

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council Chamber,  
Council Offices,  
Spennymoor

Friday,  
27 February 2009

Time: 11.00 a.m.

**Present:** Councillor J. Robinson J.P (Mayor) and

Councillors Mrs. A.M. Armstrong, W.M. Blenkinsopp, T. Brimm, D.R. Brown, V. Chapman, D. Chaytor, Mrs. K. Conroy, Mrs. P. Crathorne, V. Crosby, Mrs. L. M.G. Cuthbertson, D. Farry, P. Gittins J.P., A. Gray, G.C. Gray, B. Haigh, Mrs. S. Haigh, Mrs. I. Hewitson, J.E. Higgin, A. Hodgson, T. Hogan, Mrs. H.J. Hutchinson, J.M. Khan, B. Lamb, Mrs. E. Maddison, C. Nelson, D.A. Newell, A. Smith, A. Warburton, T. Ward, W. Waters and Mrs E. M. Wood

**Apologies:** Councillors B.F. Avery J.P, Mrs. D. Bowman, J. Burton, T.F. Forrest, Mrs. B. Graham, Mrs. J. Gray, D.M. Hancock, Mrs. L. Hovvels, G.M.R. Howe, J.G. Huntington, Mrs. S. J. Iveson, Ms. I. Jackson, B.M. Ord, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, Mrs. C. Potts, B. Stephens and K. Thompson

### **C.56/08 MINUTES SILENCE**

A minutes silence was held as a mark of respect for former Borough Councillor Mrs. Margaret Bell who had recently died.

### **C.57/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor J. Robinson, JP., and Councillor W. Waters indicated that they had a personal interest in Item 6 on the agenda relating to Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of the Council's housing stock to Sedgefield Borough Homes. They would not, however, be leaving the meeting.

### **C.58/08 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

### **C.59/08 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported that since the last meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2008 he had attended 19 functions and events including charity evenings, civic functions and civic balls.

The Mayor made reference to an official welcome to the school delegation from India which had been held at the Locomotion Museum, Sedgefield Rotary Club's Presidents Evening at Hardwick Hall Hotel and the Mayor of Durham's "Last Hurrah" at Ushaw College.

In addition the Mayor had attended a golden wedding anniversary celebration and also two 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations.

**C.60/08**

**HANDING OVER OF SEAL AND CHAINS OF OFFICE OF THE FORMER DARLINGTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL**

The seals and chains of office of the former Darlington Rural District Council were formally handed over to the Mayor of Darlington Borough Council, Councillor I. Haszeldine for safekeeping. The Mayor presented Councillor Haszeldine with a memento of the occasion.

In response Councillor Haszeldine thanked the Mayor and expressed his appreciation for the work which Sedgfield Borough Council had undertaken.

**C.61/08**

**LARGE SCALE VOLUNTARY TRANSFER OF THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING STOCK TO SEDGFIELD BOROUGH HOMES**

**NB In accordance with Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Members Code of Conduct Councillors J. Robinson JP and W. Waters declared a Personal Interest in this item and remained in the meeting.**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive (for copy see file of Minutes) seeking approval for the transfer of the Council's housing stock to Sedgfield Borough Homes.

It was explained that the report summarised the assets which would transfer together with the overall financial consideration. The report also covered key elements of the transfer and other legal agreements.

Members were reminded of the background to the transfer including details of Sedgfield Borough Council's Option Study which, in terms of the outcome of financial modelling, concluded that whilst the Council could meet the minimum Decent Homes Standards, tenants aspirations for their homes and estates would require an additional £65m for the next 5 years. A Stock Options Appraisal Group therefore concluded that LSVT was the preferred option for future ownership and management of the housing stock to deliver both tenants aspirations and the Council's wider strategic objectives.

On 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2008 Members agreed that the Council proceeds with transfer to Sedgfield Borough Homes subject to the Council's final approval of the valuation, the terms of the transfer and to the obtaining of all necessary statutory consents.

It was noted that in respect of the terms etc., of transfer all land transferred to Sedgfield Borough Homes, with the exception of previously developed land, would be protected under a development agreement which would ensure that the land could not be developed without the prior consent of the Council or its successors.

The report also outlined areas of land and assets which would be retained by the Council.

**RESOLVED :**                    1.    *That Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of housing and related assets to Sedgfield Borough*

*Homes be approved as set out in the transfer agreement and subject to the terms and conditions therein.*

2. *That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be delegated to make final adjustments for the transfer agreement up to the date of transfer.*
3. *That the Chief Executive consults with the Corporate Director of Resources at Durham County Council to ensure that he is appraised and satisfied with any final alterations to the details of the transfer agreement.*

N.B. In accordance with the Council's Procedure Rule 13.4 Councillor W. M. Blenkinsopp requested that his name be recorded as having voted against the resolution.

**C.62/08**

**ANNUAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORT 2008**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive regarding the above (for copy see file of Minutes).

The report, which was submitted on an annual basis in accordance with the Council's Constitution, identified scrutiny reviews which had been undertaken and achievements which had been made by Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the year.

*RESOLVED : That the Annual Scrutiny Report be approved.*

**C.63/08**

**APPOINTMENT OF ALDERMEN - REVIEW OF POLICY**

Consideration was given to a report of the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer (for copy see file of Minutes) informing Members of changes that had been made as a result of new regulations under the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Under Regulation 32 of the Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) (Number 2) Regulations 2008 the Council had powers to select Honorary Aldermen not only past Members of the Council but also serving Members.

The Council was requested to either confirm existing practice or adopt a new practice in the event that it may wish to appoint Aldermen prior to abolition.

*RESOLVED : That the Council adopts the practice of appointing Honorary Aldermen from those Members with 3 consecutive terms of office by 2011 or appropriate eminent service.*

N.B. In accordance with the Council's Procedure Rule 13.4 Councillor Mrs. E. Maddison requested that her name be recorded as having voted against the resolution.

**C.64/08**

**EMPLOYMENT ISSUES PANEL**

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting of the Employment Issues Panel held on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2009 (For copy see file of Minutes).

*RESOLVED : That the Minutes be received.*

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**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Liz North 01388 816166 ext 4237 email:enorth@sedgefield.gov.uk