

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 November 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), C Potter (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), T Galloway (Director of Development Services), N Tzamaras (Assistant Director of Development Services), J Elder (Acting Head of Resources), J Lunn (Regeneration Programmes Manager), S Pearson (Personal Assistant) and D Humble (Democratic Services Assistant)

Also in attendance: Councillor A Turner, Linda Surtees (Sacriston Community Sports Trust), Michelle McCallum (Landscape Architect – Durham County Council).

The Leader introduced Linda Surtees from Sacriston Community Sports Trust and Michelle McCallum a Landcape Architect at Durham County Council who were present in relation to Item No. 12 on the Agenda Sacriston Heart of the Village Regeneration Scheme.

55. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

56. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 6 OCTOBER 2008

The Chief Executive referred to Minute number 51 of the Executive Meeting held on 6 October 2008 and updated Members on the Disabled Facilities Grant application that had been approved at the meeting of the Capital Programme Working Group.

RESOLVED: "That the minutes of the meeting held 6 October 2008, copies of which had previously been circulated to Members, be agreed as a correct record, subject to the title on Minute number 52 being amended to Pelton Community Centre."

The Leader proceeded to sign the minutes.

57. PUBLIC SPEAKING

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

58. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

59. FORWARD PLAN AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Leader introduced the Forward Plan and Work Programme. It was agreed that a briefing note be provided on the implementation of the Hanlon Tracking System for the Executive by the Chief Executive.

The Leader referred to page 16 of the Work Programme on the Review of People and Place Action Learning Sets Budget and suggested that this be considered as part of Item 7 on the Agenda.

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

60. EXECUTIVE DECISION TRACKER

Consideration was given to the Decision Tracker. The Chief Executive gave an update on the Heart of the Village, Pelton Fell and advised that confirmation had now been received from the Lottery fund in terms of the support for the community centre build. He also advised that a new contractor had been appointed who was working with the local community on incorporating public artwork into the community centre and the play areas.

He advised that this scheme was attracting ministerial attention and that the Minister was due to visit the site on 10 November 2008 to look at how the Lottery funding had been applied. This was one of the first grants to come from the community assets fund.

He outlined the timescale for completion of the scheme including the environmental works which are now due to be completed May/June 2009.

The Chief Executive also gave an update in relation to the budget position for 2009/10. Budget prioritisation was due to take place within the County Council. This Authority was seeking to ensure there were no problems on the handover to the County Council.

The Leader requested that the Portfolio Holders be briefed on the budget provision for the services that they are responsible for by the relevant Directors or Heads of Service.

The Leader suggested that Item 3 on the Decision Tracker on updates on the Community Resource Centre at Sacriston could be considered as part of Item No. 12 on the Agenda.

Councillor Westrip gave an update in relation to Item number 4 on the mental health awareness training and advised that the last evaluation went very well and that MIND were now moving into the final phase of the project. He suggested that this item be removed from the Decision Tracker and the information be incorporated into a final report.

It was agreed that Item number 5 should remain on the Decision Tracker.

The Leader referred to Item 6, which was included on the Decision Tracker following the Meeting last month (minute no. 49 refers) when consideration was given to a petition on disabled parking and car park charges. Unfortunately Officers were unable to find the principal petitioner to respond to and therefore it was felt that no further action could be taken on this item.

The Director of Development Services advised that a response to the issues raised had been drafted and Councillor Westrip suggested that this be posted onto the Council's website.

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

61. IMPLEMENTING THE TRANSITION PLAN: DEVELOPING 'PEOPLE AND PLACE'

At this point Councillor A Turner entered at 3.25pm and was welcomed to the Meeting by the Leader.

The Chief Executive gave an update on the progress made on the People and Place Delivery Plan. On Partnerships for Futures he advised that there had been success in obtaining funding through One North East, which would be discussed at the next Board Meeting. Unfortunately the recruitment process for the Executive Officer had been unsuccessful and was to be re-advertised with a more targeted approach.

In relation to investment in the Town Centre he referred to a number of projects that were ongoing, particular mention was made of the market events.

On Strengthening Partnership and Neighbourhoods he outlined activities that had taken place and were due to take place. He advised of capacity issues particularly in this area and suggested that a review be undertaken to look at which activities would deliver specific outcomes over the course of the year and those that would form part of the 'handing over the baton' process.

Councillor Westrip advised of a Local Democracy Speed Dating event held at Park View School that he had taken part in which had been a very successful event and he took the opportunity to thank the Officers who stepped to fill the gaps at short notice. After speaking to the pupils at this event he was pleased to note that work was being carried out at Park View School on raising the profile of Mental Health issues.

Councillor Westrip also spoke in relation to the Chester in Bloom project and suggested that advice be offered on the planting of the oak trees, which was a matter that had been raised within his Ward.

In response to a query from Councillor L Armstrong, the Director of Development Services confirmed that Resident Associations would be consulted in the next phase of consultation on the Chester in Bloom project.

The Chief Executive advised of an informal meeting that had been held with the Officers involved in the People and Place priorities Action Learning Sets who had indicated their expenditure requirements until 31st March 2009 including the potential underspend that could occur in the projects both on Capital and Revenue.

It was suggested that the Revenue funding be ringfenced for the purpose of revisiting any future priority needs. In terms of Capital Programme he advised that this surplus had been transferred to the General Fund (capital) pot to be considered by the Capital Programme Working Group

In light of the information provided on the budgetary position, the Leader requested that two additional recommendations be added as set out below.

RESOLVED:

- “1) That Members note the progress to date on implementing the Transition Plan;
- 2) That the progress made in respect of individual progress be noted.
- 3) That the Executive agrees to the transfer of the Capital residue from the Action Learning Set budget to the General Fund.
- 4) That the remaining Revenue funding be ring fenced and remain as it is until the Executive reviews that position.”

62. CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

The Leader spoke to the report and welcomed the Climate Change document. She advised of issues she would be raising with the Senior Sustainability Officer on the lack of inclusion of the business sector and raising awareness with them on reducing carbon omissions and increasing energy efficiency.

Councillor Sekowski referred to the issues on page 55 of the report on reducing energy consumption and highlighted the importance to keep raising awareness of these issues both within the home and at work. Councillor

Westrip who also supported this Strategy queried who would be provided with a copy of this Strategy.

The Chief Executive outlined a number of initiatives that the Senior Sustainability Officer was involved in and the influence he had on the County Wide Strategy. He also discussed the initiatives planned to target different people and organisations in the strategy including use of a DVD/CD. It was noted that this data would be used as part of the 'handing over the baton' report.

RESOLVED: "That the Executive approves the Climate Change Strategy for submission to Council."

63. 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 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972."

64. REGENERATION QUARTERLY REPORT

The Chief Executive gave a verbal update on the Regeneration projects including Pelton Fell Heart of the Village and Sacriston Heart of the Village. In relation to the Sacriston Heart of the Village he advised that discussions were scheduled to be held with the Developers to consider how the land assembly work was taking place and to look at a scheme for the surrounding area of Sacriston village, which he would report back on.

He referred to the Town Centre Masterplan Regeneration Scheme and advised that this would be presented to the Council Meeting in January to incorporate the formal adoption into the Local Development Framework process and Core Strategy, which was acknowledged as a priority area.

He advised of the progress being made on the Co-operative Building Development which was now well underway and that he would report back with further details following a meeting with the Developer's Agents.

He advised of an application that had been received through the planning process for the Development at Riverside, which was now at formal consultation stage prior to the formal submission of a planning application.

RESOLVED: "That the update on the Regeneration Quarterly Report be noted."

65. SACRISTON HEART OF THE VILLAGE REGENERATION SCHEME

The Regeneration Programmes Manager gave a brief presentation on Sacriston Heart of the Village and spoke on the following issues:

- Background to the Scheme
- Links to Corporate Plan and Priorities
- Community Consultation
- Funding
- The Design

Michelle McCallum the Landscape Architect from Durham County Council and Linda Surtees from Sacriston Community Sports Trust spoke in relation to the design of the scheme incorporating the clock feature, paving, landscaping features, tree planting, car parking and the community art project.

Discussion ensued on the timescales for delivery and funding of the scheme and the relocation of the War Memorial. The Leader requested that the traffic management of the scheme including road closures be looked at well in advance of the work commencing on the project.

In relation to the funding of the scheme, the Regeneration Programmes Manager confirmed that funding had been secured from CDENT and reassured members that the SHIP funding would not be lost if the scheme continued after the end of the financial year.

The Chief Executive advised that there was a need to ensure that proper authorisation from the County Treasurer was in place with regard to any financial implications arising from new contracts which were outside the agreed 'business as usual' procedure.

RESOLVED: "That the Executive approves the design of the scheme and the subsequent commissioning of the scheme subject to the business as usual decision being agreed between the County Council and the District Council."

The meeting terminated at 4.40 pm