

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CHESTER-LE-STREET

Report of the meeting of People and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the The Gloucester Suite, Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, DH3 3UT on Wednesday, 18 June 2008 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor Geoffrey Armstrong, Councillor Stephen Barr, Councillor James William Barrett, Councillor George Keith Davidson, Councillor Martin James Gollan, Councillor Ralph Harrison, Councillor William Laverick, Councillor Maureen Diana May, Councillor Peter Howard May, Councillor Maureen Potts, Councillor John Shiell and Councillor Audrey Willis

Officers: I Forster (Director of Corporate Services), N Cummings (Scrutiny Officer), Tzamaris (Assistant Director of Development Services) and S Marshall (Democratic Services Assistant)

Also in attendance: L Ebbatson (Leader of the Council) and one member of the public.

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

The Scrutiny Officer invited nominations for the appointment of Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

Councillor P May proposed and Councillor J W Barrett seconded that Councillor G Armstrong be elected Chairman of the Committee.

RESOLVED: "That Councillor G Armstrong be elected as Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year."

Councillor Armstrong took the Chair.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman invited nominations for the appointment of Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

Councillor R Harrison proposed and Councillor J W Barrett seconded that Councillor D M Holding be elected Vice Chairman of the Committee.

RESOLVED: "That Councillor D M Holding be elected as Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year."

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L E W Brown, L Armstrong, D Holding, D L Robson, A Turner, A K Holden, F Wilkinson, A Humes, J M Proud, R Court, K Potts and T J Smith.

Councillor P May advised the Chairman that he would need to leave during the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING HELD 6 MAY 2008

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board be agreed.

RESOLVED: "That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 6 May 2008 be agreed as a correct record."

The Chairman proceeded to sign the minutes.

5. MINUTES OF LEISURE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING HELD 9 APRIL 2008

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting of the Leisure and Neighbourhood Overview and Scrutiny Panel be agreed.

RESOLVED: "That the minutes of the meeting of the Leisure and Neighbourhood Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 9 April 2008 be agreed as a correct record."

The Chairman proceeded to sign the minutes.

6. MINUTES OF PARTNERSHIP AND EFFICIENCY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING HELD 11 MARCH 2008

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting of the Partnership and Efficiency Overview and Scrutiny Panel be agreed.

RESOLVED: "That the minutes of the meeting of the Partnership and Efficiency Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 11 March 2008 be agreed as a correct record."

The Chairman proceeded to sign the minutes.

7. MINUTES OF REGENERATION AND HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING HELD 17 APRIL 2008

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting of the Regeneration and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel be agreed.

RESOLVED: "That the minutes of the meeting of the Regeneration and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 17 April 2008 be agreed as a correct record."

The Chairman proceeded to sign the minutes.

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

9. PUBLIC SPEAKING

One member of the public was present at the meeting. The Chairman advised he would invite him to speak at the appropriate times during the meeting.

10. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN AND WORK PROGRAMME

The content of the Executive Forward Plan and Work Programme was considered by the Committee enabling Members to identify any issues that may require to be reviewed prior to a decision being made.

Councillor Barrett made reference to the Communities Facilities Working Group Report and queried if this report referred to communal rooms.

The Leader advised that the review looked at all community facilities including communal rooms and libraries.

Discussion ensued in relation to the number of communal rooms which had been transferred to Cestria Community Housing and the Leader advised she would need to clarify how many communal rooms were still owned by the Council and report back to the Committee.

RESOLVED: "That the contents of the Executive Forward Plan and Work Programme were considered by the Committee and the Leader would report back to the next meeting in relation to the ownership of the communal rooms."

11. REVIEW INTO LOCAL WATERCOURSES

The Committee considered the report of the Scrutiny Officer which, presented the draft report of the Leisure and Neighbourhood Overview and Scrutiny Panel following the review into Local Watercourses.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that the draft report was set out in Appendix 1 to the report and requested that Members consider the draft report and recommendations contained therein.

He advised that the Development and Building Control Manager and Regeneration and Planning Strategy Manager had been consulted and the recommendations amended to reflect their comments.

Discussion ensued in relation to a number of points in the report including:

- Water safety
- Pollution from minewater
- Incorrect plumbing leading into waste water and feeding into watercourses

RESOLVED: "That the recommendations in the draft report be agreed and the report be presented to the Executive."

12. REVIEW INTO LOCAL TRANSPORT

Consideration was given to the report of the County Durham Overview and Scrutiny Member Network following a review into local transport issues as set out in appendix 1 to the report.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that the report was to allow members the opportunity to discuss and consider the report and recommendations contained therein.

Discussion ensued in relation to the rail network not being part of the review, the closure of post offices and the discussions held with Go Ahead North East, Arriva and also the Primary Care Trust.

The Leader stated that some of the recommendations in the report would need to be taken up by the new unitary authority.

RESOLVED: "That Members note to content of the report, agree to the recommendations contained within the report and agree that the report be presented to the Executive."

13. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2008-09

Consideration was given to the report of the Scrutiny Officer providing the Committee with a draft Work Programme for 2008/09.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that the report provided Members with an opportunity to amend or request new activities to be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

He advised that the work programme reflected the Council's single priority "People and Place" and recommended Task and Finish groups be formed around two reviews, Potential for a Town Council and Town Centre Market Places.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that the work programme included performance and monitoring business as well as the two reviews identified at the Scrutiny Workshop. He stated that this would be the Scrutiny Officer's last meeting before leaving the authority and as a result there would be a need for more officer involvement in the reviews.

The Chairman advised that Members of the Scrutiny committee would be able to express their interest in either review and it was suggested that a letter be forwarded to Members requesting them to complete a form and return it to the Democratic Services Assistant advising of their preferred review.

Councillors P H May and S Barr left the meeting at 6.45pm.

The Director of Corporate Services suggested that a scoping report for each review be brought to the July meeting of the Committee and it be decided at that meeting which Members would form each of the Task and Finish Groups.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that there would also be a budget available for Task and Finish Groups.

RESOLVED: "That the draft Work Programme be approved and Members advise the Democratic Services Assistant of their preferred Task and Finish Group."

14. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

There were no further suggestions for the next agenda.

15. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Scrutiny Officer advised that the work programme was based around the Committee meeting on a 6-weekly cycle with Task and Finish groups meeting between.

Members agreed to the Committee meeting every 6 weeks.

RESOLVED: "That the People and Place Overview and Scrutiny committee meet on a 6 weekly cycle."

16. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED: " that the next meeting of the Committee be held on Wednesday 30 July at 6.00pm."

Prior to the conclusion of business, the Chairman thanked the Scrutiny Officer for his hard work and dedication in driving scrutiny at Chester-le-Street forward over the past 2 years. He went on to wish him every success in the future.

Members proceeded to give the Scrutiny Officer a round of applause.

The meeting terminated at 6.55 pm

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