

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, 6 October 2008 at 3.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor L Ebbatson (Leader of the Council)

Councillor L Armstrong, (Portfolio Holder for Resources and Value for Money)
Councillor M Sekowski, (Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and Partnerships)

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

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

Officers: R Templeman (Chief Executive), T Galloway (Director of Development Services), N Tzamaras (Assistant Director of Development Services), J Elder (Acting Head of Resources), S High (Leisure Services Manager), R McMullen (Town Centre Development Manager), L Howley (Chief Environmental Health Officer), A Stephenson (Executive Assistant) and D Humble (Democratic Services Assistant)

41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

42. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 1ST SEPTEMBER 2008

RESOLVED: "That the minutes of the meeting held 1 September 2008, copies of which had previously been circulated to Members, be agreed as a correct record."

The Leader proceeded to sign the minutes.

43. PUBLIC SPEAKING

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

44. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sekowski declared his interest in Item No. 13 of the Agenda in his capacity as a member of Pelton Community Management Association.

45. FORWARD PLAN AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Leader introduced the Forward Plan and Work Programme.

The Chief Executive gave an update in relation to the Hanlon Tracking System that had been considered and supported by the Partnerships for Futures Board. It was agreed that an update on this be given at the next Meeting and the decision date on the work programme be amended to November.

It was noted that following the request of the Chief Executive, the Land Matters report on the work programme, which was listed as Item No. 15 on the Agenda would be withdrawn from consideration at this meeting.

It was agreed that the employee survey results be deleted from the Work Programme and an update on this item be included on the Decision Tracker. Councillor Westrip suggested that these results could form part of the handing over the baton report.

The Director of Development Services advised that Item 13 on the Agenda on Pelton Community Project was a late item and therefore had not been included on the Forward Plan.

It was agreed that the Climate Change Strategy be considered at the next Meeting and the decision date on the work programme be amended to November.

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

46. EXECUTIVE DECISION TRACKER

Consideration was given to the Decision Tracker. The Chief Executive gave a verbal update in relation to the Heart of the Village, Pelton Fell and advised of discussions with the local community on the community centre. Through the tendering process there was now a manageable deliverable project within budget and announcements would be made soon on how this would progress.

The Chief Executive also gave an update on the Community Resource Centre at Sacriston and advised that a formal opening of this Centre was due to be held on Saturday. The Leader suggested that the Portfolio Holder Councillor S Westrip should be included in the list of invites.

It was agreed that the Corporate Training and Development Plan be deferred for consideration until the next meeting and the Decision Tracker be amended accordingly.

RESOLVED: "That the Decision Tracker and the suggested amendments be noted."

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

The Chief Executive gave an update on the progress made on the People and Place Delivery Plan and advised that all the projects were now well underway. He advised that although there was no material slippage there was a need to watch capacity issues.

In relation to Partnerships for Future he advised that the appointment process had been unsuccessful and the positions would be re-advertised.

The Leader suggested that a report be produced in November on the resources of the Action Learning Sets.

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.”

48. DEVELOPING A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT FOR CHESTER-LE-STREET TOWN CENTRE

The Town Centre Development Manager gave a background to the report and explained the development of a Business Improvement District including forming a BID, the consultation process and the administration and management of the BID.

In response to queries from Members, the Town Centre Development Manager advised that the voting process would iron out inequalities with regards to rateable values and explained that the funding of the BID was part of the application for the investment into the Town Centre through the Action Learning Set money that had been set aside for marketing and developing the BID.

It was agreed that a Meeting be arranged with the Leader, Chief Executive and the Town Centre Manager to discuss promoting and protecting the initiative. The Chief Executive suggested that this matter also be flagged up through the finance workstream.

RESOLVED:

- “1 That the development of a Business Improvement District for Chester-le-Street Town Centre be agreed.
- 2 That it be agreed to use People and Place Capital funds to employ a part time assistant for the Town Centre Development Manager and to develop the BID.”

49. NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF PETITION REGARDING DISABLED PARKING IN CHESTER-LE-STREET

The Leader advised that this item was to consider the notice of receipt of a petition regarding disabled parking in Chester-le-Street. All Members of the Executive were in receipt of copies of this petition and the covering correspondence, which had been submitted anonymously.

The Leader advised of consultation that had been undertaken with groups involved with the disabled when parking charges were introduced who had commented that they would rather pay for a parking space and find that sufficient spaces were provided for people with disabilities than find that they could not park where they needed to. It was noted that the Council regularly consulted business and community groups including people with disabilities and the elderly in the run up to budget setting in March.

The Chief Executive explained the legal position in respect of the budgetary implications for the new authority. He advised that this Authority was not in a position to make decisions in relation to car parking charges which would be a legal responsibility of the new authority. Durham County Council would be responsible for the parking charges throughout County Durham in the successive years' budgets. This District Council cannot amend the payment regime at this time.

RESOLVED: "That the petitioners be notified of the comments expressed by the Executive and be advised of whom they should contact in the new unitary authority."

50. 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."

51. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

The Chief Environmental Health Officer gave a background to the report on Disabled Facilities Grant and outlined the history of the case, the options in dealing with this referral and his suggested recommendations.

The Executive discussed this case and sought clarification on a number of issues, which were clarified by the Chief Environmental Health Officer. Particular clarification was given in relation to the funding of this referral.

The Chief Executive suggested that we pursue compensatory payment from Durham County on the different Occupational advice and also seek compensation for the poor management of the previous project.

The Director of Development Services clarified the situation in relation to the compensation claims and the separate action taken by the applicant against the Home Improvement Agency.

The Leader sought clarification in relation to the tenure of the contractors and suggested that this be looked into.

RESOLVED:

- 1 That the Council approve in principal the sum of £13,000 to be made available from the Council's approved Capital Programme.
- 2 The release of such funds is subject to sufficient Capital funds being available within the existing programme or the identification of a suitable scheme of lower priority being released and hence the funds being made available to support the £13,000 investment and that such a decision be made only after consultation with the Chair of the Capital Working Group so that the associated priorities could be understood before such funding could be made available.
- 3 That the Council pursues the recovery of any additional capital funding from Durham County Council as a result of the different Occupational Therapist advice and the recovery of compensatory costs associated with the management of the previous scheme."

Prior to consideration of this item, Councillor M Sekowski declared his interest and left the Meeting.

52. PELTON FELL COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Acting Leisure Services Manager gave a background on a request received from Pelton Community Association to support them in a bid to the 'People's Millions fund as part of the Big Lottery by way of agreeing a deed of dedication for the development of a Community garden adjacent to the Community Centre.

Councillor Westrip advised of his concerns in relation to the potential health and safety aspects including the access through the scheme. The Acting Leisure Services Manager advised that the scheme would still require planning permission and any considerations about car parking access would be dealt with at that time.

It was noted that since the report and recommendations had been drafted approval had now been obtained from Durham County Council on the scheme.

RESOLVED: "That a deed of dedication, for a minimum of 5 years in respect of the area of land proposed for the community garden be approved on the condition that Durham County Council confirms their agreement."

53. WRITE OFF OF IRRECOVERABLE DEBTS

The Acting Head of Resources spoke in relation to the report on the write-off of Irrecoverable debts.

RESOLVED: "That authorisation be granted to write-off the debts detailed in section 5.2 of the report."

54. LAND MATTERS

RESOLVED: "That this item be withdrawn for consideration at this meeting."

The meeting terminated at 4.25 pm