

## **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

### **OF THE EXECUTIVE**

**HELD ON TUESDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2007**

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

- 1 **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 16 January 2007, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.

- 2 **LOCAL AVERAGE RATE OF INTEREST – HOUSING ACT 1985, SECTION 438 AND SCHEDULE 16, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING ACT 1989 SCHEDULE 11**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Resources which sought approval for the local average rate of interest to be applied to local authority mortgages, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The purpose of the report was to re-determine the local rate of interest to be applied to (a) advances and transfers and (b) sums left outstanding on disposal of Council owned dwellings.

The Council's local average rate was set at 7.39% from 1 October 2006.

**RESOLVED** that the local average rate of interest be set at 7.38% from 1 April 2007 for a further six months.

- 3 **LOANS DIARY - TRANSACTIONS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2006**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Resources which gave details of loans transactions for the quarter ended 31 December 2006, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The report gave details of short-term lending and borrowing, treasury accounts and long-term borrowing.

**RESOLVED** that the information contained within the report, be noted.

- 4 **BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2007/2008 AND THE MEDIUM TERM OUTLOOK - 2007/2008 to 2009/2010**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Resources which outlined the Council's approach to the budgets for 2007/2008 and the Medium Term Financial Forecasts for the period 2007/2008 to 2009/2010. The report also sought approval to agree the council tax and rent proposals for 2007/2008 and areas of growth, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

With regard to concessionary fares reference was made to the governments proposal to implement a national travel scheme from 2008. The Council's current arrangement was fixed for two years with an inflationary increase in 2007/2008. The cost of the scheme was currently reimbursed through formula grant and many

authorities felt that a scheme based on demand should not be funded through a formula but with specific grants to ensure costs were fully reimbursed. This could become an issue from 2008 when the current arrangement expired.

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (i) the proposals be approved as a basis for the 2007/2008 budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan covering the period 2007/2008 to 2009/2010
- (ii) the proposals be submitted to Full Council for adoption.

**5 REVIEW OF RESERVES AND BALANCES**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Resources which reviewed the reserves and balances prior to finalising the 2007/2008 Capital and Revenue Budgets and preparing the Medium Term Financial Plan for the period 2007/2008 to 2009/2010, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (i) approval be granted to reduce specific reserves and transfer residual balances of £300K to the general reserves to be utilised to fund an element of revenue one offs as proposed in the 2007/2008 budgets. Other balances and reserves to be retained at the levels outlined in Appendix 2 of the report;
- (ii) a working balance of £1.5M, which equated to 8.8% of the General Fund Budget, be retained;
- (iii) an Economic Development/Regeneration Reserve be established to carry out related schemes of that nature and £408K be earmarked from general reserves to be transferred therein. In addition to transfer future LABGI grant receipts to the reserve;
- (iv) a Management of Change Reserve be established to support the General Fund Budget in the medium term (2007/2008 to 2009/2010) and £1.5M be earmarked from general reserves to be transferred therein;
- (v) approval be granted, in principle, to release further general reserves to meet priorities subject to final details being approved by Council;
- (vi) the information given regarding the HRA balance be noted and further reports be awaited.

**6 DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME**

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Executive Members for Social Inclusion and Culture and Improvement which sought approval to the draft Disability Equality Scheme, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The Disability Equality Scheme had been developed with the involvement of disabled people and disability organisations from across the District and County. A County wide consultation event was held in conjunction with the other six District Councils, Durham County Council, Durham Constabulary, Durham Police Authority and Durham University.

The Equality and Diversity Officer had also developed an "Improving Services for Disabled People" involvement group which consisted of key officers from the District of Easington, East Durham Homes, local disabled people and disability organisations.

It was suggested that the Equality and Diversity Officer contact those involved in the consultation event and advise them of what the authority had achieved.

Members were advised that K Moss was leaving the authority. The Chair thanked K Moss for the work undertaken and wished her success in the future.

**RESOLVED** that the draft Disability Equality Scheme be approved and submitted to Full Council for adoption.

7 **"PARK IT" RECYCLING SCHEME AND IMPROVEMENTS TO RECYCLING BANKS**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Liveability which sought approval for two new recycling initiatives which were intended to increase recycling rates and increase the range of materials that could be recycled, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

**RESOLVED** that approval be granted for the introduction of the pilot "Park It" Scheme and refurbishment or resiting of the recycling sites as detailed in section 4 of the report.

8 **EASINGTON COUNCIL OF VOLUNTARY SERVICES**

This item was withdrawn.

9 **AUTHORISING THE USE OF CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 2005 POWERS**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Liveability which gave details of the range of new enforcement powers and provisions introduced by the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

In addition the report sought approval to select and agree the new powers which would be given priority for enforcement to commence and to agree the level of fine for Fixed Penalty Notices together with the discount for early payment of those selected new powers.

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (i) the use of the new Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005 be introduced as outlined in section 4 of the report;
- (ii) the levels for Fixed Penalty Notices and discounts for early payment be set as detailed in section 4 and appendix 4 of the report.

10 **ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEM 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 the following item of business, not shown on the Agenda, be considered as a matter of urgency.

**11 CIVIL CONTINGENCIES/BUSINESS CONTINUITY (AOB)**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Improvement which sought details of the Business Continuity requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act and sought approval of the Business Continuity Plan, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Members were advised that the proposals were based upon the Business Continuity Management requirements within the Civil Contingencies Act and "Preparing for Emergencies" guidance document.

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (i) the Business Continuity Plan be adopted as a working document, continually updated by the Durham and Darlington Civil Contingencies Unit.
- (ii) a training plan for appropriate personnel be approved.

**12 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 1, Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**13 REQUEST FOR EARLY RETIREMENT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Executive which gave details of a request for early retirement, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (i) the request for early retirement be approved in accordance with Regulation 31 of the LGPS and the Council's policy statement. This officer met the "rule of 85" and was entitled to the release of pension benefits on an unreduced basis;
- (ii) the effective date for the retirement be 1 April 2008. However, if recruitment and an effective "handover" could be achieved at an earlier date the officer would be allowed to retire at an earlier date to be determined by the Chief Executive;
- (iii) as there was little difference between options (A) and (B) in terms of cost to the Council the Chief Executive be authorised to adopt the most appropriate and prudent method at the time of retirement;
- (iv) the Chief Executive prepare a further report detailing recommendations for any re-alignment of the responsibilities of existing Directors and a recruitment programme to secure a new Director of Finance and Corporate Services.