

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Board held at Knowle, Sidmouth on Wednesday, 7 September 2005

Present: Councillors:
Miss S M Randall Johnson
R G Franklin

P A Diviani
Miss J M Elson
S Hughes
S C Luxton
A T Moulding
Mrs P A Stott
A J Wilkinson

Also Present Councillors:

Mrs M J Boote	Ms S M Merritt
G P Chamberlain	R Mudge
J E D Falby	Mrs F I Newth
A R Giles	T G Reeves
M J L Green	Mrs L A Roden

Apology Councillor J B Nicholson

**Apologis from
non-Board
members** Councillors:
Mrs E E Wragg
S C Wragg

The meeting started at 5.35 pm and ended at 7.00 pm

The Leader had given her apologies as she anticipated arriving slightly late – she arrived at agenda item 8: Quarterly monitoring of performance when she assumed chairmanship of the meeting. The Vice-Chairman was in the Chair until the Leader arrived.

*42 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on 20 July 2005, were confirmed and signed as a true record.

*43 **Exempt Information**

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

*44 **Forward Plan**

The contents of the Forward Plan for the period 1 September 2005 to 31 December 2005 were noted.

The Portfolio Holder – Culture advised that the transfer to a new Leisure Trust (Forward Plan item 3) was on track. Following advertising and interview, a number of trustees had been appointed to the Board. Landlord/tenant agreements, Service Level Agreements and the Business Plan were currently being prepared.

*44 **Forward Plan (cont)..**

The Portfolio Holder – Resources advised that the CPA Value for Money self assessment (Forward Plan item 4) would be completed by the end of September and would be referred, in the first instance, to the Corporate Overview Committee. He also advised that work was currently being carried out on the Corporate Business Plan (Forward Plan item 5).

The Portfolio Holder – Communities advised that there had been wide consultation in respect of the Housing Stock Options Appraisal (Forward Plan item 1) and it was anticipated that this matter would be referred to the Board in December.

In reply to a question, the Corporate Director – Environment confirmed that reference would be made to issues surrounding the possible closure of Rolle College in the Unlocking Exmouth regeneration proposals.

It was suggested that the Forward Plan column heading 3: 'Expected Date of Decision' was misleading and should be changed to 'Earliest Date of Decision'.

*45 **Matters referred to the Executive Board**

There were no matters referred to the Executive Board by an Overview Committee or the Council.

*46 **Special meeting of the Corporate Overview Committee**

The minutes of the Special Meeting of the Corporate Overview Committee held on 18 August to consider the new refuse/recycling contract were noted and taken into account when the issue was discussed later in the meeting at agenda item 17.

*47 **Quarterly monitoring of performance – First Quarter 2005/06**

Members considered the report of the Policy Manager in respect of performance information for the period 1 April to 30 June 2005, collated for monitoring purposes. The report colour-coded the service areas where targets had been met, exceeded or where remedial action was needed to get performance back on track. Progress against agreed Service Plans was also noted.

The Corporate Director – Central Services advised that a review of the indicators was going to be undertaken with a view to reducing the total number. Consideration would also be given to the best way of presenting annual indicators and it was suggested that, where relevant, these could be reported quarterly to check that performance was on target.

The Leader praised the efforts of those involved in achieving or exceeding performance targets and asked for Officers to take steps to improve their performance where targets had not been met.

A copy of the Audit Commission's Customer Access Inspection report had been circulated to Members at the meeting. The Audit Commission had assessed the council as providing a 'good', two-star service that had promising prospects for improvement. The judgments were based on the evidence obtained during the inspection carried out in May. The Leader thanked everyone involved in achieving this very encouraging outcome. The document would be considered in detail at the next meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the performance and proposed remedial action against Performance Indicators and the planned outcomes from Service Plans for the first quarter of 2005/06 be noted.
- (2) that the Audit Commission's Customer Access Inspection report be considered in detail at the next meeting of the Board.

48 **Policy updates: Organisational Development, Training and Development, Home Working, Redundancy Guide**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development introducing the above policy up-dates which had been circulated with the agenda. This work represented part of the wholesale up-dating of the employees handbook. The various up-dates and the new Home Working Policy met the needs of the organisation, best practice and legislative requirements.

Minor amendments had been suggested to the home working policy which would be taken into account in the final version.

The Portfolio Holder – Resources praised the Organisational Development Policy which he said was well written and a credit to the Head of Organisational Development and her team.

- RECOMMENDED**
- (1) that the Home Working Policy, Organisational Development Strategy and the Training and Development Policy be approved, subject to consultation with UNISON,
 - (2) that the amendments to the adopted redundancy payments policy, which had already been agreed with UNISON, be approved,
 - (3) that the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to make any necessary minor adjustments to the policies and guides prior to the final versions being published.

49 **Policy update: Street Name and Numbering**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of ICT introducing the above policy which would meet the Council's legislative responsibility of controlling the naming and numbers of streets and buildings within the district. Members were advised that the Council had a statutory duty in respect of administering original street naming and numbering. No charge was made for this service. Members considered a recommendation that a charge be made to applicants wishing to rename or renumber properties which had already been satisfactorily registered.

- RECOMMENDED**
- (1) that the Street Name and Numbering Policy be approved with delegated powers being given to the Corporate Director – Central Services to make any minor adjustments (if required) during consultation with UNISON,
 - (2) that the principal of charging applicants for renaming or renumbering properties already satisfactorily registered be approved.

*50 **Right to Buy – changes to the scheme**

Members considered the report of the Head of Housing and Social Inclusion in respect of recent changes to the above scheme in response to new legislation. Councils were now required to provide potential purchasers with information relating to the financial implications of buying their home. Members noted the draft Right to Buy Information Document which had been included with the agenda. The document would be referred to the Tenant Customer Panel for comment before the text was finalised. It was suggested that it would be beneficial to post the final version on the Council's web site.

Members also noted the Government's proposal for a Social Homebuy Scheme which would extend home ownership opportunities to council tenants and low income households. This proposal was currently at the consultation stage but, if approved, was likely to have significant financial implications for the Council.

*50 **Right to Buy – changes to the scheme (cont) ..**

RESOLVED that the changes to the Right to Buy Scheme be noted and the draft Right to Buy information document be approved and made available to new and existing secure council tenants, by post and on the Council's web site, subject to any amendments recommended by the Tenant Customer Panel.

51 **South West Regional Housing Strategy 2005-2016**

Members considered the report of the Head of Housing and Social Inclusion in respect of the above which had recently been published. Members noted the elements and priorities of the Strategy particularly relevant to East Devon together with the investment framework for use of the Regional Housing Pot.

Members were reminded that 40% of housing development in Cranbrook would be set aside for affordable housing schemes and that partnership working with Exeter City Council and neighbouring authorities was essential to achieve the best outcome for the district and to secure maximum funding from Central Government. It was recognised that the shortfall in the district's affordable housing provision would not be met entirely from development of the new community. Some of the priorities, aims and key issues included within the Strategy were consistent with the Council's own strategies and this would help the Council to make its case when bidding for funds. Links to the Regional Spatial Strategy were noted.

A sub regional housing assessment would be carried out to examine all issues affecting the local housing market. This detail and other relevant developments would be referred to future meetings of the Board.

RECOMMENDED (1) that the summary of the South West Regional Housing Strategy 2005-2016 be noted,
(2) that the Head of Housing and Social Inclusion be invited to progress work on a sub-regional housing market assessment and up-date the Council's Housing Strategy where appropriate.

*52 **Coast protection at Exmouth – Esplanade and Beach Gardens**

Members considered the report of the Corporate Director – Environment in respect of the above scheme. Two objections to the scheme still remained and the DEFRA grant aid would not be provided until these matters had been resolved or withdrawn. The objectors had confirmed that they would not withdraw their objections. Members noted that the objectors' main argument was that beach groynes, to address sediment movement on the beach, should be constructed at the same time as the scheme to carry out repairs to the sea wall. The Council would not get approval from English Nature or Teignbridge District Council unless it could be demonstrated that such measures would not have an adverse effect elsewhere.

Considerable efforts had been made by the Council to resolve objections to this scheme. Delays as a result of the unresolved objections meant that the start date for the work had been missed and the next date was likely to be Autumn 2006. Members were concerned that the delays could result in flooding problems in the town this winter should the sea wall be breached. DEFRA was being asked to confirm, or otherwise, the validity of these objections. In the meantime the Council was preparing a contingency plan in case an emergency situation arose before the works could be carried out.

Members fully supported the work carried out by the Head of Streetscene Services and his team in trying to address the problem.

RESOLVED that the progress of the Exmouth Coast Protection Scheme be noted.

53 Musbury Flood Alleviation Scheme

Members considered the report of the Corporate Director – Environment in respect of the above scheme designed to protect 4 properties from frequent flooding. The problem was as a result of the existing water surface scheme being inadequate to cope with high volume run off. For a number of reasons given in the report, the cost of the scheme had risen significantly since the project appraisal report had been prepared in September 2002. A letter from the residents' group was circulated to Members for information.

Members discussed the cost:benefit ratio of the scheme which would only directly benefit 4 properties. DEFRA had intimated that it may grant additional funding in April but any increase would have to be balanced against the likely increase in the cost associated with delaying the scheme. If Members agreed that the Council should meet the total cost of the scheme, the funding shortfall would have to be identified from another budget.

RECOMMENDED that the scheme proceeds with the difference in cost between actual and budget being met by the Council with negotiations continuing with DEFRA to try and increase its contribution,

***54 Standing Orders Exemptions: Selection of computer hardware and software for e-government projects**

Members considered the report of the Head of ICT seeking agreement to a Standing Orders exemption for three contracts. The contracts were to progress achievement of the e-government targets and the contact centre by taking advantage of formal and informal framework agreements within the Devon e-partnership.

RESOLVED that the exemptions to standing orders in respect of computer hardware and software for e-government projects be accepted for the reasons given in the report.

***56 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 in the agenda, is likely to be disclosed.

57 Conclusions of the Refuse and Recycling Contract evaluation (key decision)

Members considered the report of the Head of Streetscene Services and took into account the recommendations of the Special Meeting of the Corporate Overview Committee held on 18 August 2005.

Mr Paul Deakin (Consultant) was welcomed to the meeting.

The completed tender documentation received from selected contractors had been evaluated. The report gave an overview of the results and findings of the evaluation process and made recommendations for the appointment of a preferred supplier and the delivery of the Council's Waste Strategy. A presentation would be made to Members at the Special meeting of the Council on 14 September 2005.

The Leader and The Portfolio Holder – Resources thanked the Head of Streetscene Services and his team for their efforts in progressing this major project.

57 **Conclusions of the Refuse and Recycling Contract evaluation (key decision) (cont) ..**

- RECOMMENDED**
- (1) that the following be noted:
 - (a) the tender process had been informed by the Council's Waste Strategy,
 - (b) Company F had submitted the lowest bid for delivering the requirements of the Council's Waste Strategy,
 - (c) the bid from Company F would enable the delivery of the Council's Waste Strategy in accordance with the Council's medium term financial plan,
 - (2) that Company F be appointed as the preferred supplier for the new waste collection and recycling contract,
 - (3) that delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director – Environment in consultation with the Deputy Portfolio Holder – Environment and the Portfolio Holder (Resources) to:
 - (a) enter into contract discussions with the preferred supplier,
 - (b) pursue options for securing further efficiency savings in the new contract,
 - (c) establish detailed arrangements for achieving the full delivery of the Waste Strategy over the life of the contract,
 - (d) pursue Partnership arrangements as applicable with Mid Devon District Council.
 - (4) that the detailed financial implications (revenue and capital) of the new contract be reported back to Members following the appointment of the preferred supplier,
 - (5) that, subject to the impact on the medium-term financial plan, the Council implements recycling to 100% of households in East Devon and that the materials collected contain plastic bottles and possibly card,
 - (6) that, subject to the impact on the medium-term financial plan, the Council implements tranches of between 5,000 to 10,000 properties on a kitchen waste scheme each successive year – this will include the containerisation of the residual waste which will be collected fortnightly,
 - (7) that authority be given to the Head of Street Scene Services to instruct the Consultant to complete financial modeling of the proposed contract and to establish 'Gershon' efficiency savings.

Chairman Date