

Meeting of the **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** of the Teesdale District
Council held at Teesdale House, Galgate, Barnard Castle on
MONDAY 7 APRIL 2008 AT 2.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor R Betton **CHAIR**

COUNCILLORS:

JH Fergus	JM Salter
GK Robinson	KW Stansfield
O Hedley	EM Walton

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor PM Charlton.

Also in attendance: Councillor DAR Forster
Mr D Kinch (co-opted member of Overview & Scrutiny
Committee)

Officers in Attendance:

P Wilding	Interim Deputy Chief Executive
R Bowles	Assistant Chief Executive
J Kellett	Chief Finance Officer
M Dennis	Chief Governance Officer (Monitoring Officer)
T Watson	Director of Regeneration
G Robinson	Democratic Services Officer

191 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman had not been notified of any items of urgent business.

192 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

193 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 10 March 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

194 IMPROVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Improvement and Performance meeting held on 11 March 2008 be received.

195 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT: STANTON GROVE GARAGE DEPOT

The Lead Member for Environment, Councillor O Hedley, presented an update on health and safety issues at Stainton Grove Street Care garage depot. Certain remedial works were required and an action plan is in place to accelerate progress in this area. The recycling ramp, in particular, requires attention and funds have been identified for repair work. It was noted that the former Safety Officer became involved after construction of the ramp had taken place.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received

196 FLYPOSTING REVIEW

The Interim Deputy Chief Executive presented the flyposting report undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Environment Panel. Members discussed the report and commended the Overview and Scrutiny members on its contents. Members raised some issues regarding the recommendations of the report and it was felt that more time was needed to discuss the issues; it was therefore agreed that it would be discussed at the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That consideration of this report be deferred to the next meeting of this Committee

197 FINANCIAL POSITION UPDATE

The Lead Member for Resources, Cllr GK Robinson, presented a report which updated members on the position of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 29 February 2008. The outturn position showed a projected underspend of £47,139 against the approved budget deficit of £34,766.

RESOLVED:

That the current position in respect of the Medium Term Financial Plan be noted.

198 AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT – USE OF RESOURCES

The Lead Member for Resources, Councillor GK Robinson, presented a report informing members that the Audit Commission had undertaken an assessment of the Council's Use of Resources for 2007 and determined an overall score of 2, which represented 'adequate' performance. The Council's score in 2006 was also 2, although the Council's performance was much stronger in the recent assessment than in the previous year. The Use of Resources assessment is undertaken annually by the Audit Commission to evaluate how well the Council is managing and using its resources. A detailed action plan is already in place to achieve level 3 in as many judgments as possible for the next assessment.

RESOLVED:

The Audit Commission report on Use of Resources be received.

199 AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT – DATA QUALITY

The Lead Member for Resources, Councillor GK Robinson, presented a report informing members that the Audit Commission had completed its review of the Council's Data Quality arrangements and determined that the overall management arrangements for ensuring data quality demonstrated an 'adequate' performance. The data quality review is undertaken annually by the Audit Commission to evaluate the accuracy of the performance indicators that are relied upon by the Audit Commission service assessments for Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

RESOLVED:

The Audit Commission report on Data Quality be received.

200 APPEARANCE OF OFFICERS IN LEGAL PROCEEDINGS IN RELATION TO COUNCIL TAX AND NON DOMESTIC RATES

The Lead Member for Resources, Councillor GK Robinson, presented a report requesting authority for the officers named in the report to attend Magistrates' Court to act on behalf of the Council. This was in accordance with Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1972 which provided that any member or officer of

a local authority who was so authorised should be entitled to defend, or to appear in, proceedings before a Magistrates' Court.

RESOLVED:

That the following officers be authorised to prosecute, defend or appear on behalf of the Council in proceedings before a Magistrates' Court, in order to collect and recover amounts of Council Tax or Non Domestic Rates:

Brenda Rowell (Revenues Manager)
Emma Raine (Revenues Officer)
Lynsey Wood (Revenues Officer)
Julie Dowson (Recovery Manager Wear Valley District Council)
Sharon Paley (Recovery Officer Wear valley District Council)
Anne Gristwood (Recovery Officer Wear Valley District Council)

201 TRANSFER OF ASSETS TO PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

The Lead Member for Resources, Councillor GK Robinson, presented a report proposing a policy for the possible transfer of some Council assets to Parish and Town Councils for a nil or nominal value. The issue had arisen in connection with the implementation of local government reorganisation in County Durham and consideration as to whether community assets might be beneficially transferred into local community ownership and control. It was considered important that ward members be informed if the local parish council express an interest in an asset. Any transfer would need to comply with the requirements of the new County Durham Council.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That a policy of transferring assets to parish and town councils at nil value be adopted.
- (2) That the policy framework for such transfers should be as set out in paragraph 5.2 of the report
- (3) That the procedure for dealing with requests for transfers be as set out in paragraph 5.4 of the report
- (4) That Transfers should be made without restrictive covenants, both parties should meet their own legal costs, and no dowry should be payable upon the transfer of any asset.

202 COMMITTEE TIMETABLE

The Leader of the Council, Councillor R Betton presented a proposed timetable of Council meetings for 2008/09.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee timetable be recommended to Council for approval.

203 LOCAL GOVERNEMENT REORGANISATION UPDATE

The Leader of the Council, Councillor R Betton, presented a report updating members on matters relating to the reorganisation of local government in County Durham. The Structural Change Order had come into effect on 26 February 2008: its principal provisions were summarised. Members were informed that no further action would now be taken with the legal challenge to local government reorganisation which had been dismissed by the Court of Appeal on 4 March. The Boundary Committee had been directed by the Electoral Commission to begin a review of electoral ward boundaries in County Durham in July 2008, to be completed in August 2009, prior to further elections to the new council being held in 2010. All eight local authorities in the County had agreed to stage strong opposition to this proposal.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received

204 'TEESDALE LISTENS'

The Leader of the Council, Councillor R Betton, provided members with a summary of Teesdale Listens visits to date and funding allocated, and considered a further application for funding at Stainton Grove for the phase 2 target hardening works following the recent visit to Streatlam and Whorlton ward. It was noted that further contributions had now been received, in the amount of £200 from the Teesdale Community Safety Partnership and £50 from Teesdale Housing Association thereby reducing the contribution requested from the Community Improvement Fund.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the progress of Teesdale Listens be noted
- (2) That a contribution of up to £800 from the Community Improvement Fund to fund phase 2 target hardening works at Stainton Grove be approved.

205 LSP THEMATIC GROUPS: LEAD MEMBER REPORTS

Lead Member reports on the progress of the activities being undertaken within each Teesdale Partnership thematic group were submitted. Councillor J Salter provided members with further information regarding the Lifelong Learning group and referred to the loss of Andy Leitch following his retirement as Learning Partnership Co-ordinator.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted

206 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the current Forward Plan.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan be noted

207 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

'That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, minute 208, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as detailed in paragraph 3 of part 1, Schedule 12A of the said Act.'

208 INTERIM DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Leader of the Council, Councillor R Betton presented a report detailing the agreement reached which provides for the continued engagement of the Interim Deputy Chief Executive during the period 1 June to 30 November 2008.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

The meeting closed at 2.35pm

CHAIRMAN