

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE

HELD ON TUESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2008

Present: Councillor A. Napier (Chair)
Councillors D Myers, Mrs A Naylor,
F Shaw and R J Todd

Apologies: Councillor Mrs J Freak, Mrs E Huntington
R Crute, G Patterson and P G Ward

1. **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 2 September 2008 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.
2. **SOUTH/EAST DURHAM GROWTH POINT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Regeneration which gave details of the Durham Growth Point bid, and sought approval to continue to develop the proposals, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Members were advised that the New Growth Points Programme formed part of a series of Government measures to provide more housing. In October 2006, 29 locations across the East, South East, South West, East Midlands and West Midlands were named first "New Growth Points" (NGP). The Housing Green Paper 2007 included an additional round of the New Growth Points Programme and welcomed bids from Northern England.

Initially, it was expected that in the North East invitations to bid would be focussed on existing Housing Pathfinders in the urban centres. However, Government Office North East made it clear that bids were welcomed from all sub regions. At a County Chief Executive's meeting held last year it was agreed that the development of a bid be managed through the Housing Neighbourhoods Partnership Board. Accordingly, a bid was prepared involving the district councils of Sedgefield, Easington and Wear Valley.

In October 2007 the Durham Housing and Neighbourhoods Partnership submitted a bid covering 'South and East Durham' to Communities and Local Government (CLG). In July 2008, CLG announced that the Durham bid was one of 20 successful second round bids eligible to share £100m through the Growth Fund.

The Durham NGP bid aimed to create 14,500 net additional homes before 2016 in the districts of Easington, Sedgefield and Wear Valley. The bid was linked to the Coalfield Housing Market Renewal Programme and the recognised priority areas and focussed on the A19 corridor and the Bishop Auckland to Darlington Corridor.

Although the primary purpose of the bid was housing growth, it would be linked to town centre regeneration and job creation via the accelerated development of nine employment and mixed-use development sites including Peterlee. It would also link with ongoing masterplanning in Spennymoor, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee and Bishop Auckland and would lead to transport, healthcare and education improvements in the two corridors.

The CLG announcement of Durham's successful bid was accompanied by a proposal to make £100m available for NGPs through the "Growth Fund".

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Following consultation, the government would release final details of the Growth Fund in Autumn 2008.

In April 2008, CLG also released bidding guidance for the £300m 'Community Infrastructure Fund 2' (CIF). Although £100m of this was reserved for the Thames Gateway, the bidding guidance stated that the remaining £200m was available for Growth Areas, Growth Points and Eco-towns.

Achieving the Durham NGP programme would require significant private investment and with the ongoing credit crunch and a downturn in commercial and housing property markets this was likely to cause obstacles.

The next steps would become clearer once CLG finalised details of the £100m Growth Fund for NGPs. Details of the key points were outlined in the CLG confirmation letter which was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

RESOLVED that;

- (i) the information contained within the report, be noted,
- (ii) the Director of Regeneration and Development, in consultation with the Leader and Executive Member for Regeneration be authorised to approve the submissions of the Community Infrastructure Pro-Forma and the Programme of Delivery.

3. 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 two items of business, not shown on the Agenda, be considered as a matter of urgency. However, due to the exempt nature of the items they be considered following the exclusion of the press and public.

4. 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 items of business on the grounds that they involved the disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraphs 3 & 4, Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

5. DISADVANTAGED AREAS FUND ACTIVITY

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Regeneration, which gave details of the Disadvantaged Areas Fund (DAF) and sought approval to utilise that funding in 2008/09, and to continue activity in East Durham into 2009/10 and 2010/11 utilising Area Based Grant, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted and approval be granted to utilise DAF in 2008/09 and to continue activity into 2009/10 and 2010/11 utilising Area Based Grant.

6. EAST DURHAM LINK ROAD & HAWTHORN PRESTIGE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE (AOB)

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Regeneration which gave details of progress on this scheme and sought approval to complete a legal agreement between the Council and English Partnerships, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that;

- (i) the information given, be noted and the proposed changes to the original funding agreement be approved,
- (ii) a new legal agreement be entered into on the terms outlined in the report,
- (iii) the Director of Regeneration & Development be authorised to progress the scheme to completion.

7. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT – SWIMMING POOL NORTH OF THE DISTRICT (AOB)

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Social Inclusion and Culture which gave details of the preliminary assessment undertaken by County Durham Sport in relation to the potential provision of a swimming pool in the north of the district and sought approval to commission consultants to undertake a full feasibility and site option appraisal, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that;

- (i) approval be granted to commission PMP Consultants to undertake a detailed feasibility study and site options appraisal of the selected options for the development of a swimming pool in the north of the district as detailed in section 4.5 of the report and any other sites that may become available,
- (ii) a strategic group of key partners to lead on the development of this project be established.