

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Communities Overview Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on Wednesday, 21 January 2004

Present:

Councillors:

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

Miss V Ash
Mrs K J Bamsey
P W Burrows
B H Clark
Mrs C E Drew
Mrs M L Hardy
D R H Hull
H J Jeffery

D R A Key
Mrs A E Liverton
A S Pascoe
T G Reeves
Mrs L A Roden
Mrs B O Taylor
P C Townsend
Mrs E E Wragg

Also Present:

Councillors:

Miss J M Elson
J E D Falby
M J L Green
Ms S Merritt
A T Moulding
A T Wilkinson
Miss S M Randall Johnson

Apologies:

Councillor:

Mrs P A Graham

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and terminated at 9.15pm.

*22 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Communities Overview Committee held on 12 November 2003, were confirmed and signed as true record.

*23 Item dealt with as a matter of urgency
Bid for Grant Aid – Exmouth Shopmobility

The Chairman agreed for consideration to be given to an application for funding received from the Exmouth and District Community Transport Group under item 9 on the agenda (see minute 26). The application had been submitted to the Executive Board on 20 January 2004 where it was recommended that it be considered by this Committee when it reviewed the Revenue and Capital estimates for 2004/05.

*24 Social Inclusion and Community Development

The Corporate Director – Communities informed Members that the Local Strategic Partnership had been looking into the issue of social inclusion and community development. The Partnership had identified the main factors of exclusion and the key reasons why people could feel excluded. A social exclusion checklist was drawn up which could be used when new initiatives were introduced.

RESOLVED that the Social Inclusion Checklist be noted

*25 Arts and Community Development

The Arts Development Officer and Assistant Arts Development Officer gave a presentation on the work of the Arts Development Section and how it contibuted to community development. The presentation was divided into four sections: the creative economy; healthy communities, vital neighbourhoods and engaging young people. It was noted that the creative industries were worth over £1 billion in the South West. The Council assisted local artists through work with the Thelma Hulbert Gallery and via the Nine Days of Art event. Local communities were encouraged to participate in the arts through the Villages in Action scheme, help and advice given when requested and festivals and arts projects were supported. The Thelma Hulbert Gallery worked closely with schools and young people and had links with the Haywood Gallery, London, which enabled it to stage popular touring exhibitions by famous artists. Funding had been received for several projects from external organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund. This had contributed £23,000 to the Council's jurrassic coast inspired contribution to the Honiton Festival, details of which could be found at www.bigjurrassic.com. The Arts Development Officer and the Assistant Arts Development Officer were thanked for their interesting and informative presentation.

*26 Service Plans 2004/07

Consideration was given to the report of the Policy Officer, which set out Service Plans for Environmental Health and Health Equalities, Housing and Social Inclusion and Leisure and Lifestyles for the years 2004/07. The plans had been prepared differently from those of previous years. Standard templates had been used for every plan and a greater level of staff involvement had taken place. Each Service Head spoke on key issues within their plan. Given the level of detail in the plans and the number of questions Members wished to ask, it was considered appropriate for a separate meeting be held specifically to consider the Service Plans.

RESOLVED that the Service Plans for Environmental Health and Health Equalities, Housing and Social Inclusion and Leisure and Lifestyles for the years 2004/07 be considered meeting of the Communities Overview Committee.

27 Draft Revenue and Capital Estimates 2004/05

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director – Economy, which set out the proposed revenue and capital estimates for 2004/05 relevant to the Communities Overview Committee. Members were advised that the estimates had been drawn up mindful of the financial concerns of the Council, resultant from the fall in interest rates and capital receipts, the requirements for new services imposed by legislation, the reluctance in previous years to increase Council Tax in line with spending and changes in service levels. Concern was expressed that no provision had been made for Rural Aid Grants within the draft estimates Members felt that the Rural Aid Scheme offered valuable support to rural

Draft Revenue and Capital Estimates 2004/05 (Cont)

communities and should be continued. It was suggested that the £7,000 proposed increase in the Council's contribution to the Crime and Disorder Initiative Fund should be removed and included instead as part of a Rural Aid Grants fund.

Consideration was given to an application for funding from the Exmouth and District Community Transport Group that had been referred to the Committee by the Executive Board (minute 23 above refers). Members supported the application. It was proposed that £4,000 be taken from the grant set aside for the East Devon Voluntary Service Association and given instead to the Group for its shopmobility scheme. Discussion also took place on the proposed extension of the Sidmouth Cemetary.

RECOMMENDED

- 1) that the Executive Board approve the draft Revenue and Capital Estimates for 2004/05 subject to the following changes being made:
 - (i) a virement of £7,000 from the increase in the Crime and Disorder Initiative Fund to the Rural Aid Grants fund to be used only for projects meeting strict criteria.
 - (ii) a virement of £4,000 from the grant set aside for the East Devon Voluntary Support Agency to the grant aiding of the Exmouth and District Community Transport Group.
- 2) that the Executive Board approve the draft Housing Revenue Estimates for 2004/05.
- 3) that Council house rents be increased on average by 3.96% in line with Government guidelines from 5 April 2004
- 4) that garage rents be increased on average by 3.96% from 5 April 2004.
- 5) that the price differential between cremation and internment be reassessed and the possible phasing in of the proposed extension to the Sidmouth Cemetary be considered.

(Cllr Miss Elson declared a personal interest in the bid for grant aid submitted by the Exmouth and District Community Transport Group as she was Chairman of the Group)

*28 House of Commons Seminar on Affordable Housing

The Corporate Director – Communities informed the Committee of the Affordable Housing Seminar held at Portcullis House on 16 December 2003, organised by Hugo Swire MP. He advised Members that he considered the visit made by several Members and officers to the House of Commons on affordable housing had been very worthwhile in raising the profile of housing needs in East Devon.. Several key people had been present including the Chairman of the Housing Corporation and officers from the Government Office. Consideration was given to the cost of such visits and their value.

29 Dog Waste Bin Task and Finish Forum

Consideration was given to the report of the meeting of the Dog Waste Bin Task and Finish Forum that had been held on 26 August 2003. It was felt that in the current climate of financial restraint the Council should not be investing in more dog waste bins but instead looking to better relocate existing bins. Members were advised that new bins cost £250 to provide and erect and incurred an annual revenue cost of £150 per bin.

RECOMMENDED that no more dog waste bins be provided but the possible relocation of existing bins to meet current areas of demand be considered.

*30 Beach Management Task and Finish Forum

Consideration was given to the suggested terms of reference for the Beach Management Task and Finish Forum as recommended by the Forum. It was noted that the Beach Lifeguard service was included in the terms under the reference to the Blue Flag Awards.

RESOLVED that the terms of reference for the Beach Management Task and Finish Forum be agreed as set out in the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 16 December 2003 subject to the expansion of terms to include the beach lifeguard service.

Chairman Date.....