

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Communities Overview Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 18 November 2004

Present:

Councillors:

Mrs P A Stott (Chairman)
R C Peachey (Vice-Chairman)

Miss V Ash
Mrs K J Bamsey
D J Cox
H J Jeffery

Mrs A E Liverton
T G Reeves
P C Townsend
Mrs E E Wragg

Also Present:

Councillors:

Mrs M J Boote
P A Diviani
Miss J M Elson
S Hughes
B O Ingham

A T Moulding
N J Spence
Dr H W Waterworth
A J Wilkinson

Apologies:

Councillors:

Mrs C E Drew
Mrs P A Graham
Mrs M L Hardy
Mrs B O Taylor

The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 8.55pm.

*18 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Communities Overview Committee held on 6 October 2004, were confirmed and signed as a true record.

*19 **Exempt Information**

RESOLVED

that the classification given to the documents to be submitted to the Committee be confirmed and that the report relating to exempt information be dealt with under Part B of the agenda.

20 **Future management arrangements for East Devon's Leisure Services – Options appraisal**

Members of the Strategic Overview Committee were invited to participate in the meeting for this item.

Mr Tim Mills of PMP Consultancy presented his report on the future management arrangements for the Council's sports and leisure facilities. The Council had previously undertaken a preliminary options review and, in the light of its findings, appointed PMP Consultancy to specifically examine the alternative delivery options of continued in-house management, transfer of management to a newly established not-for-profit distributing organisation (NPDO), or a combination of both options. Following site visits, a review of relevant documentation, consultation with key personnel and with representatives of

Future management arrangements for East Devon's Leisure Services – Options appraisal (Cont.)

relevant personnel external to the Council, a list of advantages and disadvantages for each option were drawn up. The potential best options for the Council were then examined in detail with regard to both financial and non-financial implications. In addition to examining the future options for the sports centres and swimming pools, PMP looked at the various options available for the outside pitches, the Thelma Hulbert Gallery and arts development service and the Exmouth Pavilion.

It was noted that the option offering the Council the greatest predicted saving involved use of an existing NPDO. A number of neighbouring authorities did make use of NPDOs but these may or may not be suitable partners for East Devon, further research into this would be required.

Consideration was given to the breakdown of predicted savings. The greatest area of saving was through National Non Domestic Rates which a trust would not be required to pay. The Council would retain, and be responsible for, the capital assets such as the buildings. The initial set up costs were in all cases spread across five years to aid comparison. One problem in using a NPDO could be attracting suitable trustees. The liability of trustees would be limited by guarantee. The Council would retain an influence over the facilities and if a trust failed it would be seen to have a moral responsibility for it.

RECOMMENDED that the Council adopt the recommendations and action plan set out on page 59 of the PMP Options Appraisal.

***21 Housing affordability in East Devon**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Housing and Social Inclusion that informed Members of the latest research into housing affordability. The research looked into the cost of housing for sale and household income nationally. East Devon was reported to have the eighth highest ratio of house prices to income in the country. Members noted the letter sent to three key Ministers that set out East Devon's position in the housing affordability statistics and requested an urgent review of the ODPM's policy to focus on growth in the provision of new affordable housing in London and the wider south east.

RESOLVED that the report be noted

***22 Quarterly monitoring of performance – second quarter**

Members noted the report of the Policy Officer in respect of performance and proposed remedial action against key performance indicators for the first quarter of 2004, under the control of the Communities Overview Committee. Members were advised that the following indicators BV64 should have been shaded red, BV66a should have been green and L46 required the addition of an explanation, ie that the backlog of Benefits payments skewed the indicator on rent arrears and would continue to do so throughout the rest of the year.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

***23 Exclusion of the Public**

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as exempt information, of the description set out on the agenda, is likely to be disclosed.

24 **Implications of the Medium Term Financial Plan and Prioritisation Process**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Executive which set out the proposed measures and a number of specific proposals for changes to service delivery to reflect the results of the recently completed Service Prioritisation process and the adopted Medium Term Financial Plan for 2005/08. It was noted that the report had been referred for consultation to all the Overview Committees and that the Executive Board, at its meeting on 24 November 2004, would then consider it prior to the meeting of the Council on 8 December 2004. The draft budgets for 2005/06 would then be prepared taking into account the decisions reached. The recommendations of the other three Overview Committees were noted.

Members went through each service listed in bands five, four and three and discussed the recommended changes to the budget.

RECOMMENDED

- 1) that the Executive Board recommends to Council all necessary changes to the organisation's service delivery profile to facilitate preparation of draft budgets for the 2005/06 financial year that will ensure delivery of a balanced budget.

- 2) that it be noted that the Communities Overview Committee agreed with the suggested service savings listed in bands five, four and three of the report, subject to the following amendments:
 - the adoption of the alternative option for the Arts as set out in Appendix E
 - that toilet facilities closest to the location of traditional public events such as festive swims be opened on the relevant days.

*25 **Next meeting of the Committee**

Members were advised that there were no items to be considered at the next meeting of the Committee scheduled for 1 December 2004. The Citizens Advice Bureau had offered to talk to Members but it was felt that as this could be deferred until the next meeting.

RESOLVED

that the meeting of the Communities Overview Committee scheduled to be held on 1 December 2004 be cancelled.

Chairman Date.....