

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Consett on 12th March 2007 at 4.30 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor A. Watson (Chairman)

Councillors: C.D. Christer, J. Huntley, O. Johnson, D.G. Llewellyn, M.J. Malone and A. Taylor.

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors C. Bell and W. J. Tyrie.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor W. Armstrong.

129. REVIEW OF SCRUTINY BOARD DEBATE

A list of items discussed at Scrutiny Board were circulated, the Chair advised that the comments, if any, would be referred to as each agenda item was discussed. A copy of the note of the Scrutiny Board meeting held 9th March 2007 are attached for information (Appendix 'A').

130 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

131. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that subject to the following amendments the minutes of the meeting held 12th February 2007 be agreed.

- Minute Number 115: That the level of the Fixed Penalty Notice be adjusted to reflect the Government's maximum allowable which was £80.00.
- Minute Number 112. That in view of the importance of the item the text be adjusted to reflect a more verbatim style for the minute.

132. COUNCIL PERFORMANCE – REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Councillor Malone presented the report, the purpose of which was to inform Members of the performance of red, amber and green rated Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) for the third quarter of 2006 /07.

In addition a comparison with the 2005/06 outturn published figures from other authorities in our 'Nearest Neighbours Grouping' was included to give a more accurate measure of current performance against that of a set of comparable authorities.

He also highlighted that a special joint meeting of the Learning and Community Safety Scrutiny Panels was to be arranged to discuss BVPI's 12 (the number of days lost to absence) and 127a (violent crime per 1,000 population).

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 9th March 2007.

Options: Whether or not to refer any of the indicators that posed concern into the Action Planning and Scrutiny process.

RESOLVED:

1. That the information in the report regarding performance indicators be noted.
2. That a special joint meeting of the Learning and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel be arranged to discuss BVPI 12 (the number of days lost to absence) and 127a (violent crime per 1,000 population).

Reasons: To ensure that any slippages in performance can be noted and indicators which pose concern can be directed to the Action Planning and Scrutiny process.

133. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME FOR THE DERWENTSIDE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Councillor Johnson presented the report which sought approval for the Council's revised Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS identified the documents which were to be prepared for the District's new Local Development Framework (LDF) and the timetables for their preparation.

Derwentside's most recent LDS had been adopted in June 2006. However, slippage in the preparation of the North East Regional Spatial Strategy, the Derwentside Core Strategy and revised guidance on the preparation of LDS's from the Government had meant that the Derwentside LDS needed to be revised.

He asked that Members note that more recent information required a number of amendments to the LDS attached to this report before it was submitted to the Government Office. These were:-

- The deletion of the Green Corridor Masterplan as it had become clear that the document would actually be useful evidence for the LDF and not a Supplementary Planning Document, and
- Showing the Lanchester Locality Plan SPD, the two North Pennines AONB SPDs and the River Team SPD linking to the Development Control DPD rather than the Core Strategy.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 9th March 2007.

Options: Whether to agree, amend or reject the content of the revised Local Development Scheme.

RESOLVED: That provided the following amendments are included, the revised Local Development Scheme be approved:

- The deletion of the Green Corridor Masterplan as it had become clear that the document would actually be useful evidence for the LDF and not a Supplementary Planning Document, and
- Showing the Lanchester Locality Plan SPD, the two North Pennines AONB SPDs and the River Team SPD linking to the Development Control DPD rather than the Core Strategy.

Reason: The revised LDS has been designed to reflect the Council's available resources and fulfils the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 12, which guides the contents of Local Development Frameworks documents.

134. VEHICLE RENEWAL GENERAL SERVICES 2007 / 2008

Councillor Johnson presented the report which advised Members of the operational requirements for replacement of vehicles within the General Services Division for the financial year 2007 / 08. The report recommended the necessary replacement of vehicles in order to meet operational requirements and fulfil statutory duties.

The vehicles included the 7 mechanical sweepers referred to in the Street Cleaning Review report. These were necessary to deliver the service and contribute to the improvement plan which is in place. It was noted that the current vehicles were subject to operating lease agreements which were due to expire.

In addition, the Highways section needs to replace 2 winter maintenance vehicles. The associated costs would be passed on to the County Council.

A full evaluation had been carried out to determine the need for the vehicles. After trials, and after consultation with the users, the most suitable make was to be procured. This would provide the Council with a modern fleet of Street Cleaning and Winter Maintenance vehicles fit for purpose.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 9th March 2007.

Options: Whether to agree, reject or amend the proposals for replacement of vehicles within the General Services Division.

RESOLVED:

1. That the recommendations as detailed in the report be approved.
2. That the funding of the vehicles be subject to an options appraisal as detailed in the report.

Reasons:

1. To provide the Council with a modern fleet of Street Cleansing / Winter Maintenance vehicles, which would have the least environmental impact for those reasonably obtainable, whilst providing the flexibility needed to address future environmental issues.
2. The Winter Maintenance vehicles would provide a safer working environment through the introduction of additional four wheel drives and the additional salt management system to ensure the good site control of winter maintenance operations.

135. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REPORT 2007 / 08

Councillor Huntley presented the report which outlined the Council's prudential indicators for 2007/08 – 2009/10 and set out the expected treasury operations for this period. This fulfilled three key reports required by the Local Government Act 2003 as follows:-

- (1) The reporting of the prudential indicators as required by the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities;
- (2) The treasury strategy in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management; and
- (3) The investment strategy (in accordance with the DCLG investment guidance).

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 9th March 2007.

Options: Whether to agree, amend or reject the options in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2007/08 to 2009/10 as detailed in the report be adopted.
2. That the Treasury Management Strategy 2007/08 and the Treasury Prudential Indicators as detailed in the report be approved.
3. That the Investment Strategy 2007/08 contained in the Treasury Management Strategy and the detailed criteria included in Appendix A be approved.

Reason: In the interests of good financial management.

136. 'ARTS AT THE STRATEGIC CENTRE' SELF ASSESSMENT

Councillor Taylor presented the report which set out the process and outcomes of the 'Arts At The Strategic Centre' Self-Assessment which had taken place between September 2006 and February 2007. The Executive were asked to agree a number of recommendations which had come out of the consultation and self-assessment processes to enable officers (including those staff transferred into Derwentside Trust For Sport and the Arts) could work with partners to produce and implement an agreed Improvement Action Plan for the arts service.

The report gave details on:

- Strategic Context
- A@SC Self-Assessment Methodology
- A@SC Self-Assessment Process in Derwentside
- Results and Outcomes of the Self-Assessment
- Other findings and outcomes
- Recommendations from the A@SC Self-Assessment process

Councillor Taylor highlighted the amount of work carried out to produce the assessments and thanked the Officers responsible.

Councillor Christer commented that he was pleased with the broad range of participants for the self-assessment however, he was disappointed that there had been no participation from the Youth Forum. In reply Councillor Taylor advised that this would be mentioned to the Youth Forum.

The Executive Director commented that Scrutiny Board had discussed the Improvement Plan and suggested that this be submitted to the relevant Scrutiny Panel.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 9th March 2007.

Options: Whether or not to approve the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received and the process, findings and outcomes of the 'Arts At the Strategic Centre' Self Assessment of this authority, conducted between September 2006 and February 2007 be noted.
2. That the recommendations as set out in Section 3.8 of the report be approved as the basis for the development of an Improvement Plan in collaboration with external partners, on the understanding that, once drafted, it will be submitted to Executive and to the Board of the new Leisure Trust for final approval.
3. That approval be granted for the continuation of the Partnership Agreement between this authority and Arts Council England from April 2007 and confirm to ACENE the arrangements for the paying over of the core arts development grant of £21,218 to the new Trust, along with related monitoring and reporting responsibilities.
4. That the Improvement Plan be submitted to the relevant Scrutiny Panel for consideration.

Reasons: To improve the provision of Arts in the area and to comply with Arts Council of England Best Practice.

137. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That on the motion of Councillor Malone seconded by Councillor Johnson that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of the Local Government Act 1972 (As Amended).

138. ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN AND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Councillor Huntley presented the report which sought approval to the Council's Asset Management Plan (AMP) 2007/08, the council's Capital Strategy 2007 /08 and to appraise Members of the performance of the Council's land and property portfolio in 2005/06.

It was noted that amended copies of the Asset Management Plan had been circulated to Executive and Scrutiny Board members. It was further noted that issues may change and progress during the course of the year and any relevant issues would be reported to Asset Management Group, Corporate Management Team and Members as appropriate. Councillor Huntley commented that the team of officers had worked hard to produce the report and in her opinion it was an excellent development.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 9th March 2007.

Options: Whether to approve, amend or reject the Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy 2007/08.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy 2007/08 (as circulated to Executive and Scrutiny Board members) be approved.
2. That the information regarding National Performance Indicators be noted.

Reasons: To support the continuing development of Asset Management within the authority.

139. DISPOSAL OF ALLOTMENTS AT STEEL STREET, CONSETT

Councillor Johnson presented the report which advised of an opportunity to bring online a further Project Genesis development by including Steel Street Allotments within the site of a proposed new housing development.

Questions were asked regarding the waiting lists and provision of allotments. Members were advised that the proposed developer had agreed to provide alternative allotment provision in Consett. Members were further advised that Council owned allotments were usually visited once per year as part of the monitoring process.

The Chairman referred Members to the notes of Scrutiny Board held 9th March 2007.

Options: Whether to agree or reject the proposals to take forward the project.

RESOLVED: That approval be granted to take this project further forward in conjunction with Project Genesis Limited, which will be subject to further reports in the future.

Reasons:

1. The proposal would assist towards the overall regeneration of the area and provide a further receipt which would assist in further improvements.
2. The development project would not disadvantage the allotment holders as negotiations are taking place with Project Genesis Limited on how best to take the project forward in the best interests of the authority.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Councillor Watson advised that this would be final meeting attended by Nick Wiggins in his capacity as Acting Head of Leisure Services as Nick was shortly to emigrate to Canada. He commented that he had been impressed with Nick's professionalism and fairness in all his work for the authority and that he had

changed the Leisure Services for the better. Finally he added that he would be a great loss to the authority and wished him the best of success in his future career.

Councillors Johnson added his personal thanks to Nick for his work for the authority and Councillor Taylor commented that Nick had been a marvellous person to work with and was sad to see him leave as he had achieved much in his time with the authority.

In response Nick thanked all Members for their kind remarks.

CONCLUSION OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 4.59 p.m.