

Public Document Pack

25 September 2008

Dear Councillor

A meeting of the Executive will be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, DH3 3UT on Monday, 6th October, 2008 at 3.00 pm

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roy Templeman', written over a light grey rectangular background.

R TEMPLEMAN

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the Meeting held 1st September 2008 (Pages 1 - 8)
3. Public Speaking
4. To Receive Declarations of Interest
5. Forward Plan and Work Programme (Pages 9 - 20)
6. Executive Decision Tracker (Pages 21 - 22)

People and Place Priority

7. Implementing the Transition Plan; Developing 'People and Place' (Pages 23 - 38)

Report Of Director of Corporate Services

Usual Business

8. Developing a Business Improvement District for Chester-le-Street Town Centre (Pages 39 - 46)

Report Of Town Centre Development Manager

9. Notice of receipt of petition regarding disabled parking in Chester-le-Street

Local Government Review

10. No Items

11. Exclusion of Public and Press. To RESOLVE:

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

12. Disabled Facilities Grants (Pages 47 - 52)

Report Of Director of Development Services

13. Pelton Community Centre (Pages 53 - 56)

Report Of Director of Development Services

14. Write Off of Irrecoverable Debts (Pages 57 - 60)

Report Of Acting Head of Resources

15. Land Matters (Pages 61 - 80)

Report Of Asset Management Assistant

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, 1 September 2008 at 3.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor L Ebbatson, (Leader of the Council)
Councillor S C L Westrip, (Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services)
Councillor M Sekowski, (Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and Partnerships)

Officers: R Templeman (Chief Executive), I Forster (Director of Corporate Services), T Galloway (Director of Development Services), C Potter (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), J Elder (Acting Head of Resources), N Tzamarias (Assistant Director of Development Services), J Lulic (Community Development Manager), J Smerdon (Regeneration and Strategy Co-ordinator), Lunn (External Funding and Regeneration Officer), A Stephenson (Executive Assistant) and D Humble (Democratic Services Assistant)

Also in attendance: Councillors G Armstrong and R Harrison.

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors L Armstrong and C Jukes.

26. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 4 AUGUST 2008

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

The Leader proceeded to sign the minutes.

27. PUBLIC SPEAKING

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

28. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

It was agreed that Item No.13 be considered prior to the other items listed on the Agenda due to the fact that Councillors G Armstrong and R Harrison were present in relation to this item.

29. REVIEW INTO LOCAL WATERCOURSES

Councillor G Armstrong, Chairman of the former Leisure and Neighbourhood Overview and Scrutiny Panel who conducted the review into Local Watercourses gave a background to the report. He advised that the review had commenced in July 2007 following issues raised by local residents, parish council and the local conservation group in Bournmoor over the quality of the local waterway at Lumley Park Burn.

He outlined the scrutiny review process including the evidence gathered, the various organisations involved and the findings of the review.

Discussion ensued in relation to the potential of reedbeds as a resolution to the problem, however Councillor Armstrong pointed out that these schemes were costly. He advised however that the Coal Authority were currently looking into alternative options to divert pumping away from Lumley Park Burn.

The Chief Executive spoke in relation to joint working in relation to local planning issues and how we look at bio-diversity and environmental improvements. He felt that environmental enhancements to critical watercourses could be considered as part of the core strategy of the Local Development Framework as a way to look at potential source of funding from major developments through 106 contributions.

The Leader queried whether this report would be sent to various participants or external bodies. The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that he would ensure that this was carried out.

The Leader suggested that an additional recommendation be added to the recommendations to suggest that this report should be treated as a background paper for the Local Development Framework in relation to the issues outlined by the Chief Executive.

The Leader advised that this was a very interesting report and conveyed thanks to all those involved in producing it.

RESOLVED:

- “1 That Members note the review and agree to the recommendations contained within.
- 2 That the Executive agree that the report be forwarded to Durham County Council for consideration.
- 3 That the report be used as a background paper for the Local Development Framework in relation to the issues raised by the Chief Executive.”

30. FORWARD PLAN AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Leader introduced the Forward Plan and Work Programme. It was recommended that the Key Decisions highlighted for inclusion within the Forward Plan be agreed.

It was agreed that the Review of Local Watercourses, Tenders for the Heart of the Village, Corporate Performance Report, Communities for health – Mental Health Project, Local Development Framework be deleted from the Work Programme.

It was recommended that the non-key decisions highlighted for inclusion within the Forward Plan be agreed.

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

31. EXECUTIVE DECISION TRACKER

Members considered the Decision Tracker. The Chief Executive gave a brief update in relation to the tenders in relation to the Development Framework Principles for the Heart of Pelton Fell, that would be considered further in the in the private part of the Agenda.

The Leader suggested that the Review of Community Facilities be deleted from the Decision Tracker.

A verbal update was given by the Chief Executive on the Community Resource Centre at Sacriston which was now being effectively used by clubs and classes. He advised that work was expected to start soon on the demolition of the old Community Centre and the planned environmental improvement works.

The Leader advised that the Strengthening Partnerships Action Learning Set had been asked to support a feasibility study with Sport Durham on behalf of the Community Trust at Sacriston to look into sporting provision and requested that they take into consideration the Area Development Framework.

Councillor Harrison referred to the relocation of the War Memorial and gave an update on the progress that had been made to date.

The Leader requested that the Department for Health Project be deleted from the Decision Tracker.

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

32. IMPLEMENTING THE TRANSITION PLAN; DEVELOPING 'PEOPLE AND PLACE'

Consideration was given to a report from the Director of Corporate Services to update members on progress made on developing the ‘People and Place’ Delivery Plan and the key issues on the four Action Learning Sets.

The Director of Corporate Services outlined the progress to date in the four Action Learning Sets and highlighted in particular the progress made in relation to Young People and Place where a full series of events had been organised as set out on the Council's web-site to help engage with young people.

He also referred to a project that had been added to the Neighbourhoods Action Learning Set which was a video that had been designed and delivered by Environmental Services Enforcement Team to increase Environmental awareness raising for areas of their work.

The Leader expressed concern that local Councillors were not being involved in and made aware of the projects that were in hand. The Director of Corporate Services advised that he would work with the Action Learning Set leads to move this forward and raise the awareness of these projects both internally and externally.

It was agreed that that the Environmental Services Enforcement Team's video be show prior to the Special Council Meeting which was scheduled to be held on 30 September 2008.

Councillor Westrip advised as a point of information that powers were to be invested in the new Unitary Authority so that long standing Councillors could be nominated Aldermen in advance of the new Unitary being formed which was noted by Members.

The Leader referred to page 28 of the report on Neighbourhoods Action Learning Set with reference to the booking of community centre rooms and clarified that this was a shared online facility which does not relate solely to Sacriston Community Centre.

RESOLVED:

- “1 That the progress to date on implementing the Transition Plan be noted;
- 2 That the progress made in respect of individual progress be noted.”

33. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT APRIL 2008 TO JUNE 2008

The Director of Corporate Services advised of the need for the Council to retain a high level of performance management and direction of travel for its final year. He advised of the positive progress made so far on performance and spoke in relation to new sections introduced to the report such as health and safety, complaints - dealing with telephone enquiries and new national indicator set performance.

The Leader advised that she was pleased to see the changes taking place particularly in relation to the handling of complaints and congratulated the Officers involved in this.

It was noted that Councillor L Armstrong had requested that comparisons be made with other Authorities in relation to the number of complaints about the recycling scheme.

Councillor Westrip raised a number of queries in relation to the new local indicators, the improvements made to sickness indicators performance and the number of health and safety incidences in respect of Leisure, which were addressed by the Director of Corporate Services.

RESOLVED: "That the progress on improvements and the contents of the Performance Report in Appendix 1 of the Report be noted."

34. AUDIT AND INSPECTION PLAN

The Acting Director of Resources advised that this item was for Members information and would be considered at the Audit Committee on 16 September 2008. It was noted that if any Members wished to direct any questions in relation to this report they could do so through the Audit Committee.

Particular discussion ensued in relation to moving towards Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) next year, which was explained by the Director of Corporate Services.

RESOLVED: "That the Audit and Inspection Plan from the Audit Commission which would be considered at the Audit Committee on 16 September 2008 be noted."

35. COMMUNITIES FOR HEALTH - MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT EVALUATION

Councillor Westrip spoke in relation to the project delivered by MIND on behalf of the Council, which he felt had exceeded expectations.

He advised that MIND had moved ahead on all targets set in the project and that the feedback had been very encouraging. It had been an extremely successful project and that MIND had excelled themselves in delivering it. He reported that progress on this project would continue to be reviewed.

Thanks were conveyed to the sub-group of the LSP who had been working on this project alongside the PCT.

The Leader advised that this was an excellent example of partnership working and gave particular thanks and appreciation to Councillor Westrip for his involvement in this project and his commitment and expertise in making this so successful.

RESOLVED: "That the contents of the report be noted and responsibility be delegated to the Communities for Health Sub-group to oversee the full evaluation of the first year of the Mental Health project."

36. EARLY INTEGRATION OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FUNCTION

The Regeneration and Strategic Planning Manager introduced the report and gave an update on progress that had been made on the Local Development Framework on how we would integrate work done so far.

The Chief Executive requested that the Regeneration and Strategic Planning Manager produce a report in November on how we are proceeding with the Town Centre Master Plan and how this could be incorporated as a key priority under the LDF in the new Unitary Authority. The Chief Executive also suggested that the Regeneration and Strategic Planning Manager incorporate some of his early ideas in terms of visioning work so that Members could give some support to this and so this could also be adopted as part of the core strategy.

The Leader advised that this is one of the key investments that she wished to see recognised at County level and hopefully promoted and that it would be useful to see a draft version of his preferred options. She felt it would be useful to have CMT/Executive joint session or away day to look at these issues. The Chief Executive suggested that this session should also include discussion of the 'handing over the baton' work.

The Chief Executive also suggested that this report should be referred to Council.

The Leader suggested that an additional recommendation be added so that Parish Councils be notified by letter of the functions that will continue to be undertaken by District Councils until vesting day and that this be distributed with the weekly planning list.

RESOLVED:

- “1 That the Executive recommends that Full Council agrees the formal cessation of work on the Chester-le-Street Local Development Framework.
- 2 That the Executive notes and supports the early integration of the Local Development Framework (LDF) function and the creation of an Interim Team and the interim appointment of a Strategic Planning Manager.
- 3 That a letter be sent to all Parish Councils to advise of the functions that will continue to be undertaken by District Councils until vesting day.”

37. 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 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 of the Local Government Act 1972.”

38. TENDERS FOR PELTON FELL HEART OF THE VILLAGE

The Chief Executive gave a verbal update on the progress that had been made in relation to the Tenders for Pelton Fell Heart of the Village Community Centre.

It was noted that three tenders had been received for Pelton Fell Heart of the Village and that a Meeting would be held with the consultants Capita to go through the tender evaluation process. He gave an update in relation to the timetable for works to the Community Centre and the Environmental Improvements.

RESOLVED: "That the verbal update on the progress with the Tenders for Pelton Fell Heart of the Village be noted."

39. LAND MATTERS

Consideration was given to a report from the Acting Head of Regeneration on Land Matters requests.

It was noted that Councillor L Armstrong had raised comments in relation to the request at Fell Road, Pelton Fell that were noted by the Executive.

Members felt that notwithstanding the comments expressed by Councillor L Armstrong that it would be premature to sell off the land at this time and therefore they agreed with the Officer's recommendation not to approve the request.

Members raised a number of issues in relation to the request for grazing land at New Lambton. It was therefore agreed that this item be deferred pending further information.

RESOLVED:

Premise at Fell Road, Pelton Fell

- 1) "That the request be not approved at this time and that the application is held in abeyance until such time as further economic regeneration opportunities are explored.

Grazing Land at New Lambton

- 2) That this item be deferred so that further information can be considered in relation to this request."

40. REVIEW IN TO COMMUNITY FACILITIES - THIRD STAGE REPORT

The Community Development Manager gave a background on a Review of Community Facilities and gave an update on model for community appraisal, strengths and weaknesses associated with community facilities, models of

delivery, steps to community hubs and the proposals for the new Unitary Authority regarding management of facilities.

An amended copy of Appendix 2 on the current status of community facilities was circulated to Members and the changes were highlighted for information.

The Leader advised that this was a very useful and interesting report and thanked the Community Development Manager. Particular discussion ensued in relation to the work and resources that would be required to establish community hubs.

The Leader highlighted a number of issues in relation to the community hub model, that she felt needed to be established further, which were noted by the Community Development Manager.

She requested that thanks be conveyed to the Communities Facilities Review Working Group for the work that they had undertaken on this review.

RESOLVED:

- “1 That the proposals referred to in paragraph 14.2 are referred to the County Council (and hence the new Unitary Authority) as a recommended approach to the further development of community facilities in Chester-le-Street.
- 2 That an amended report together with the views of Members be submitted in due course to the ‘access workstream’ and the Leader of the County Council for information and consideration to help inform the prioritisation work in which the County Council Cabinet is currently engaged.
- 3 That the Community Facilities Review Working Group is ‘wound down’ and that Members of that group be informed of the decisions in relation to his report and thanked for their contributions in bringing this report forward.”

The meeting terminated at 5.05 pm



Chester-le-Street
District Council

Executive Forward Plan and Work Programme



October 2008

15 September 2008

1

About this document

Chester-le-Street District council is committed to continuous improvement. We want to make sure that we engage people in the decisions we make wherever we can. We want to let people know what decisions we are going to make and when.

The council's Executive, which is made up of the Leader and five Executive Members have powers to make certain decisions on behalf of the council. This document aims to go further than what the law requires us to do and let people know as far in advance what decisions the Executive is to make on the councils behalf. Where possible and in relation to what are called key decisions, it will let you know how you can make representations and who they can be made to. This document will be published every month at the Civic Centre and on the council's website at www.chester-le-street.gov.uk.

This document is in two parts:

- Part One: Chester-le-Street District Council's formal Executive Forward Plan
- Part Two: the Executive's Decision Work Programme for the next year

Part One

The Executive Forward Plan is a statutory document which the council must produce every month covering a four month period. It is published fourteen days before it comes into effect. This is the first day of each month. It includes:

- a list of all 'key decisions' the councils will make on the council's behalf;
- details of the nature of the decision;
- details of the decision taker, which in the councils case is normally the council's Executive;
- when the decision is to be made;
- who are the principal consultees and the means by which consultations will be undertaken;
- a list of documents to be considered by the decision maker; and
- details of how and by when representations can be made.

What are 'key decisions'?

'Key decisions' are defined as executive decisions which are:-

- decisions likely to result in the District Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant, having regard to the District Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates, or
- significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the Council

Part Two

The Executive's work programme is not a statutory document which the council must produce. It is advance notice of all other important decisions the Executive will take either on behalf of the council or in making recommendations to the council. It includes:

- a list of the non 'key decisions the councils will make;

- details of the nature of the decision;
- details of the decision taker, which in the council's case is normally the council's Executive as a group;
- when the decision is to be made;
- who are the principal consultees and the means by which consultations will be undertaken;
- a list of documents to be considered by the decision maker; and
- details of how and by when representations can be made.

Who are the Executive?

The Executive is made up of the Leader of the Council and five other Executive Members as follows:

Cllr. Linda Ebbatson	Tel: 0191 387 2090
Leader of the Council with responsibility for Human Resources, Equalities, and Young People	E-Mail: lindaebbatson@chester-le-street.gov.uk
Cllr. Simon Westrip	Tel: 0191 387 2090
Deputy Leader and Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder	E-Mail: simon.westrip@bigfoot.com simonwestrip@chester-le-street.gov.uk
Cllr. Chris Jukes	Tel: 0191 389 1136
Regeneration and Strategy Planning Portfolio Holder	E-Mail: chris.jukes1@btopenworld.com
Cllr. Lawson Armstong	Tel: 0191 3873195
Resources and Value for Money Portfolio Holder	E-Mail: lawsonarmstrong@chester-le-street.gov.uk
Cllr Mike Sekowski	Tel: 0191 3703416
Community Engagement and Partnerships Portfolio Holder	E-Mail: m.sekowski@metronet.co.uk michaelsekowski@Chester-Le-Street.gov.uk

How do I find out when the Executive is meeting?

Information about the time and venue for a particular meeting of the Executive may be obtained from the agenda available from the Reception Desk at the Civic Centre, from the District Council's website or from the Executive Assistant. Public Speaking is allowed at Executive meetings so long as you comply with the council's procedures. To find out more contact Democratic Services.

How do I contact Members of the Executive or the Council Chief Officers?

Contact details for Members of the Executive and for the Council's Chief Officers are set out in this Forward Plan.

If you have any queries about the Forward Plan, please contact the Executive Assistant at the Civic Centre on 0191 387 2010 or e-mail the Executive Assistant at: amandastephen@chester-le-street.gov.uk.



Chester-le-Street
District Council

Part One: Executive Forward Plan



October 2008

15 September 2008

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Executive Forward Plan

Summary of Key Decision	Decision Taker and Documents to be considered	Decision Date	Contact Officer	Consulted Parties and means of consultation	How to make representations and when by (If making representations in writing, please address them to the Director/Manager named at: Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3UT)
Bad Debt report Quarterly Report	Executive	October 2008	Jim Elder 0191 3872300	Acting Head of Resources Head of Corporate Finance Internal Auditor	In writing or by telephone, to the Acting Head of Revenue and Benefits or by email to jimelder@chester-le-street.gov.uk
Business Improvement Districts	Executive	October 2008	Leila Dawson 0191 3872233	Relevant Executive Members Corporate Management Team Traders Association	In writing or by telephone to the Acting Head of Regeneration or by email to leiladawson@chester-le-street.gov.uk

Summary of Key Decision	Decision Taker and Documents to be considered	Decision Date	Contact Officer	Consulted Parties and means of consultation	How to make representations and when by (If making representations in writing, please address them to the Director/Manager named at: Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3UT)
Hanlon Tracking System	Executive	October 2008	Leila Dawson 0191 3872233	Relevant Executive Members Corporate Management Team Partnerships for Futures Board	In writing or by telephone to the Acting Head of Regeneration or by email to leiladawson@chester-le-street.gov.uk
Land Matters	Executive	October 2008	Leila Dawson 0191 3872233	Portfolio Holder Corporate Management Team	In writing or by telephone to the Acting Head of Regeneration or by email to leiladawson@chester-le-street.gov.uk
Land Matters	Executive	November 2008	Leila Dawson 0191 3872233	Portfolio Holder Corporate Management Team	In writing or by telephone to the Acting Head of Regeneration or by email to leiladawson@chester-le-street.gov.uk

Summary of Key Decision	Decision Taker and Documents to be considered	Decision Date	Contact Officer	Consulted Parties and means of consultation	How to make representations and when by (If making representations in writing, please address them to the Director/Manager named at: Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3UT)
Land Matters	Executive	December 2008	Leila Dawson 0191 3872233	Portfolio Holder Corporate Management Team	In writing or by telephone to the Acting Head of Regeneration or by email to leiladawson@chester-le-street.gov.uk
Land Matters	Executive	January 2009	Leila Dawson 0191 3872233	Portfolio Holder Corporate Management Team	In writing or by telephone to the Acting Head of Regeneration or by email to leiladawson@chester-le-street.gov.uk
Land Matters	Executive	February 2009	Leila Dawson 0191 3872233	Portfolio Holder Corporate Management Team	In writing or by telephone to the Acting Head of Regeneration or by email to leiladawson@chester-le-street.gov.uk
Land Matters	Executive	March 2009	Leila Dawson 0191 3872233	Portfolio Holder Corporate Management Team	In writing or by telephone to the Acting Head of Regeneration or by email to leiladawson@chester-le-street.gov.uk



Chester-le-Street
District Council

Part Two: Executive Work Programme



October 2008



Executive Work Programme

Summary of Non Key Decision	Decision Taker and Documents to be considered	Decision Date	Contact Officer	Consulted Parties and means of consultation	How to make representations and when by (If making representations in writing, please address them to the Director/Manager named at: Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3UT)
Employee Survey Results	Executive	Revised date October 2008	Ian Forster 0191 3872130	Corporate Management Team Portfolio Holder Employees Trade Unions	In writing or by telephone to the Director of Corporate Affairs or by email to ianforster@chester-le-street.gov.uk
Disabled Facilities Grant	Executive	October 2008	Tony Galloway 0191 3872100	Relevant Portfolio Holders	By phone, or in writing to the Director of Development Services or by email to Tonygalloway@chester-le-street.gov.uk

Summary of Non Key Decision	Decision Taker and Documents to be considered	Decision Date	Contact Officer	Consulted Parties and means of consultation	How to make representations and when by (If making representations in writing, please address them to the Director/Manager named at: Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3UT)
Climate Change Strategy	Executive	October	Andy Stephenson 0191 3872134	Corporate Management Team Regeneration Strategic Housing Environmental Services Planning Local Environment Groups The LSP The Town Centre Manager Members of the public	In writing or by telephone, to the Senior Sustainability Officer or by email to andystephenson@chester-le-street.gov.uk
Regeneration Quarterly Report	Executive	Revised date November 2008	Leila Dawson 0191 3872233	Relevant Executive Members Corporate Management Team	In writing or by telephone to the Acting Head of Regeneration or by email to leiladawson@chester-le-street.gov.uk

Summary of Non Key Decision	Decision Taker and Documents to be considered	Decision Date	Contact Officer	Consulted Parties and means of consultation	How to make representations and when by (If making representations in writing, please address them to the Director/Manager named at: Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3UT)
Sacriston Heart of the Village regeneration scheme	Executive	November 2008	Janice Lunn 0191 3872158	Corporate Management Team Ward Members Sacriston Community trust Durham County Council Urban Renaissance Team	In writing or by telephone to the External Funding and Regeneration Officer or by email to janicelunn@chester-le-street.gov.uk
Corporate Performance Report July 2008 to September 2008	Executive Corporate Performance and covering report	December 2008	Ian Forster 0191 3872130	Relevant Executive Members Corporate Management Team Internal consultation e-mail	In writing or by telephone to the Director of Corporate Affairs or by email to ianforster@chester-le-street.gov.uk

Summary of Non Key Decision	Decision Taker and Documents to be considered	Decision Date	Contact Officer	Consulted Parties and means of consultation	How to make representations and when by (If making representations in writing, please address them to the Director/Manager named at: Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3UT)
New power to establish Parish Councils (including Town Councils)	Executive	December 2008	Ian Forster 0191 3872130 Chris Potter 0191 3872011	Corporate Management Team Portfolio Holder Executive Members	In writing or by telephone to the Director of Corporate Affairs or by email to ianforster@chester-le-street.gov.uk or to Head of Legal and Democratic Services or by email chrisspottter@chester-le-street.gov.uk
Communities for Health - Mental Health Project – Final report	Executive	March 2009	Tony Galloway 0191 3872100	Corporate Management Team Portfolio Holder Health Improvement Sub Group	By phone, or in writing to the Director of Development Services or by email to Tonygalloway@chester-le-street.gov.uk
Corporate Performance Report October 2008 to December 2008	Executive Corporate Performance and covering report	March 2009	Ian Forster 0191 3872130	Relevant Executive Members Corporate Management Team Internal consultation e-mail	In writing or by telephone to the Director of Corporate Affairs or by email to ianforster@chester-le-street.gov.uk



EXECUTIVE DECISION TRACKER

	<u>Date of decision</u>	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Progress/ Key Date</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Officer Lead</u>
1	6 February 2006 3 December 2007	<p><u>Development Framework Principles for the Heart of Pelton Fell</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ That the Executive confirm the support given to the Pelton Fell Community Association to date and the principle of them seeking to establish the community facility, but it be recognised that the Council is unable to commit to any additional funding and that in order for them to move forward they be required to produce a sustainable business plan which is viable. ▪ Negotiations to take place for the purchase and disposal of land. Report back to Executive prior to any acquisition. ▪ The revised plans for the Heart of the Village, Pelton Fell will be presented to the people of Pelton Fell for consultation. 	Verbal update October 2008	Progressing	Negotiations under way with landowners and prospective interested parties in the village.	Leila Dawson
2	2 June 2008	<p><u>Budget 2009/10 Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update on financial planning on the formal budget process. 	October 2008	Progressing	Ongoing	Ian Herberson
3	1 October 2007	<p><u>Updates Community Resource Centre at Sacriston</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular updates to be given to Executive on the progress on the Community Resource Centre 	October 2008 Executive	On schedule	Ongoing	Leila Dawson

	<u>Date of decision</u>	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Progress/ Key Date</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Officer Lead</u>
4	4 August 2008	<p><u>Corporate Training and Development Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It was agreed an update on the plan, including an evaluation of the mental health awareness and first aid training be given to Executive 	October 2008	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ian Forster



Chester-le-Street
District Council

REPORT TO: Executive

DATE OF MEETING: 6th October 2008

REPORT OF: Director of Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Implementing the Transition Plan; Developing 'People and Place'

ITEM NUMBER: 7

1 Purpose and Summary

- 1.1 In March 2008 the council adopted its Transition Plan for 2008/2009. Since that time early progress has since been made on the implementation of plan. The purpose of this report is to update members on progress specifically on the '**People and Place**' Priority and to seek Members agreement to progress made on developing the '**People and Place**' Delivery Plan
- 1.2 So far the following progress has been made. The council has:
- agreed the principles and financial allocations within the 2008/2009 Corporate budget setting process;
 - agreed the '**People and Place**' priorities and four areas of focus as part of the adopted 'Transition Plan';
 - set up the four action learning sets and appointed leads, Executive support and sponsors;
 - provided guidance and support to leads;
 - Executive has agreed the delivery plan by the action learning set leads;
 - carried out a launch event on 13th May 2008
 - worked with Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to undertake a workshop in May;
 - agreed to a single '**People and Place**' Scrutiny Panel with a task and finish approach to undertake work to support the delivery of the '**People and Place**' Delivery Plan which had its first meeting in June;
 - agreed a Draft '**People and Place**' Scrutiny Work programme
 - agreed an approach to monitoring and reporting progress to the Executive on the '**People and Place**' Delivery Plan of which this report is the fourth
 - agreed an approach to delivering the '**People and Place**' Personal Profile for all employees and launched the project .

- Commenced time lining and crosscutting work to re-evaluate the scale and practicality of delivering the **'People and Place'** Delivery Plan;
- Set up a resource centre and commenced a programme of weekly member engagement opportunities in early July.

1.3 With specific regard to the **'People and Place'** Delivery Plan specific progress has been made on developing the high level proposals and details of proposals are set out in Appendix 1.

1.4 Members are recommended to:

- 1) Note the progress to date on implementing the Transition Plan;
- 2) Note the progress made in respect of individual progress and comment on the issues raised

2. Consultation

2.1 Executive Members, the Chief Executive, Directors, relevant Service Team Managers, Action Learning Set Members (including external stakeholders) have been engaged in the development of the **'People and Place'** Delivery Plan and its implementation to date.

2.2 No other consultations were considered necessary at this stage including external consultations or engagement.

3. Transition Plan and People and Place Priority

3.1 The Transition Plan, in effect, replaces the Corporate Plan 2007/2010. The Transition Plan includes a schedule of proposals from the previous seven priorities which ought to be and can be achieved in the remaining life of the council.

3.2 The council's choice to move towards a single priority of **'People and Place'** priority was considered as part of the budget setting process and forms a firm part of the Transition Plan. This report tracks progress to date and puts forwards proposals to take forward the delivery of the **'People and Place'** priority.

3.3 The Delivery Plan content identified in the appendices in this report address all four areas of the **'People and Place'** priority focus i.e.

- Partnerships for Futures;
- Investment in the Town Centre;
- Strengthening Partnerships; and
- Neighbourhoods

4. Implications

4.1 Financial implications and value for money statement

The Transition Plan takes account of the 2008/2009 budget process. Specific resources have been made available for both the contribution to setting up the new organisation and the implementation of the '**People and Place**' priority. It is considered that the council has properly reviewed its priorities in the light of Local Government Re-organisation and its abilities to deliver services during the transitional period. The view is taken that in doing so the council will achieve value for money in a year of significant challenge. In delivering '**People and Place**' resources may need redirecting during the forthcoming year. Action Learning Set leads and relevant Executive members are responsible for the allocated budgets to deliver the four strands of the '**People and Place**' priority

4.2 Local Government Reorganisation Implications

The Transition Plan and the '**People and Place**' Delivery Plan is the council's response to the challenges it faces in the final year of its existence. It is considered that the plan commits the council to working within its capacity to provide human and financial resources to help establish the council while delivering 'Business as usual'. It is considered that the Plan meets the guidance and recommendations provided by the Audit Commission set out in their Annual Audit and Inspection Letter. The subject of this report is principally progress against this plan and specifically the '**People and Place**' priority. It is not considered that the subject matter of the '**People and Place**' Delivery Plans at this stage requires any consultation or approval of the County Council because the proposals have been part of the budget process. Should potential resource issues change e.g. further unbudgeted resources caught within the direction occur then appropriate consultation with the County Council will take place.

4.3 Legal

The Transition Plan includes a factual statement of legal guidance to managers and Members. This remains under preparation and will be added to the Plan when complete. It is considered that the Transition Plan provides vehicle to enable the council to work within its legal powers during the transition period.

4.4 Personnel

How the council supports its employees through the transition process is a key part of the Plan. The Transition Plan revises the Organisational Development Strategy commits the council to supporting its employees through the process and help them take advantage of opportunities that will occur in the new authority. A key part of this is the development of a '**People and Place**' Personal profile for all employees. It is important to note that the Transition plan and the '**People and Place**' Delivery Plan are both living and developing documents and will be reviewed as a result of consultations undertaken and progress made. The approach to '**People and Place**' is through an 'action learning set approach' which has been a key tool used to deliver the council's improvement programme over the last three years. A key risk to delivery of business as usual next year is the capacity of the organisation to deliver. The council is faced with depleting human resources and account will be taken as to the ability of the council to deliver by regularly reviewing the strategic planning documents.

4.5 Other Services

The Transition Plan and the '**People and Place**' priority have implications to all services delivered by the council.

4.6 Diversity

There are no specific diversity issues in respect of the Transition Plan. The Plan does not replace the Equality Plan which will continue to be implemented through the lifetime of the council. In terms of developing In the '**People and Place**' Delivery Plan, action learning set leads are having regard to ensuring the projects are fully inclusive and projects regarding engagement with otherwise excluded groups and social cohesion are included within the delivery plan proposals.

4.7 Risk

There are clear risks to the organisation in failing to continue to maintain and improve on its progress in its remaining year. The council remains committed to improving its services although it faces difficult capacity challenges through the transition period. The council will be undertaking a strategic risk assessment once the delivery plans in relation to '**People and Place**' have been developed. A key risk to delivery of business as usual next year is the capacity of the organisation to deliver. The council is faced with depleting human resources and account will be taken as to the ability of the council to deliver by regularly reviewing the strategic planning documents. The timelining and cross cutting work currently being undertaken is intended to help evaluate the councils ability to deliver on its '**People and Place**' priority while continuing to deliver improving services to communities within the District.

4.8 Crime and Disorder

It is not felt there are any specific implications of the report on Crime and Disorder. Actions agreed through the delivery of the '**People and Place**' priority include proposals to positively address crime and disorder issues.

4.9 Data Quality

Every care has been taken in the development of this report to ensure that the information and data used in its preparation and the appendices attached are accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete. The council's Data Quality Policy has been complied with in producing this report.

4.10 Other Implications

The report does not relate to a key decision. It is considered that the information will be communicated to the community and stakeholders by inclusion on the web-site. The Transition Plan has already been made available to staff and Members through the intranet and a web site is being developed. The Transition Plan has been made available to the County Council. An Intranet site for 'People and Place' has been established and work has been undertaken to update the council's own website to communicate the new priority. Should Members adopt the delivery plan progress towards achieving the '**People and Place**' priority will be significantly promoted and communicated. A '**People and Place**' brand has been developed and this will be used to co-ordinate, communicate and celebrate achievements in the coming months. Appendix 1 includes achievements that need to be communicated and celebrated and work is ongoing with the Communications Team to ensure that this happens.

5. **Background, Position Statement and Options Appraisal**

5.1 As a result of Local Government Reorganisation Chester-le-Street will cease to exist as a council from April 2009. In order to set a framework as to how the council will conduct its business during this final year a 'Transition Plan' has been approved by the council in March 2008 The Transition Plan aims to:

- state the Council's aims, objectives and priorities during the transition period;
- build on the councils learning and continue its improvement programme;
- set out revised corporate activity and funding arrangements for transition period;
- clarify corporate transition programme management arrangements;
- identify how we will support and motivate and support staff through the process;
- set out the values and principles by which the Council will operate during transition; and

- agreed an approach to monitoring and reporting progress to the Executive on the '**People and Place**' Delivery Plan of which this report addressees
- agreed an approach to delivering the '**People and Place**' Personal Profile for all employees and launched the project .
- Commenced time lining and crosscutting work to re-evaluate the scale and practicality of delivering the '**People and Place**' Delivery Plan;
- Set up a resource centre and commenced a programme of weekly member engagement opportunities in early July.

5.5 In terms of the delivery of the '**People and Place**' priority the Action Learning Sets have been working with Executive Members to develop and implement Delivery Plans. This remains work in progress and the delivery plans are continuing to be developed. Progress to date in the four Action Learning Sets and key issues are as follows:

Partnerships for Futures

- Third Board meeting held September 2008 and agreed contributions from four organisations
- First round of interviews for Executive Director took place end of August 2008 and second round planned for 25 September 2008
- Terms of Reference for the Board agreed.
- Planning activity undertaken with consultant to implement Hanlon Skills Register
- Funding bid being developed for single programme funds for delivery of post employment support in the district

Investment in the Town Centre

- The programme of events had mixed results, mainly due to the weather.
- A number of events in August and September were adversely affected by the torrential rain, however, the Beat Faster Festival on the 16 August was a great success
- Plans for October include an honest food festival on 18th and multi cultural celebration on 25th
- A report on the development of the Business Improvement District has been produced for Executive on 6 October 2008
- Arrangements made for Task and Finish Group to visit other markets as part of the Research on the Future of the Market project
- Banners were installed on 19 August and work is currently underway to obtain the retrospective planning permission required.
- Locator Boards maps are being designed and work is to begin on the planning application required.
- Further consideration to be given to obtaining a supplier for the footfall counters for the Front Street as previous estimates were not cost effective

- Further information awaited regarding requirements for inspection of light columns for the Christmas Tree lights

Strengthening Partnerships

- Collating and writing stories of local achievements taking place for the 'What Wonderful Women project' and preferred supplier has been appointed to undertake the filming
- Meetings held with relevant organisations to gain support for Youth Forum and meetings planned with 4 comprehensive schools
- Additional resource secured to support work of Youth Forums
- Scrutiny Task and Finish Group have visited other Town Councils
- Proposal accepted from Durham Sport to develop a business case for sports facilities at Sacriston
- Initial meeting for Strengthening Voluntary and Community rearranged for 18 September to agree a way forward
- Council donated ICT equipment to CVS
- A visit was undertaken to Choppingham Community centre, Northumberland to consider their kitchen franchise arrangements
- Websites to be completed for the WWW project, Sacriston and Pelton Fell Community Centres and PC's for Grange Villa to be finalised.

Neighbourhoods

- All projects on target
- Schools hosting the main workshop activities for Local Democracy Week are now fully committed and workshop details are being finalised
- A draft DIY Neighbourhoods toolkit booklet has been developed and is being reviewed
- All Parish Councils have now been contacted regarding the Chester in Bloom project and the response has been positive - specific areas for improvements are now being arranged
- All work with regard to the 'Respect & Anti-Social Behaviour' project is on target
- Successes to celebrate include the launch of Open your Eyes campaign and Chester in Bloom.

5.6 A significant amount has already been achieved in setting up the Action Learning Sets, developing and rationalising the delivery projects and implementing the projects agreed. The delivery plans are living documents and built to cope with change. A couple of actions were behind schedule including the meeting with voluntary and community sector and completion of websites but overall, good progress is being made. An additional resource has been secured to support the work of the Youth Forum and joint working with Derwentside District Council is also proposed as part of this project.

5.7 Successes to celebrate include the acceptance of the proposal to develop a business case for sports facilities at Sacriston, completion of visits to Town Councils, the launch of 'Open Your eyes' campaign, Chester in Bloom and events in the Civic Heart.

6. **Recommendations**

6.1 Members are recommended to:

- 1) Note the progress to date on implementing the Transition Plan;
- 2) Note the progress made in respect of individual progress and comment on the issues raised

7. **Background Papers/Documents referred to**

7.1 Transition Plan March 2004

7.2 Corporate Plan 2007/2010 – June 2007

7.3 Budget reports to Council dated 28th February 2008

7.4 Report to Executive 12th May 2008

7.5 '*People and Place*' Action Learning Set Monthly monitoring reports

Ian Forster
Director of Corporate Services
19 September 2008
Version 1.0

Ian Forster Tel 0191 3872130 e mail ianforster@chester-le-street.gov.uk



'People and Place' Action Learning Set Monthly Monitoring Report

ALS Ref	Action Learning Set 1
'People and Place' Theme	Partnerships for Futures
Milestone and outcome achievement	<p>Third board meeting took place early September, agreed cash/in-kind contributions from: Durham County Cricket Club Hermitage School Ambic Manufacturing New College Durham</p> <p>First round of interviews for Executive Director took place end of August, and second round planned for 25th September. Terms of reference for the board agreed. Planning activity undertaken with consultant to implement Hanlon Skills Register for the project. Funding-bid being developed to submit to Tyne and Wear Employment Consortium for single programme funds for post-employment support to be delivered in the district. Partnerships for Futures is proposed lead-commissioning partner with delivery undertaken by Groundwork West Durham & Darlington, CLS CVS & VB, Skill Training and Wise Group.</p>
Actions behind target and remedial measures proposed	Specific sub-project activity, such as Beamish Customer Care training on hold until Executive Director comes into post.
Issues to be resolved and who by	
Successes to communicate and celebrate	<p>Both public and private sector support has been gained for the project, with the following organisations agreeing to sit on the board to guide and provide strategic oversight to Partnerships for Futures. Board members consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beamish Museum • Durham County Cricket Club • Enterprise Agency • Hermitage School • New College Durham • Ambic Ltd • Chester-le-Street District Council <p>The initial establishment of the project could be promoted internally though team talk/intranet. Once further development work has taken place and a clear framework is in place for delivery of Partnerships for Futures it can be promoted externally.</p>
Comments	



'People and Place' Action Learning Set Monthly Monitoring Report

ALS Ref	Action Learning Set 2
'People and Place' Theme	Investment in Town Centre
Milestone and outcome achievement	<p>The programme of events for the town centre in August had good and bad results - entirely to do with the weather. The Association of Town Centre Manager's Monthly Springboard High Street Index (a commentary on footfall data collected from a variety of high streets across the UK) argues that "official figures show that August was the least summery since records began in 1929, with just 106 hours of sunshine - a third less than the average for the month. This is a huge contrast to the weather in August last year, which was both sunny for three weeks out of four and had the lowest amount of rainfall since 2003.</p> <p>It therefore should be no surprise that footfall in our high streets in August was 8.5% lower than in August 2007 and, despite it being the school holiday period, just 0.5% higher than in July.</p> <p>Indeed, during the six-week school holiday period from 21st July until 31st August, footfall was 7.6% lower than for the same six-week period last year.</p> <p>Three events took place in the civic heart in August an ice rink came to the town on the 9th and 10th and on the 23rd and 24th. Unfortunately these were all affected by torrential rain. Nevertheless about 500 children and their parents used the rink on the first weekend and a 750 turned up on the last weekend. The Beat Faster Festival on 16th August, in stark contrast, was a great success. Over 500 people came to the civic heart and enjoyed the entertainment that the Council provided. Chester-le-Street's Business Association wrote to the Leader expressing their thanks for the event and the Market Traders told me that their takings had increased considerably. Market takings also increased slightly in August when compared to last year. In August 2007 the income from rents was £43044 and this year's takings were £47669 an increase of 11% or £4625.</p>

Milestone and outcome achievement	<p>The rain also affected the International Market that I brought to the Civic Heart on 4th, 5th and 6th September. Food such as cheeses, olives, dried fruits and nuts, biscuits and cakes as well as artefacts from Indonesia and Thailand were offered. Thursday's market went well with a steady stream of shoppers, (including staff from the civic centre) spending. However the heavens opened on the Friday and the market had to be closed because of a severe weather warning. The organiser decided to cut his losses and moved on.</p> <p>Plans for October include an honest food festival on 18th and a multi cultural celebration focused on Divali on the 25th.</p>
	<p>Work to develop a Business Improvement District has not moved on I am still waiting for the following assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direction about the terms of reference and purpose of the group in relation to the master plan. • The use of capital monies to assist in this piece of work • The provision of administration assistance to help in the organisation and development of essential data etc. <p>A report on the development of a BID has been produced for the Executive to consider at their meeting on 6th October.</p>
	<p>Work to Research the Future of the Market. This research is going well and arrangements have been made for the for the Task and Finish Scrutiny group to visit markets in Darlington, Stanley, Blyth and South Shields. Some very interesting questions are being raised during the process.</p>
	<p>Work on dressing the town with banners The banners were installed on 19th August. However I was later informed that a retrospective planning application was required because the banners fall within the advertising regulations. I am working with the planning team to expedite this.</p>
	<p>The locator board maps are being designed and I now need to make a planning application to install the plinths and map cases.</p>
	<p>Work to extend canopies and provide better sheeting for market stalls will continue when the Market Supervisor returns from sick leave.</p>
	<p>A supplier of footfall counters for the front street has been identified and a proposal has been received. This will provide data for five years. I am still waiting for confirmation that capital funds can be used to complete this work. The estimates that have been received far outweigh the effectiveness of the product to produce cost effective footfall counting. So it's back to the drawing board.</p>

Milestone and outcome achievement	<p>A meeting has taken place with Lumalite to supply some new lights for the Xmas tree and they will supply an estimate. Unfortunately Durham County Council recently changed the rules pertaining to the inspection of light columns prior to the fixing of structures to them. This may add a further £2000 to the total bill for the Christmas lights. I am waiting for more information about this issue.</p> <p>The project to use coloured paving slabs or adhesive signs leading from Riverside to the town centre is on hold pending some estimates - I need to test the viability of these.</p>
Actions behind target and remedial measures proposed	All projects seem to be progressing well but I would appreciate some assistance to develop the BID.
Issues to be resolved and who by	
Successes to communicate and celebrate	The success of the events that have been provided in the civic heart.
Comments	



'People and Place' Action Learning Set Monthly Monitoring Report

ALS Ref	Action Learning Set 3
'People and Place' Theme	Strengthening Partnerships
Milestone and outcome achievement	<p>What Wonderful Women's Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project moving to challenging stage of collating and writing stories of local women's achievements. - Donation of £500 to Chester-le-Street Heritage Group made in recognition of their assistance collating information on 'Wonderful Women' of Chester-le-Street. - Preferred supplier appointed to film and provided DVD archives. - Website for 'What Wonderful Women' being built.
	<p>Youth Forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planned meetings with 4 local comprehensive schools and head teachers. - Met with Connexions, Police, Youth Centre to get support for the planned Youth Forums. - Letters planned to go out over the next few weeks to get nominations for young people to be part of the forum. Letters to be sent to local schools and youth groups. - Additional resource secured to start in week 22nd September to support the work of the Youth Forums. - Joint working with Derwentside DC to make use of additional capacity to assist with project. -
	<p>Potential for a Town Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Task and Finish groups have visited other areas of County Durham to gather information and knowledge from existing or planned Town Councils; Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee, Durham City and Stanley. - Task and finish group plan to consider the information gathered from other Town Council projects and agree a way forward. -
	<p>Sports and Activity Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A proposal from Durham Sport has been accepted to develop a strategic business case for a Phase II development for sports facilities at Sacriston This would deliver a report that would identify what sporting facilities s would be feasible, what could be achieved and sustained and likely sources of funding.

Milestone and outcome achievement	<p>Strengthening the Voluntary/Community Sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First meeting of 21st August cancelled and re-organised for 18th September. - Further work needed to agree a mechanism to capture information about community/voluntary groups throughout district; who they are, what they do, what strengths are. - Further plans needed to identify how those services can be marketed, and how groups can take advantage of future opportunities. - Donation of ICT equipment from the council to the CVS.
	<p>Community Cohesion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploring extending Cestria Credit Union to villages. - Considering food co-operative to make use of allotments in Stella Gill to provide food for community centres. - Investigating a kitchen franchise for kitchens at community centres. Visit taken place on 16th September to look at similar arrangements at Choppingham Miners Community Centre. - ICT equipment now in place at Sacriston - Identified potential solutions to allow different community centres to view and book each others resources and facilities via the Internet. - Websites for Sacriston Community Centre and Pelton Fell in progress.
Actions behind target and remedial measures proposed	<p>Provision of PC's for Grange Villa to be finalised - Graeme Clark</p> <p>Meet with partners within the Strengthening Community/Voluntary Sector - Roy Templeman</p> <p>Websites need completion for What Wonderful Womens, Sacriston and Pelton Fell. – Graeme Clark, Alan Mckay and Julie Underwood.</p>
Issues to be resolved and who by	
Successes to communicate and celebrate	<p>Proposal to develop strategic business case approved for sporting facilities at Sacriston.</p> <p>Visits to other Town Council projects completed.</p> <p>ICT equipment in place at Sacriston Community Centre and CVS.</p>
Comments	Overall good progress being made.



'People and Place' Action Learning Set Monthly Monitoring Report

ALS Ref	Action Learning Set 4
'People and Place' Theme	Neighbourhoods
Milestone and outcome achievement	Local Democracy Week - Schools which will host the main workshop activities are now fully committed to the project and staff are now finalizing the workshop details with the contractors.
	DIY Neighbourhoods Toolkit - A draft toolkit booklet has been developed and is being reviewed.
	Chester in Bloom – All Parish Councils have now been contacted and the response has been positive. Specific areas for improvements are now being arranged with appropriate staff and Parish representatives
	Respect & Anti Social Behavior – All work under this project is on target and being developed as per the original action plan
Actions behind target and remedial measures proposed	There are no actions behind schedule and all projects are now live.
Issues to be resolved and who by	-
Successes to communicate and celebrate	Launch of Open your Eyes campaign (pr already started) Chester in Bloom (pr to be started)
Comments	The project team is continuing to work towards the final outputs of their Neighbourhood projects. All of the projects will acknowledge and fulfill the Young People and Place Initiative and ensure that where possible young people have the widest opportunity to participate.



Chester-le-Street
District Council

Report to:	Executive
Date of Meeting:	6 October 2008
Report from:	Town Centre Development Manager
Title of Report:	Developing a Business Improvement District for Chester-le-Street Town Centre
Agenda Item Number:	8

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report recommends that Chester-le-Street District Council should take positive steps to work with businesses in its town centre and develop a Business Improvement District (BID) to enhance the town's commercial viability. It discusses the policy background; what benefit the partners and our communities would obtain and outlines the steps needed to develop a BID.

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 The proposal to develop a BID for Chester-le-Street has been discussed informally with members of the Business Association, who are in favour in principle and agree that the town centre is ripe for improvement. A more formal meeting was held with representatives of the Business Association and other business people on 23 June 2008. The meeting endorsed the proposal to develop a BID.

Those who attended the meeting are passionate about the town and have invested their own money to improve the business environment. They are keen to develop new projects. A BID prevents freeloading; all the businesses in the BID area gain from the levy, which is a major selling point.

3. Transition Plan and People and Place Priority

- 3.1 The development of a BID is a priority for the 'Investment in the Town Centre' aspect of the People and Place single priority.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Implications and Value for Money Statement

There are around 450 hereditaments in the town centre footprint yielding £3,650,000 in non-domestic rates; if a 1.5% levy was agreed in a vote this could raise around £55000 per year for the BID.¹

4.2 Local Government Reorganisation Issues

The Council has an important role in developing a BID. It is vital that the BID has its support and necessary that a strong partnership is forged between it and the business community at an early stage. Officers from Durham County Council's economic Development Department and the Durham Economic Partnership have been consulted and have no objection to the development of a BID but are unable to assist financially.

4.3 Legal

Local Authorities play an important facilitating role and in particular are charged with legal responsibilities, including the provision of the ratings data to calculate the BID levy; the collection and enforcement of the BID levy via a ring-fenced BID Revenue Account, which is then passed to the BID company; the organisation of the formal BID ballot, and the preparation and commitment to an audit of services.

4.4 Personnel

The Town Centre Development Manager will require part time assistance to conduct the necessary consultation and business case development processes on the run up to a vote on the BID proposals.

4.5 Other Services

Departments delivering services to businesses and residents in the town centre wards will be required to provide accurate details of service levels and costs. This will include all our public sector partners.

4.6 Diversity

The BID consultation process will be open to all who are within the BID footprint area; this will include resident's associations and the voluntary sector.

4.7 Risk

Appendix 1 to this report outlines the pros and cons of developing a BID.

¹ These are indicative figures, which will need to be verified.

4.8 Crime and Disorder

A BID Business Plan could include provision for extra Crime and Disorder preventative measures that will improve the perception of safety in the town. Discussions have taken place with the Officer in Charge of policing the town centre who also supports the development of a BID.

4.9 Data Quality

Every care has been taken in the development of this report to ensure that the information and data used in its preparation and the appendices attached are accurate, timely, consistent and comprehensive. The council's Data Quality Policy has been complied with in producing this report.

4.10 Other Implications

A private sector lead Town Centre BID Steering Group will need to be established in order to champion the BID process and to develop the Business Plan upon which non-domestic ratepayers will vote. The meeting that took place with business people on 23 June agreed to develop such a steering group; however the relationship between the private sector, Chester-le-Street District Council and the new Unitary Authority has to be determined.

5. Background to Developing a Business Improvement District

5.1 BIDs are a proven means of enhancing the business environment; over 60 have been established across England and Wales since the enabling legislation was passed ².

5.2 A company, partnership or group manages a BID, which may be established by the business community, local authority or others. The BID will invest in specific projects and additional services over and above those already provided by a local authority and other public bodies. These bodies will enter into formal baseline service agreements with the BID organisation. The BID organisation, in consultation with businesses in the area, decides what its priorities are and produces a business plan.

5.3 The revenue collected provides a flexible funding mechanism to improve and manage the commercial area. Funding is based on the principle of an additional levy on all defined non-domestic ratepayers following a simple majority vote. ³

5.4 A dual test applies to the votes cast:

² Part four of the Local Government Act 2003, (2003 C.26)

³ Funding is not likely to be reliant only on the BID levy. Other sources could be a significant – from voluntary contributions, sponsorships, grants or similar leverage.

1. A simple majority of those voting.
 2. Those voting in favour must represent a majority by rateable value of the hereditaments (rateable properties).
- 5.5 The levy proposed in the BID business plan becomes mandatory on all defined ratepayers and is treated in the same way as the Business Rate, becoming a statutory debt.
- 5.6 The business plan should specify how the levy would be paid and calculated but there are provisions within the legislation and regulations for smaller companies to contribute less.
- 5.7 The Council collects the additional levy in the same way as non-domestic rates but the revenue is held in a ring-fenced BID account. The BID runs for a defined period but it needs to be reviewed or renewed after five years, which will be the subject of another vote.
- 5.8 In order to establish a successful vote the BID will rely on a certain amount of up-front funding to get it off the ground.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 That Executive agrees to the development of a Business Improvement District for Chester-le-Street Town Centre.
- 6.2 That Executive agrees to use People and Place Capital funds to employ a part time assistant⁴ for the Town Centre Development Manager and to develop the BID.

7. Background Papers/ Documents referred to

- 7.1 Part four of the Local Government Act 2003, (2003 C.26)
- 7.2 Appendix 1 (BIDs in Brief)

AUTHOR NAME
DESIGNATION
DATE OF REPORT
VERSION NUMBER

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TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

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⁴ The process of writing a person specification job description and evaluation is being undertaken. Approximatley £15000 is set aside for consultation and marketing the BID.

Appendix 1

BIDS IN BRIEF

Business Improvement District allow businesses in the defined area and / or business sector(s) to vote on which additional services they want to invest in, to improve their trading environment

The vote is open if a simple majority, both by number and by rateable value, approve the proposal, all non-domestic ratepayers will contribute through their business rates

BIDs give local businesses the power to effect changes that will benefit them in their local community. Improvements may include extra safety/security, cleansing and environmental measures, improved promotion of the area, improved events, and greater advocacy on key issues, but the legislation does not put a limit on what products or services are provided

Businesses have the opportunity to agree on the projects for which they are contributing and to vote in a ballot on the amount of money they are prepared to raise, enabling them to become involved in the administration of the schemes themselves

BIDs are operated by not-for-profit partnership organisations

Businesses must be able to sustain the additional cost - if they are not viable the BID levy will not be sufficient to raise enough income to make it a worthwhile venture

Once voted for, the levy becomes mandatory on all defined ratepayers and is treated as a statutory debt

The plan has a lifespan of up to 5 years and further proposals will have to be reaffirmed through a vote

Who Gains and How?

The Community

- Can produce economic well being and economic growth in the area
- Attracts inward investment
- Gives competitive regional advantage
- Produces social well being / improves quality of life
- Develops partnership between private & public sector
- Encourages corporate social responsibility

- Provides sustainable investment for ongoing capital projects/services
- Creates a positive sense of place and enhanced feeling of safety and well being - provides community pride.

Businesses

- Increases footfall
- Increases consumer spend and sales - can lead to increase in profits
- Reduces costs (crime reduction, joint activities, e.g. promotions/marketing)
- Is flexible to address the issues of individual sectors
- Gives businesses a local voice
- Creates more appealing environment for employees
- Fair to smaller businesses
- Fair system, those that invest, benefit - no freeloading
- Can decide and vote for action before making the investment
- Can control process, monitor results and terminate it easily – flexible.

Local Authorities

- Harnesses private sector management/organisational drive and skills
- Promotes greater understanding of the role of LAs
- Provides new, sustainable investment and doesn't detract from other resources
- Has commercial support.

The Landlord

- Assists capital value growth
- Increases rental values of property and area
- Increases an area's desirability and attracts occupiers
- Increase in trade which affects turnover based rents (some retail)
- Could help properties away from main footfall areas
- Good PR for company locally and regionally
- Forges positive links with council

Establishing a BID

Preparing for, consulting upon and marketing the concept is essential; therefore a clear and effective strategy should be developed at the start of the process, which could take up to 18 months. The focus of any consultation or marketing strategy should be on delivering a return on investment, rather than simply increasing the costs of running a business. It will also need to recognise that a business person – whether owner or occupier – will not vote in favour of the BID unless it is self-evidently in their interests to do so.

There are a number of audiences to convince:

Businesses:

- Any new services they pay for have added value to them.
- Businesses must see the levy as an investment rather than an unnecessary burden. For example, through increased footfall as public confidence improves; higher asset values as the area's competitiveness increases: lower costs as crime falls, security improves - &
- That objectives can be delivered through a BID – this could involve other stakeholders in the equation e.g. owners and landlords.

The Authority:

- The BID will benefit the wider community – through increased employment etc.
- The BID has wide business support
- The beneficial outcomes will improve its popularity

Owners:

- BID objectives will be beneficial to the area – hence they may be more likely to invest in the area.
- They can convince their tenants that the BID levy and resulting improvements will not lead to offsetting by increased rents.

Voluntary and Community Sectors:

- They have a stake in the BID and its objectives will benefit their constituents
- The community can be involved in the development of strategies helping to harness civic pride through a shared vision.

Practical Steps To Set Up The Bid

What's Feasible?

1. Define the area carefully to provide focus
2. Develop/identify projects with equal care with all stakeholders
3. Define baseline services that the Authority and other public bodies provide in the area
4. Assess the costs - rateable value information will enable potential yields and therefore the feasibility of costing the schemes prioritised
5. Allow a notional 12 to 18 month period from forming the partnership to the ballot result

Forming a Board

The BID Board will develop the proposal and business plan explaining how the BID will be implemented. Its member's most important work will be to draw up and sell the proposal and the business plan, which should cover:

- Baseline agreement – what the BID entails and what the partner's commitments will be.
- The benefits to the stakeholders clarified
- Risk assessment – covering aspects such as contingencies to deal with funding gaps, delivery failure, loss of key personnel or other externalities
- Liability
- Other identified contributions
- Budget and funds likely to accrue
- Voting procedure and publicity for the vote
- The BID's aims, objectives, timescales, outcomes and KPIs

Administration and Management

Management of the BID is the key to its success. The Board that was set up prior to the vote may not be appropriate afterwards. Members may need different skills and techniques to implement the business plan. But the skills and qualities of the BID manager are crucial. The legal status of the Board has also to be considered; it may be appropriate to make the BID a company limited by guarantee and its roles could include:

- Acting as a focal point for those involved in the BID area
- Supporting stakeholders and seeking new investors
- Developing areas for projects and coordinate and oversee them
- Monitor budgets etc.

To maintain the mandate the Board must be able to show the benefits of the BID over time, meeting targets, outcomes etc. Mechanisms for measuring change and evaluation are required and KPIs should be established to determine change over the period of the BID.

As the BID develops new issues will arise:

- The range and nature of business change – the BID will need continuous marketing
- The focus and/or boundary may need to change
- The relationship between the BID and the Council may evolve – (who provides what services?)

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Agenda Item 14

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