

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CHESTER-LE-STREET

Report of the meeting of People and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, DH3 3UT on Wednesday, 14 January 2009 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor Geoffrey Armstrong (Chairman)

Councillors:

D M Holding	M D May
J W Barrett	M Potts
L E W Brown	J Shiell
G K Davidson	T J Smith
M Gollan	D Thompson
S Greatwich	F Wilkinson
W Laverick	

Officers:

I Forster (Director of Corporate Services), T Galloway (Director of Development Services), I Herberson (Head of Corporate Finance), J Elder (Acting Head of Resources), J Taylor (Senior Planning Officer) and S Marshall (Democratic Services Assistant)

Also in attendance: Two members of the public.

60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors S Barr, R Harrison, P May, J Proud, D Robson and A Turner.

61. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 3 DECEMBER 2008

RESOLVED; "That the minutes of the meeting of the People & Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held 3 December 2008, copies of which had previously been circulated to each Member, be agreed as a correct record."

62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

63. PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were two members of the public present at the meeting. The Chairman advised he would invite them to speak at the relevant times during the meeting.

The Chairman advised that Item Nos. 8 and 11 would be considered prior to the remainder of the agenda.

64. BONFIRE POLICY UPDATE

The Director of Development Services provided Members with a verbal update on this year's bonfire night activity within the district and advised that he could provide written confirmation of information provided if required.

He advised that the Bonfire Policy was introduced in 2005 due to the number of illegal bonfires throughout the district. He stated that since the introduction of the policy, bonfires were not allowed in the district and any found would be removed.

He also advised that a Firework/Halloween Sub-Group had been formed with the purpose of providing a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to Halloween and Bonfire activities throughout the district during the period from 22 October 2008 to 6 November 2008, and that the following were invited to attend:

Inspector Anderson – Durham Constabulary
Keith Wanley – Fire & Rescue
Paul Duffy – Youth Engagement Service
Fiona Parker – Partnership Liaison Officer
Ann Hall – ASB Officer, Cestria Community Housing
James Ritson – Refuge & Street Care, CLS DC
Barbara Cruikshank – ASB Officer, CLS DC

He went on to advise that the aim of the sub-group was to raise awareness in relation to personal and community safety, produce a cross tenure advisory booklet, agree target areas, consider enforcement action if necessary and deliver reassurance.

Councillor M Gollan entered the meeting at 6.08pm.

The Director of Development Services advised that he had been supplied with statistical information from the Fire and Rescue Service, which hi-lighted the following:

Total No of Secondary Fires in Chester-le-Street	Oct 15th – Nov 7th 2007	Oct 15th – Nov 7th 2008	Change
	59	32	-45%

Total No of Deliberate Secondary Fires in Chester-le-Street	Oct 15th – Nov 7th 2007	Oct 15th – Nov 7th 2008	Change
	44	9	-56%

He advised that this information proved a significant reduction in the number of deliberate fires in the district. He also reported that there were no attacks on fire crews in Chester-le-Street during the bonfire period and there were no bonfires reported or removed on bonfire night in 2008.

In relation to costs to the Council, the Director of Development Services reported that the costs in the initial year were £11,000, reducing to £7,000 in 2006, £3,500 in 2007 and £1,200 in 2008.

The Chairman queried a reported bonfire in the Bournmoor area, commenting that he had been advised that the matter was now being investigated by the police and arrests were imminent.

The Director of Development Services advised that that particular bonfire had not been reported to the Environmental Services Team.

Discussion ensued in relation to the success of the policy.

RESOLVED: "That the comments made be noted."

65. REVIEW INTO SPORTS MARKETING

The Director of Corporate Services issued a draft final report for the Review into the Marketing of Activities for Young People to Members at the meeting.

Councillor Smith advised that in carrying out the review evidence had been gathered from Wear Valley District Council, Sunderland City Council and North County Leisure (a leisure trust covering the districts of Tynedale, Alnwick and Copeland). She commented that it had been extremely beneficial to visit other local authorities and share best practise.

The Acting Leisure Services Manager advised that it was important to promote and market activities in an attractive way for young people and also

to look at the types of activities available, ensuring that current trends, such as dance, were made available.

He went on to advise that the report was a draft and that he welcomed questions and comments from Members.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that the report was to be submitted to the Executive and comments would be required by the following Monday to enable them to be incorporated into the report. He also requested that the Committee agree to give delegated powers to himself, the Chairman, the Acting Leisure Services Manager and Councillor Smith to finalise the report.

RESOLVED: "That the Committee agreed to give delegated powers to the Director of Corporate Services, the Chairman, the Acting Leisure Services Manager and Councillor Smith to finalise the report and that the Final Report be submitted to the Executive."

66. SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS - UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report of the Development and Building Control Manager advising Members of the present position in relation to financial contributions held by the Authority that have been secured through Section 106 Agreements entered in to as part of decisions taken to grant planning permission.

The Senior Planning Officer spoke in relation to the report, advising Members of the sums received and spent to date. He went on to welcome questions from the Committee.

Councillor Barrett requested clarification of the money spent by Durham County Council from the monies secured by the Drum Industrial Estate agreement.

The Senior Planning Officer advised that Durham County Council had drawn down on some of the monies and the Head of Corporate Finance confirmed that there had been payments made for design fees in relation to the scheme.

Councillor Gollan queried if the new authority would be bound by the decisions made by Chester-le-Street District Council and if other authorities were successful in pursuing defaulted payments.

The Senior Planning Officer advised that the new authority would be bound by the agreements made by Chester-le-Street District Council and that in his experience other authorities did not have problems recovering defaulted payments.

The Acting Leisure Services Manager advised that the Council's Legal Services Team had recently been instructed to pursue matters against three

developers who had defaulted on payment of Section 106 monies to the Authority.

The Chairman thanked the Senior Planning Officer for the report.

RESOLVED: "That the comments made be noted."

The Senior Planning Officer and the Acting Leisure Services Manager left the meeting at 6.40pm.

67. REVIEW INTO THE FUTURE OF THE MARKET - FINAL REPORT

The Director of Corporate Services issued Members with a Draft Final Report of the Review of the Future of the Market in Chester-le-Street and advised that a foreword was still to be added. He asked that Members agree for delegated powers to be given to himself and the Chairman to finalise the report prior to it being submitted to the Executive.

The Chairman queried if Members had any questions or comments.

Councillor Gollan referred to Paragraph 9.2 of the report in relation to a phased improvement plan for the market place and suggested that the recommendation be re-written to avoid any misinterpretation.

The Director of Corporate Services advised he would make the recommendations clearer in the final report.

Discussion ensued in relation to the rental costs of the market stalls and the difference in prices between Fridays and Saturdays.

Councillor Thompson queried why the market was closed between the Christmas and New Year holidays.

The Head of Corporate Finance advised that traditionally the market traders took annual leave after Christmas and hence the market remained closed.

RESOLVED: "That the comments made be noted and delegated powers be given to the Chairman and Director of Corporate Services to finalise the report."

68. REVIEW INTO THE FUTURE OF THE UNPARISHED AREA OF CHESTER-LE-STREET - FINAL REPORT

The Director of Corporate Services issued the draft final report to Members present and requested that delegated powers be given to himself, the Chairman and Councillor Holding to finalise the report prior to it being submitted to the Executive.

Councillor Holding outlined the process which the review had taken and the Director of Corporate Services outlined the main changes that had already been made to the report following a meeting with the Chairman and Councillor Holding.

RESOLVED: "That the Committee accept the report and give delegated powers to the Director of Corporate Services, the Chairman and Councillor Holding to make any final amendments to the report prior to it being submitted to the Executive."

The Director of Corporate Services commented that Scrutiny at Chester-le-Street had progressed from being underdeveloped to being effective due to Member and officer engagement making reviews successful. He added that this had often been carried out under difficult circumstances but that a lot of evidence had been gathered in the three reviews to support the recommendations and that once the recommendations had been agreed by the Executive they would be included in the "Handing Over the Baton" report.

He also advised that a summarised version of the "Handing Over the Baton" report would be included in the final edition of District News.

In relation to the review of the market place, the Director of Corporate Services advised that both himself and the Town Centre Manager had been invite to Seaham Town Council, who were looking to develop a market in the town, to discuss the findings of the review.

The Chairman expressed his personal thanks to the Director of Corporate Services and the Democratic Services Assistant for taking on the extra responsibility of carrying out the reviews alongside their other responsibilities.

69. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

The Chairman suggested that Cestria Community Housing be invited to the final meeting of the Committee and that if Members had any particular issues to be raised that they be forwarded to the Democratic Services Assistant within the next week in order for Cestria Community Housing to be able to investigate the issues in question and provide Members with answers.

A member of the public referred to recycling and suggested that this could also be discussed at the final meeting.

The Chairman agreed that the Environmental Services Manager and Environmental Strategy Co-ordinator be invited to attend the final meeting to answer questions in relation to recycling.

RESOLVED: "That Cestria Community Housing and Recycling be items for the agenda of the next meeting of the Committee."

70. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED: "That the next meeting of the Committee be held on Wednesday 25 February 2009 at 6.00pm."

The meeting terminated at 7.14 pm