

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CHESTER-LE-STREET

Report of the meeting of Executive held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, DH3 3UT on Monday 4 February 2008 at 3.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor L Ebbatson (Leader of the Council)

Councillor S A Henig, (Portfolio Holder for Resources and Value for Money)

Councillor S Barr, (Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and Partnership Working)

Councillor C J Jukes, (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Strategic Planning)

Councillor M Potts, (Portfolio Holder for Health and Well-being)

Councillor S C L Westrip, (Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services)

Officers: I Forster (Director of Corporate Services), J Henderson (Acting Head of Resources Directorate), L Dawson (Acting Head of Regeneration), J Lunn (External Funding and Regeneration Officer), M Mansbridge (Asset Management Assistant), D Allinson (Democratic Services Assistant) and A Stephenson (Executive Assistant)

128. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted by the Chief Executive.

129. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 7 JANUARY 2008

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed.

RESOLVED: "That the minutes of the meeting held 4 February 2008, copies of which had previously been circulated to Members be agreed as a correct record."

The Leader proceeded to sign the minutes.

130. PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no questions or representations received from members of the public.

131. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Henig declared a personal interest in Item number 9 on the agenda in his capacity as an employee of Kevan Jones MP who will be taking up residence at Sacriston Community Centre.

132. FORWARD PLAN AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Leader introduced the Forward Plan and Work Programme and advised that this was to be revised following the Corporate Plan and Budget setting exercise.

RESOLVED: "That the Forward Plan and Work Programme be noted."

133. EXECUTIVE DECISION TRACKER

Members considered the Decision Tracker and were updated on the progress on the Communities for Health Programme by Councillor Westrip.

He advised that an action plan had been agreed which would be circulated to the Executive in due course. The project was progressing and that there was a Meeting this week to discuss the mental health awareness course and mental health first aid workshop. The Council would be a major beneficiary of the project as well as other businesses.

The Leader advised that it was good to see this project progressing and queried the level of interest from other businesses and employers. Councillor Westrip advised that MIND had written out to 119 voluntary sector businesses and the schools in the area and that they were awaiting the return of expressions of interest. He was hopeful that there may be additional funding next year to continue the project.

RESOLVED: "That the Decision Tracker be noted."

134. DRAFT EMPLOYEE SURVEY RESULTS

Consideration was given to a report from the Director of Corporate Services to advise Members of the draft results of the employee survey. He advised that this was the draft version of the survey, which gave the headline results, however a final report was expected soon detailing a full appraisal. The report highlighted the results from the Consultants who had identified the key indicators.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that the results were generally positive and showed some significant improvements, which were listed in section 5.2 of the report. He advised that although there were some negative comparisons with last year as listed in Appendix 1 of the report; the Consultants felt that these negative results were statistically insignificant. He advised that a detailed analysis and action plan review would be undertaken once the final report was received.

Questions ensued by Members on the findings, particularly in relation to bullying and harassment, which were addressed by the Head of Corporate Services.

It was proposed and seconded that the recommendation to the report be agreed.

RESOLVED:

- “ 1. That Members note the headline results of the survey.
2. That Members agree to a detailed analysis of the Final Report once received.
3. That a further report be provided to Executive once this has been achieved.”

135. APPROVAL FOR DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICE TO EXERCISE URGENT POWERS FOR ROOF REPAIR CONTRACT

Consideration was given to a report from the Director of Corporate Services to seek endorsement by the Executive for the exercising of urgent business powers, granted to the Director of Corporate Services to enter into contract with the approved roofing contractor to allow works to commence on 4 February 2008.

He advised that the carrying out of works to the Civic Centre roof had been agreed through the Capital Working Group and a tendering process had been undertaken through the relevant procedures and a preferred contractor had been selected as a result. He explained that it was necessary in this case to use urgent powers in accordance with the Constitution to sign the contract therefore he had consulted with the statutory Officers and Members to secure delegated authority. The Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer were kept fully informed and were satisfied with the proposals. He confirmed that delegated powers had therefore been exercised and the contract was signed under the common seal on 21 January 2008.

It was proposed and seconded that the recommendation to the report be agreed.

RESOLVED: “That the action taken to use urgent business powers to secure delegated authority by the Director of Corporate Services to sign the contract to initiate required roof repairs be endorsed.”

136. SACRISTON AREA DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Consideration was given to a report from the Acting Head of Regeneration to provide an update and action plan on interventions identified as early priorities within the Sacriston Area Development Framework.

The Acting Head of Regeneration briefed Members on the comprehensive regeneration plan for the village and the recommendations for a programme of activity to regenerate the village including the priorities and phasing for each area of the village.

She advised of work that was already underway to progress some of the aims deliverable as early priorities. She spoke in particular on the Heart of the Village and the securing of £150,000 funding to deliver on the village square with the possible relocation of the war memorial.

It was noted that the building of the new community centre was well under way and that there was a possibility of additional funding to help this project. The Acting Head of Regeneration also spoke in relation to the disposal of land at Mafeking Terrace and the discussions with the Planning Department in relation to housing density, which was progressing well.

Councillor Jukes felt that the Development Framework was in line with what was deliverable over the next 14 months and that he was fully in support of the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Barr praised the Regeneration staff for the way they had handled both this project at Sacriston and the Heart of the Village in Pelton Fell.

Discussion ensued in relation to the war memorial and ensuring that this matter was dealt with as sensitively as possible.

It was proposed and seconded that the recommendation to the report be agreed.

RESOLVED:

- “1. That the action plan and early delivery priorities contained with the plan be approved.
2. That the early delivery plan progress be noted.”

137. REFERRALS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS

There were no referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

138. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS. TO RESOLVE:

RESOLVED: “That in accordance with Regulation 21(1)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2000, the public and press be excluded during the transaction of the following business because it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.”

139. LAND MATTERS

Consideration was given to a report from the Acting Head of Regeneration relating to various land matters. The Acting Head of Regeneration briefed Members on the three requests that had been received.

The Leader referred to the request for an area of land at 17 Arlington Close, Bournmoor and suggested that the viability of the business be investigated and the outcome be reported back to a future meeting.

Members discussed each disposal as outlined within the report.

The following recommendations were proposed and seconded by Members.

RESOLVED:

“Wayleave agreement at Lingey House Farm, Sacriston

- 1 That a wayleave be granted subject to the applicant being responsible for all the Council’s costs associated with the disposal of land in accordance with the Council adopted Land Disposal Policy and procedures.
- 2 That the District Council works closely with NEDL to ensure that a minimum amount of damage is caused to the hedge and that no damage is caused to the root structure.

Land adjacent to 17 Arlington Close, Bournmoor

- 3 That the request to purchase an area of land, for the purposes of an extension be investigated further and the outcome be reported back to a future Executive Meeting.

Land adjacent to 85 Bradley Close, Ouston

- 4 That the land is not declared surplus to requirements and that the request to dispose of the land be not approved.”

The meeting terminated at 3.40 pm