

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CHESTER-LE-STREET

Report of the meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, DH3 3UT on Thursday, 31 January 2008 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor A Humes (Chairman)

Councillors

A Turner	M D May
G Armstrong	P H May
S Barr	P B Nathan
J W Barrett	K Potts
L E W Brown	M Potts
R Court	J M Proud
G K Davidson	D L Robson
L Ebbatson	M Sekowski
P Ellis	J Shiell
M Gollan	T J Smith
S Greatwich	D Thompson
R Harrison	S C L Westrip
D M Holding	F Wilkinson
C J Jukes	A Willis
W Laverick	

Officers: R Templeman (Chief Executive), I Forster (Director of Corporate Services), T Galloway (Director of Development Services), J Henderson (Acting Head of Resources Directorate), I Herberson (Head of Corporate Finance), L Dawson (Acting Head of Regeneration), C Potter (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), J Underwood (Performance, Improvement and Equality Manager) and C Turnbull (Democratic Services Officer)

125. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors SA Henig and AK Holden.

126. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 20 DECEMBER 2007

The minutes of the proceedings at the meeting of the District Council held on 20 December 2007 copies of which had previously been circulated, were submitted.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.”

The Chairman proceeded to sign the minutes.

127. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD 21 DECEMBER 2007

The minutes of the proceedings at the Special Meeting of the District Council held on 21 December 2007 copies of which had previously been circulated, were submitted.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.”

The Chairman proceeded to sign the minutes.

128. PUBLIC SPEAKING

No requests had been received from members of the public to speak at the meeting in accordance with the Council’s agreed policy.

129. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

130. REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader, Councillor L Ebbatson, advised of one key decision taken by the Executive on 7 January 2008:

‘That in the light of Local Government Restructuring and the proposed dissolution of Chester-le-Street District Council in April 2009 we agreed not to progress Phase 2 of the Leisure Options Review.’

Councillor Ebbatson then gave an update on events since the last Council Meeting as follows: -

▫ Housing

Cestria Housing has been registered with the Housing Corporation.

▫ European Charter for equality between men and women in local life.

LGA have sent Charter to all Council’s indicating it is ‘a useful tool to meet Gender duties’. As the only Council in the UK to have signed up

we have been invited to the Council of European Municipalities and Regions conference in Pisa as part of an LGA delegation.

▫ Scrutiny

County and District Officers are working with a PhD student from Northumbria University on an evaluation of existing scrutiny functions.

- Final reports from 'task and finish' groups at Association of North East Council on (1) 'The role of the councillor' and (2) climate change. Members of this Council were active in preparing both reports. Copies can be made available from Leaders Office.
- The previous week saw the launch of the new recycling scheme – Chester le Street, Durham City, Easington and Sedgefield will be working in partnership with Greencycle. From April residents will be able to recycle cardboard and plastic as well as cans, paper and glass.
- The first regional awards for Local Government – SHINE Awards – whose primary aim is to inform people of the contribution made by Councils and local government to their quality of life, will be made in March. The Leader was pleased to announce that the Council had+ been shortlisted for The Improvement Award.
- LGR – Implementation Orders were expected to go through Parliament in February. The Implementation Executive continued to meet monthly. There were Programme Boards overseeing the various workstreams necessary to consolidate the services of the new authority. This Council was preparing a Transition Plan which would come before Council. A sub-group of the Implementation Executive met for the first time to oversee the recruitment of a new Chief Executive for the new authority. It was agreed that a recruitment consultancy be appointed to do the necessary work in the run up to the May elections. The appointment will take place post May. This had to be agreed by the Implementation Executive the following day.
- The Electoral Commission had, in principle, agreed to direct the Boundary Committee to undertake an electoral review of the proposed new County Durham Authority in 2008.

Following the report from the Leader, Councillor PH May asked whether there would be an election after the electoral review.

The Leader advised that the review would not require elections to be held on implementation of the new boundaries. It was intended that recommendations would be implemented for any elections in 2010.

Councillor W Laverick enquired whether the proposed electoral review would have any affect on the Parish Boundary Review undertaken by the Council. The Chief Executive advised there would be no affect.

131. REPORTS FROM PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

a. Resources and Value for Money

Councillor L Ebbatson, in the absence of Councillor SA Henig, advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Panels would consider budget proposals in the following two weeks prior to their submission to a Special Meeting of the Executive on 18 February 2008 and then to Council.

b. Regeneration and Strategic Planning

There was no report from Councillor CJ Jukes.

c. Community Engagement and Partnership

Councillor S Barr reported on the following matters:

- Continuous Process Improvement
- Corporate Complaints Procedure
- Members Discuss Group
- 360 Degree Appraisals for Members
- Equality and Diversity training for Members

d. Neighbourhood Services

Councillor SCL Westrip reported on the following:

Leisure Services

The Chester-le-Street Sport and Activity Network was established on 10 January 2008 to bring together all the primary agencies involved in providing sport and physical activity in the District. The key priorities of the network are:

- Increase participation and widen access in sport and physical activity for children and young people and adults
- Develop the Riverside site as a multi sport environment and local sporting hub
- Improve existing sports and recreation facilities and develop new provision to meet identified community needs

Establishment of the Network was a key requirement in the Community Leisure Teams bid to Sport England for grant funding.

The Footsteps to Fitness and Next Steps walk programmes are part of the Lifestyle Initiative. The Lifestyle Initiative is the first in the country to attain the new and revised accreditation and denotes a high quality health walk scheme.

Planning Services

The Development Control Team hosted a successful public exhibition on proposals by Persimmon Homes for development at Newfield Village.

The appointment of a Senior Planning Officer brought the Development Control Team to full staff levels and will ensure the service returns to a position of strength.

The Building Control Service was to host a Technical Seminar on the subject of air tightness in buildings. The seminar was part of a series of events planned to improve customer interactions with the Building Control Team.

Environmental Health

The Environmental Health Team was drafting an Empty Property Strategy that would underpin the overall Housing Strategy and contribute to the regeneration of the District. A postal questionnaire had been sent to the owners of empty properties and a range of measures to assist and encourage the properties to be brought back into use was being developed.

A revised Contaminated Land Strategy would be presented to the Executive in March 2008. A rationalisation exercise had been undertaken that reduced the number of potential sites from over 700 to approximately 180. A prioritisation exercise would be undertaken to rank the sites with a view to site inspections commencing in April/May 2008.

Environmental Services

The Council in partnership with Sedgefield, City of Durham and Easington Councils entered into a new recycling contact with a new contractor, Green Cycle. The new contract will deliver 25% recycling in 2008/2009 by the recovery of 5200 tons of recycling materials from the household waste stream. The scheme, to be launched in April 2008, was designed to collect plastics and cardboard.

e. Health and Wellbeing

There was no report from Councillor M Potts.

132. QUESTIONS TO LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

There were questions for the Leader or Executive Members.

133. UPDATING OF MANAGING ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE DOCUMENT

Consideration was given to a report from the Director of Corporate Services seeking approval to an update of the Managing Organisational Change Document.

The Director of Corporate Services spoke to the report advising that the amendment to the document was the substitution of 'years service in local government' in place of 'years service with the Council' in the Retirement Policy.

The Council RESOLVED:

"That the revised Retirement Policy included as Appendix E of the Management of Change Document be approved."

134. PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT MANAGER REVIEW OF CORPORATE EQUALITY PLAN

Consideration was given to a report from the Director of Corporate Services on the implementation of the Corporate Equality Plan 2007.

The Performance and Improvement Manager spoke to the report.

The Council RESOLVED:

"1. That the continued implementation of the Corporate Equality Plan 2007 be approved.

2. That the information attached to the report as Appendices 1 and 2 be accepted."

135. APPOINTMENT TO LOCAL CHILDRENS BOARD

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services requesting the Council to appoint a Member to serve on the Local Childrens Board.

Councillor L Ebbatson advised of the development of the Local Childrens Board and of the need to appoint a representative to serve thereon.

Councillor Ebbatson proposed an amendment to the recommendation in the report, seconded by Councillor GK Davidson:

' That Councillor M Potts be appointed to serve on the Local Childrens Board.'

On the amendment being put, Councillors R Court and PB Nathan abstained from voting and the Council RESOLVED:

"1. That Councillor M Potts be appointed to serve on the Local Childrens Board.

2. That the appointment be an approved duty for the purpose of Regulation 8(1)(h) of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 (as amended).”

136. CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items of correspondence.

137. CONFERENCES

There were no invitations to attend Conferences.

138. COMMON SEAL

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the action of the Officer in affixing the Common Seal of the Council to the following documents be confirmed:

Lease relating to premises known as Roseberry Grange Golf Complex,
Grange Villa, Chester-le-Street
Tenancy at Will in duplicate relating to Unit 11 Sacriston Industrial Estate
The Councils of Chester-le-Street, City of Durham, District of Easington and
Sedgefield Borough: Recycling Services Form of Agreement
JCT Contract in duplicate relating to the supply and installation of single ply
membrane roof deck of Civic Centre.”

139. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised that his Charity Dinner Dance would be held on Friday 7 March 2008 and that tickets were available.

The meeting terminated at 6.46 pm