

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a special meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** of the Teesdale District Council held at Teesdale House, Galgate, Barnard Castle on **THURSDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2008** at 5.30 pm

PRESENT: N Wood Chairman

Councillors:

RA Bell	KP Ryman
MJ Clark	A Smith
AJ Cooke	PL Stubbs
D Metcalfe	D Reed
KJ Hodgson	JR Watson
GM Richardson	

Co-opted Members: Mr D Kinch and Mrs P Spurrell.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Bolden and K Coates

Officers in attendance:

DM Roberts - Democratic Services Manager

63 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman indicated that he had some additional information for the Committee, which he would refer to at the end of the meeting.

64 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members.

65 REPORTS FOR APPROVAL

Fly Posting

Councillor AJ Cooke submitted the final draft report on Fly Posting; the report had been prepared by a 'task and finish' group following some public concern about the enforcement of advertising regulations by the Council's Planning Department which had led to the removal of notices advertising local events as they were considered to constitute fly posting. The report made a number of recommendations for consideration by the Executive Committee.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the report be approved and forwarded to the Executive Committee for consideration.
- b. That a copy of the report be forwarded to the PR & Consultation Manager with a view to a press release being prepared.
- c. That district councillors be requested to monitor fly posting in their wards and reminded to contact the Council's Planning Enforcement Officer where appropriate.

Rural Policing

Councillor KP Ryman indicated that the report on rural policing had been drafted following the receipt of parish council responses to the questionnaire

issued to them on the subject. A further meeting with the police had been arranged to consider the draft report, following which it was hoped that the final draft could be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee. Following comments from members it was noted that any recommendations contained in the report would need to be monitored by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the information be noted.

66 UPDATE ON REVIEW OF BARNARD CASTLE FAIR

The Chairman reported on the progress of the review in connection with the Barnard Castle Fair; issues had been raised with regard to insurance, the need for road closures, health and safety and risk assessments. It was noted that the Council's Corporate Management Team had contacted the Fair owners about these matters, with particular regard to costs that could be incurred in implementing health and safety measures.

RESOLVED:

That the review of the Fair be suspended and that the matter be referred to Corporate Management Team, with a view to urgent progress being made, particularly in relation to any necessary risk assessments

67 PROGRESS REPORTS

Reports were submitted on behalf of Councillor P Hughes, as follows:

Broadband – a number of organisations had made bids for funding for a broadband service in areas that were perceived to have no or inadequate provision of broadband services. West Durham Rural Pathfinder was conducting a survey to establish current levels of service and it was suggested that a public meeting be arranged in due course to disseminate findings so far and to request support and evidence for future action. It was suggested that any member with an interest in this issue should contact the Scrutiny Officer, who could pass any comments on to Councillor Hughes.

Affordable Housing - it was noted that the Council had recently published its Affordable Housing Strategy. Information had been sought from housing associations and mortgage providers with regard to their policies on affordable housing. It was suggested that a questionnaire be issued in an attempt to gauge the impact of the Council's policies in this area. It was anticipated that Councillor Hughes would present a comprehensive report to the Committee in due course.

RESOLVED:

That the reports be received.

68 UPDATE ON JOBSEEKERS' ISSUES

The Chairman, together with Mrs P Spurrell, updated the Committee on matters relating to the review of difficulties allegedly being experienced by some claimants of 'Jobseekers Allowance' in Teesdale. It was noted that the Citizens Advice Bureau had offered to seek evidence of the alleged difficulties direct from claimants.

RESOLVED:

That the information be noted and that the review group be requested to finalise their report as soon as possible.

69 FINANCE PANEL: VALUE FOR MONEY REVIEW

Councillor RA Bell submitted a report requesting approval for a 'light touch' review regarding value for money of the Council's street care service

RESOLVED:

That the Finance Panel conduct a 'light touch' review into the value for money aspect of the Council's street care service, as outlined in the scoping document attached to the report.

70 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman submitted a report providing an update on the progress of the Committee's work programme for 2007/08, including details of the progress of individual reviews being undertaken by both the Committee and Panels. In connection with this matter the Chairman referred some additional information, as follows:

The possibility of the Committee doing some risk analysis work in relation to aspects of Audit & Governance.

The possibility of the Committee undertaking some analysis of responses to a questionnaire issued in connection with the best value partnership review.

In response to a request from the Executive Committee preliminary work was underway on a review of cemetery provision in Teesdale.

Members referred to the likelihood of additional workload for the Committee arising from Local Government Reorganisation and it was agreed that this would need to be carefully monitored over the coming months.

RESOLVED:

That progress to date be noted.

The meeting closed at 7pm.