proposed changes would enable greater flow of information with regard to community issues and to regeneration processes.

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Details were also given in the report relating to policy, promotion and planning. Work had been undertaken to support emerging regeneration policy for the benefit of the district. This had included the formulation and contribution to reports relating to the Northern Way, Regional Spatial Strategy, Local Transport Plan, Local Public Service Agreements and Local Area Agreements.

A Member queried why Priority 7, 8 and 9 had not applicable next to it. The Executive Member for Regeneration explained that there were nine corporate priorities and 7, 8 and 9 related to other Executive Members and did not fall directly within his portfolio.

A Member commented that there had been difficulty in establishing a temporary office base in North Peterlee and explained that at the last meeting, it was reported that Novus Business Centre had only let 8 out of 31 units. There was also premises on the industrial estate that was vacant and queried if they could not have been utilised.

The Head of Regeneration and Partnerships explained that the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder for North Peterlee centred around Edenhill and Acre Rigg and a base was required within that target area. The old CVS and East Durham Homes buildings had been investigated but there had been problems with the leases. The North Peterlee Pathfinder would be eventually co-located with the East Durham Community Development Trust but a short term solution was still required.

The Executive Member for Regeneration explained that Novus Business Centre was about business growth and incubation. North Peterlee Pathfinder needed to be located in North Peterlee.

A Member commented that this was an excellent report. There was excellent work being carried out by Officers of the regeneration team. Regeneration in East Durham had lifted the lives and happiness of people living there.

A Member requested more information on the media village. The Head of Regeneration and Partnerships explained that a media village would be contentious in terms of the planning application as it was located on a greenfield site, although allocated in the Local Plan for job creation. This would be considered at a regional level because it was located within a Strategic Reserve Site and would create 1000 jobs. The media village would relate to creative industries. It was likely to have a hotel, leisure facilities as well as a small number of houses that would be used for personnel coming to the district working for 6 – 9 months at a time. The good road links and Seaham Hall had attracted the interest of a Media Village to the district. The media village would be related around the film industry. The housing was an essential part of the development and it would not impact on the housing allocation in the district.

A Member referred to the Horden and Easington Colliery Pathfinder and explained that he was under the impression when it was expanded to North Peterlee they would be ran together but it seemed as though they were two separate organisations. He referred to funding and queried if Durham County Council now held the funds for the pathfinder areas.

The Head of Regeneration and Partnerships explained that there would be two local presences in the pathfinder areas but would be ran under the same management structure. There needed to be two separate identities so residents felt that it was local. The pathfinders were funded until 2009 and previously the allocation was on

a year by year basis. The funding had now been allocated to Local Area Agreements and Durham County Council was the accountable body. The pathfinders had to negotiate year on year what funding they required.

The Chair thanked the Head of Regeneration and Partnerships and the Executive Member for Regeneration for their report.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 ANY ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

(i) The Review of Acute Hospital Services North and South of the Tees (AOB)

The Scrutiny Support Manager explained that the Chief Executive of North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust had confirmed that he could attend the meeting on 2 August to answer questions relating to the review of hospital services at the University Hospital of Hartlepool and the University Hospital of North Tees.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(ii) Health Statistics in Easington District (AOB)

A Member had raised concerns regarding the recently published health statistics. The Scrutiny Support Manager explained that the Department of Health had produced profiles for every region and he would circulate a copy of the Easington District to Members. It was suggested that the Executive Member for Health and a representative of the County Durham PCT be invited to a future meeting to discuss the report on the health profile of Easington District.

RESOLVED that the Executive Member for Health and a representative from County Durham PCT be invited to a future meeting.

(iii) Scrutiny Training (AOB)

The Scrutiny Support Manager explained that Member training which focussed on the implications of the White Paper would be facilitated by Dr A Coulson from Ingolov, University of Birmingham. The training commenced at 9.30 and all Members were encouraged to attend.

The Scrutiny Support Manager explained that Members of the Audit Committee and the Executive had also been invited.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.