

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE

HELD ON TUESDAY 28th NOVEMBER 2006

Present:- Councillor A. Napier (Chair)

Councillors R. Crute, Mrs J. Freak,
D, Myers, Mrs A. Naylor, G. Patterson,
F. Shaw, R.J. Todd and P.G. Ward

Apology:- Councillor Mrs. E. Huntington

1. **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 7th November 2006, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.

2. **LOANS DIARY - TRANSACTIONS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 30th SEPTEMBER 2006**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Resources which gave details of loans transactions for the quarter ended 30th September 2006, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The report gave details of short term lending/borrowing and Treasury accounts. There had been no long term borrowing in this quarter.

RESOLVED that the information contained within the report, be noted.

3. **GENERAL FUND/HOUSING REVENUE - 2006/2007 MONITORING STATEMENT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Resources which gave details of the financial position for the period 1st April 2006 to 30th September 2006, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Details of the revised forecast position on the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account and the provisional Housing Subsidy Draft Settlement for 2007/8 were outlined in the report.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services referred Members to the use of reserves and the 3* Strategy as detailed in the report. £376,000 had been vired from the Use of Reserves allocation to support the Strategy. Two further issues had arisen as detailed in the report which he proposed should be met from reserves. If agreed, £330,000 of the original approval would be unspent and East Durham Homes was to come forward with proposals for future utilisation of reserves. Members were requested to endorse the actions taken and await a further report.

RESOLVED that the position be noted, and actions outlined in relation to the use of reserves, be endorsed.

4. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2005/2006 - PERFORMANCE MONITORING - OUTTURN POSITION**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Resources which advised of the outturn position on delivering the 2005/2006 Capital Programme and gave details of the outturn position to the end of the financial year. A copy of the report had been circulated to each Member.

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Members were advised that the total capital programme agreed for 2005/2006 amounted to £14.7m and the report set out details of how this funding had been allocated.

Appendix 1 to the report was a summary of the progress made in the programme under the ALMO works, HIP Council Schemes and other non-housing services. Appendix 2 provided a detailed financial analysis of the programme outturn variances.

Reference was made to the ALMO works detailed in Appendix 1 and in particular, the five year replacement programme for doors and windows to OAP bungalows in Easington, Haswell, Peterlee, Seaham, Station Town, Thornley and Wingate. Members considered that all those involved in completing the scheme should be commended for their efforts.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the outturn position statement on 2005/2006 Capital Programme, be noted;
- (b) the Executive Member for Housing write to everyone involved in the replacement door and window scheme to OAP bungalows, commending them for their efforts.

5. REVIEW OF THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL POSITION

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Resources which advised of the medium term financial plan position and issues emerging from the 2007/2008 budget process. A copy of the report had been circulated to each Member.

Members were advised that medium term financial planning covered 3 year periods and allowed changing resource and service levels to be planned in a structured way by forecasting resource availability and balancing this against improvement in investment needs.

Whilst the aim of the strategy primarily was to ensure that resources were directed into priority areas, it should also shape the future financial direction of the Council outlining financial pressures and the impact on future Council taxes.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services briefed Members on the key issues facing the Council, details of which were set out in the report.

In considering these issues, reference was made to the concessionary fares scheme. Members stressed the need for a co-ordinated countywide response on the actual costs of the scheme, particularly as the amount committed by the Government for a national travel scheme from 2008 was unlikely to be enough.

Members were also advised of the revised financial position for 2006/7 and 2007/8 to 2009/10, together with the Financial Strategy beyond 2007/8. Having reviewed the medium term position the Council needed to develop the 2007/8 budget framework for Members consideration.

RESOLVED that the information outlined in the report, be noted and proposals for the 2007/8 budget framework, be awaited.

6. PROPOSED INCREASE IN HACKNEY CARRIAGE TARIFFS

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Liveability which sought approval to increase the current hackney carriage tariffs and carry out the statutory consultation procedure, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The Executive Member reported that a request had been received from hackney carriage proprietors within the District for an increase in the present scale of fares and the introduction of a soiling charge in line with other authorities in the region.

The last tariff increase had been implemented on 1st October 2002 and details of the proposed increases were set out in the report for Members consideration.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the proposed increases in tariffs as set out in Section 4.4 in the report, together with the introduction of a soiling charge of a maximum sum of £50, be agreed and the statutory consultation be carried out;
- (b) any objections received be referred to the Development Control and Regulatory Panel to determine the Table of Fares.

7. GAMBLING ACT 2005 - STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Liveability which gave details of the Council's Statement of Principles relating to the Gambling Act 2005, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The Executive Member advised that the report sought approval to the Council's Statement of Principles and that further reports would be submitted to update Members in relation to new responsibilities and the scheme of delegation for functions under the Act.

The Gambling Act would become operational from 1st September 2007 and local authorities would then become responsible for issuing premises licences for specified gambling premises in their area.

The Authority had a legal duty to produce a Statement of Principles and a copy was attached to the report for Members consideration.

RESOLVED that the content of the report, be noted and the Statement of Principles be referred to full Council for adoption.

8. ANY ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

In accordance with the Local Government Act, 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, Section 100B(4)(b) the Chair agreed that consideration be given to one item of business not shown on the Agenda as a matter of urgency following consultation with the Proper Officer.

9. URBAN AND RURAL RENAISSANCE SCHEMES IN DEAF HILL AND THORNLEY (AOB)

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Regeneration which sought approval to provide a financial contribution to two schemes being undertaken as part of the Urban and Rural Renaissance Initiative (URRI). A copy of the report had been circulated to each Member.

The Executive Member advised that the schemes were taking place in Deaf Hill and Thornley and aimed to improve the environment of the two village centres.

In relation to Deaf Hill, this scheme had already been undertaken in line with the Council's agreement to the programme of works in the District of Easington, however confirmation of the financial contribution had not been finalised. Details of the scheme were set out in the report for Members information. The Council had allocated £20,000 to this scheme from the Flexible Regeneration Budget for the current financial year.

With regard to Thornley, this proposed scheme aimed to rejuvenate the Villas, including Stanley Terrace and the village green opposite Greenwood Cottages. The Executive Member added that since the report had been prepared, a local Member had expressed concern about the level of consultation carried out on the proposed car park opposite the cottages and it was suggested that Durham County Council be contacted on this.

The total cost of the scheme in Thornley was £300,000 and the Council had allocated an initial £25,000 to the scheme from the Flexible Regeneration Budget. However, costs had increased and a further £20,000 had been requested making a total contribution of £45,000 which could be accommodated from within the Flexible Regeneration Budget.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) support for the Environmental Improvement Schemes in Trimdon Station and Thornley to be implemented under the Urban and Rural Renaissance Initiative, be granted;
- (b) a contribution of £20,000 be made to the Trimdon Station scheme and £45,000 to the Thornley scheme from the Flexible Regeneration Budget;
- (c) Durham County Council be contacted with regard to the level of consultation carried out in relation to the design of the scheme and in particular the car parking areas adjacent to the Aged Persons accommodation in the Thornley Scheme;
- (d) landlords consent be granted for the works being undertaken in Thornley on Council owned land subject to agreement of a final scheme following further discussion of local consultation outcomes with Durham County Council.

10. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item

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of business on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

11. ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY TRAINING CENTRE FEASIBILITY STUDY

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Member for Regeneration on the potential for establishing an Engineering and Technology Training Centre, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The Executive Member advised that Single Programme funding had been secured from the County Durham Economic Partnership to carry out a feasibility study into the potential for establishing an Engineering and Technology Training Centre in the District of Easington.

The report sought approval to engage Consultants to undertake this work and gave details of the proposals, together with the draft Consultants Brief.

RESOLVED that approval be granted to engage Consultants to undertake a feasibility study into the demand for, and sustainability of, establishing an Engineering and Technology Training Centre in the District of Easington.

JE/CB/COM/EXEC/061101
29 November 2006