

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, 3 March 2008 at 3.00 pm.

PRESENT:

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: R Templeman (Chief Executive), I Forster (Director of Corporate Services), T Galloway (Director of Development Services), J Henderson (Acting Head of Resources Directorate), J Bradley (Assistant Solicitor), L Howley (Chief Environmental Health Officer), J Johns (Economic Development and Tourism Officer), A Stephenson (Executive Assistant), Mitchinson (Environmental Health Technical Officer) and D Allinson (Democratic Services Assistant)

145. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor L Ebbatson.

146. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 4 FEBRUARY 2008

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

147. MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF EXECUTIVE HELD 18 FEBRUARY 2008

RESOLVED: "That the minutes of the Special meeting held 18 February 2008, copies of which had previously been circulated to Members be agreed as a correct record."

Councillor Henig proceeded to sign the minutes.

148. PUBLIC SPEAKING

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

149. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

150. FORWARD PLAN AND WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Henig introduced the Forward Plan and Work Programme. Councillor Westrip made reference to the review into Environmental Enforcement in relation to clean neighbourhoods, which was scheduled to come to this Meeting, and requested an update on this. The Director of Development Services explained that unfortunately the report was unable to be completed in time and suggested that this be presented at the next Meeting of the Executive.

It was agreed that the Empty Property Strategy would now be considered in June 2008, as additional information was required to complete this report.

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

151. EXECUTIVE DECISION TRACKER

Members considered the Decision Tracker and were updated on the progress on the following items:-

Neighbourhood Management – The Director of Development Services suggested that he report back on this item within the next two months. It was suggested that he speak to the Director of Corporate Services on linking this item to the Council's 'people and places' priority.

Development Framework Principles for the Heart of Pelton Fell – The Chief Executive updated Members on this development particularly in relation to the work on the new community centre and advised that procurement options were now being considered and discussions were taking place with the community. It was suggested that the progress key date for this item be added to the tracker for June 2008.

Report into the review into Leisure Services for Young People – The Director of Corporate Services advised that this item would be drawn into the 'People and Places' priority and be included in the delivery plan undertaken by the action learning set for Strengthening Partnerships and be brought back to Executive in May 2008.

Report into the review of Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 – The Director of Development Services confirmed that this item would now be presented in April 2008.

Updates Community Resources Centre at Sacriston – The Chief Executive gave an update on this development. He advised that work on the resource

centre was progressing well even though there had been delays due to the adverse weather conditions and was due to open as scheduled.

Corporate Governance Framework Action Plan – The Director of Corporate Services advised that this information would be reported through the Corporate Performance Report in future and that the next report would be presented in June 2008

RESOLVED: “That the Decision Tracker and the amendments be noted.”

152. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE APRIL TO DECEMBER 2007

Consideration was given to a report from the Director of Corporate Services to present a summary of key areas of performance from achieving the corporate plan to complaints from April to December 2007.

The Director of Corporate Services briefed Members on his report and drew their attention to Section 15 of the report, which detailed the key performance summary. This performance information had been looked at by the Performance clinic, extended Management Team and CMT and whilst there was some disappointing performance on BVPI's generally there seemed to be a positive direction of travel overall.

He referred to the draft annual audit letter that had been received from the Audit Commission, which he reported was really positive in terms of the Council's overall performance and that he would be reporting back on this once the final draft had been received.

Councillor Westrip updated Members in relation to the equalities and diversity training and awareness initiatives, which were progressing well and were to be rolled out across the Council in areas of awareness raising and mental health first aid.

In relation to the decent housing standards performance, which were included in the report, Councillor Westrip queried whether these would continue to be reported. The Director of Corporate Services clarified that these would no longer be included in the Corporate performance report and new national indicators would be set as from 1st April 2008.

The Chief Executive clarified that Cestria would monitor the day-to-day performance issues, however they would be required to report back on the homelessness service and the delivery of the offer document.

Councillor M Potts referred to the Local Performance Indicators on page 7 of the report and advised that it was encouraging to see that out of all new housing development in Chester-le-Street District 30% was affordable housing.

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

RESOLVED: “That it be noted that Members considered and commented on the progress on improvements and the contents of the Performance in Appendix 1 of the Report which addressed the learning and remedial measures and identified other areas where improvements were required to corporate performance.”

153. PARTNERSHIPS FOR FUTURES

Consideration was given to a report from the Economic Development and Tourism Officer to recommend to Executive the establishment of a dedicated resource, Partnerships for Futures.

The Economic Development and Tourism Officer briefed Members on the report and outlined the scope of activity proposed to be undertaken by Partnerships for Futures which would include workforce development planning with employers and the appropriate connections with support agencies, other employees, prospective employees and apprenticeships. A critical aspect of Partnerships for Futures would relate to working with the education sector to influence the skills supply of the future workforce.

To achieve the Partnership for Futures she outlined the funding that would be required within the budget for 2008/09, the need to appoint an Executive Director and to establish a Board of Partnership for Futures and develop a revised business plan.

She advised of the consultation activity that had been undertaken with a wide range of partners, key employers and internal departments within the Council.

Councillor Barr welcomed the report and queried whether the scheme would include an element to target young people who were not in employment, education and training (NEETs).

The Chief Executive confirmed that NEETS were included as one of the target groups within this project. He explained that the main drive would be to get people into employment and train them so that they would take advantage of job opportunities.

He referred to the recommendations in the report and highlighted the importance that Partnerships for Futures should not be seen to be public sector driven, but the Council still be part of the Board. He asked that Members give consideration to the appointment of a Council Member representative on the Board through a nomination process at the Council Meeting.

He spoke in relation to the appointment process of the Executive Director which could be done through direct employment with the Council or by financing one of the other partnership bodies to act as employer and suggested the recommendations in the report be amended to reflect this.

Councillor Westrip advised that he welcomed the involvement of the secondary schools and referred to a scheme that was being run by Cestria to engage with the schools, which he felt would be a good opportunity to engage them in this project.

The Chief Executive clarified that although Cestria were not indicating their wish to be on the Board of Partnerships for Futures at present he could foresee them engaging in the future. He confirmed that he would report back to Cestria on the views expressed by Members.

It was proposed and seconded that the recommendations to the report be agreed, subject to the suggested amendments.

RESOLVED:

- (1) "That the Executive approve a commitment of £90,000 in 2008/09 budget to assist in the establishing of Partnerships for Futures, subject to the council approving the budget for 2008/09.
- (2) That it be noted that the Executive supports the establishment of a Partnership for Futures Board and the development of a revised business plan for Partnerships for Futures and that delegated authority be granted for the Chief Executive to look to appoint an Executive Director either through direct employment by the Council or through financing one of the other partnership bodies to act as employer.
- (3) That the Executive recommends that nominations for a Member representative to be appointed onto the Partnership for Futures Board be considered at the Council Meeting."

154. REVISION OF CONTAMINATED LAND STRATEGY

Councillor Henig introduced Marie Mitchinson the Environmental Health Technical Officer to the Executive.

Consideration was given to a report from the Chief Environmental Health Officer to consider the revised Contaminated Land Strategy, which was attached as Appendix A to the report.

The Chief Environmental Health Officer gave a background to Members on the report which had been revised due to the restructuring of the Council and changes to the legislation that drives Contaminated Land. He outlined the areas that needed to be amended and highlighted the three principle changes in the document as well as the timescales involved in taking this forward.

Councillor Barr spoke in relation to engaging with the public on matters surrounding contaminated land and the risk of blight and queried how this was managed. He also referred to land surrounding the District which had been

subject to wrongful use in terms of materials being tipped and whether this strategy would help this situation.

The Chief Environmental Health Officer spoke in relation to the contaminated land process and advised of a risk communication strategy that was to be developed. He summarised the situation in relation to present sites and advised that once this document had been approved specific site surveys could then be carried out to help resolve the problems highlighted.

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

RESOLVED: "That it be noted that the Executive considered the draft Contaminated Land Strategy and recommends its adoption by Council."

155. REFERRALS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS

There were no referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

The meeting terminated at 3.40 pm