

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive of Bolsover District Council held in Committee Room One, Sherwood Lodge, Bolsover, on Monday 28th May 2012 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Councillor E. Watts – Chair

Members:-

Councillors K. Bowman, D. Kelly, D. McGregor, B.R. Murray-Carr and A.M. Syrett.

Officers:-

W. Lumley (Chief Executive Officer), P. Hackett (Director of Health and Well Being), K. Hopkinson (Director of Development), B. Mason (Director of Corporate Resources), S. Tomlinson (Director of Neighbourhoods), S.E.A. Sternberg (Solicitor to the Council), J. Arnold (Assistant Director of Planning) (to minute no. 32), P. Campbell (Head of Housing), B. Truswell (Head of Shared Procurement) (from minute no. 41), S. Chambers (Communications Officer), K. Drury (Customer Service and Access Officer) (from minute no. 33 to minute no. 36), N. Etches (Projects Officer, Policy and Research) (from minute no. 40 to minute no 42), R. Mooney (Project Co-ordinator) (from minute no.41 to minute no. 43), D. Riley (Clerk of Works) (from minute no. 41 to minute no.43) and R. Leadbeater (Democratic Services Officer).

Councillors H. Gilmour (to minute no. 31), K. Reid (to minute no. 31) and J. Smith (to minute no. 30) were also in attendance.

21. APOLOGY

An apology was received from Councillor A. Tomlinson.

22. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

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23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

24. MINUTES – 30TH APRIL 2012

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor
RESOLVED to add to the 3rd paragraph of minute no. 1106 after the words
Supporting People Contract, 'and this be subject to an initial report
to Executive'

Moved Councillor D. McGregor, seconded Councillor E. Watts
RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Executive held on 30th April
2012 be agreed as a true record, subject to the agreed
amendment.

Minute No. 1106 - Housing Department Quarterly Report

The Director of Neighbourhoods advised that the tender for the floating support
(mobile wardens) Supporting People Contract had been issued and this would be
discussed in further detail at the conclusion of the meeting.

25. RECORD OF DECISION NOTICES FROM THE JOINT BOARD MEETING HELD ON 15TH MAY 2012

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor D. Kelly
RESOLVED that the Decision Notices from the meeting of the Joint Board held
on 15th May 2012 be noted.

26. EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor D. Kelly
RESOLVED that the Executive Functions be agreed.

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27. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Moved by Councillor K. Bowman, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor
RESOLVED that the Representatives on Outside Bodies be appointed as outlined in the report.

28. IMPROVEMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW – UNUSED COUNCIL LAND, GARAGES AND GARAGE PLOTS

The Chair of the Improvement Scrutiny Committee presented the report which set out recommendations in respect of the Council's Unused Land, Garages and Garage Plots. A review had been carried out to address concerns that the Authority was expending resources to maintain garage sites, allotments and parcels of unused Council owned land which provided little or no financial return. Executive were requested to consider the Improvement Scrutiny Committee's proposals for future investment, disposal or development of these sites.

Members' attention was drawn to a summary of the sites considered as part of the review and to the costs associated with grounds maintenance and cleansing and administration of allotments.

Recommendation 1

Consider undertaking a project to identify Council-owned sites and garage plots that consume a disproportionate amount of the Grounds Maintenance and Cleansing budgets and look at measures to reduce problems.

Recommendation 2

Consider producing an Improvement Plan to put in place arrangements for the management of Council-owned sites and garage plots with a view to disposal and/or development.

Recommendation 3

- I. Examine the present rate charged for allotments and what services are delivered for that fee.
- II. Consider increasing the annual fee to cover the cost of administration and bring charging more into line with national trends and with the facilities provided.
- III. Consider the relative sizes of each plot and adjust the area so each plot is the same as the national average of 250/300 m²
- IV. Determine the exact number of allotments that are invoiced per year.
- V. Produce an allotments strategy, with a vision and clear objectives, detailing activities that will make best use of allotments in the future.
- VI. Approach Parish Councils to see if they would be interested in being part of a strategy for the disposal/development of their allotments.
- VII. Consider the creation of Allotments Management as an activity and approach Parish Councils as a potential income stream.

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Recommendation 4

Look into how Social Enterprises could develop unused Council plots of land

Executive Members were generally in support of the recommendations and were invited to raise questions, to which the Chair of the Improvement Scrutiny Committee responded.

The Chair suggested that in the interests of expediency, for future Scrutiny reviews, interim discussion take place with Cabinet prior to submission to Executive for approval. It was also requested that financial implications be fully explored as part of the reviews.

Lengthy discussion took place on various suggestions for the management, disposal and marketing of the unused sites and allotments.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor D. Kelly
RESOLVED that Executive approve the recommendations as outlined in the report.

29. IMPROVEMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW – USE OF CONSULTANTS

The Chair of the Improvement Scrutiny Committee presented the report which set out recommendations in respect of the Council's use of consultants. The review had been undertaken to identify where further savings could be made and whether the services engaged provided good value for money.

Members' attention was drawn to a summary of transactions included in the report. It was added that some inconsistencies in allocation of charges across cost codes had been noted. This would be revisited after 6 months to assess the effectiveness of new systems put in place.

Recommendation 1

Establish a system to ensure that the engagement of Consultants is subject to the same controls as the recruitment of temporary or agency workers i.e. signed off by the Director of Corporate Resources and Chief Executive Officer.

Recommendation 2

Ensure that steps are put in place to improve the recording of expenditure on Agency Staff, Software Purchases, Hired/Contract services and Professional/Consultancy Fees so that it's easier to analyse and monitor trends.

Recommendation 3

Revisit the 'Use of Consultants' Review when effective 'sort' mechanisms are in place that will allow an assessment of the costs of 'bought in' services; sorted by commissioning Officer and department

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Members welcomed the report and generally accepted the recommendations.

- Recommendation 1 - With regard to the proposed procedures to authorise the engagement of consultants, concerns were raised by officers in respect of a potential increase in bureaucracy balanced by the need to ensure expenditure was controlled. It was agreed that the issues raised would be considered by SAMT.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor D. Kelly
RESOLVED that Executive approve the recommendations as outlined in the report subject to SAMT's further consideration of Recommendation 1.

Councillor Smith left the meeting.

30. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY REVIEW – DEMAND FOR HOUSING IN BOLSOVER

The Chair of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee presented the report which set out recommendations in respect of housing demand across Bolsover District. On reviewing the waiting list for Council properties, the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee considered it timely to review the available housing provision and housing requirements across the District.

Recommendation 1

Produce a new strategy and vision for local housing that redefines the authority's role as a Housing provider and sets out a future for Bolsover as a major partner in the commercial house building, social and private rented sector.

Recommendation 2

Ensure that the Review Action Plan emphasises the importance of the Regeneration Corporate Aim for the District so that the need to attract "new" households to the District is recognised across the authority *

Recommendation 3

Produce a strategy and action plan for the reduction of the number of Empty Properties across all sectors.

Recommendation 4

Consider re-orientating the Housing Needs and Housing Options Teams.

Recommendation 5

Carry out a regular survey and assessment of Housing demand and need; establish a reliable data gathering and cleansing process.

Recommendation 6

Consider altering the Housing Application Form so more relevant data about tenants can be gathered.

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Recommendation 7

Produce a Plan to drive improvement in the prioritisation and turnover of Void Council properties.

Recommendation 8

Produce a communications strategy that gives advice and guidance to Tenants on the new Housing Benefits legislation.

Members considered the report and asked questions to which the Chair of Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee responded. Following discussion a number of issues were raised for further consideration:

- The review had not considered the effects on rent levels that may be brought about by Welfare Reform.
- Recommendation 1 - It was suggested that broader consultation with the Planning department and other services would have been beneficial as proposals in respect of the range of housing to be delivered and aspirational housing design would be considered as part of the Local Plan.
- Recommendation 4 – A review of the existing housing teams would impact across 3 directorates of the Council and would require significant resources to review.
- Recommendation 6 - It was generally considered that requesting financial information on housing application forms would not be supported and that comparison with Derbyshire Dales was not relevant as that Authority's housing stock was managed externally.

It was requested that the final paragraph of the explanatory note to the recommendation starting 'Whilst it is accepted.....' be removed from the report.

- Recommendation 7 – Undertaking work to properties after letting had been previously rejected by Members as this was considered too disruptive to tenants. Lettings were currently not delayed as a result of minor repairs that could be carried out whilst the tenant was in situ.

It was requested that the penultimate sentence of the explanatory note to the recommendation starting 'If the Housing Service can ensure.....' be removed from the report.

Following further discussion it was suggested that the report be deferred to enable further consideration of the points raised by Members.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor K. Bowman
RESOLVED that the report be deferred.

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Councillors Gilmour and Reid left the meeting.

31. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2012 - 2014

The Assistant Director of Planning presented the report to seek Members' approval of the draft Homelessness Strategy. This was a statutory document that had been produced in consultation with Environmental Health, Housing, and Regeneration and would cover a relatively short time period due to the expected changes that would be brought about by the Localism Act and Welfare Reform. Thereafter, consideration would be given to delivering a Joint Strategy to cover Bolsover, Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire District Councils.

Members' attention was drawn to the action plan appended to the report. Questions were raised in respect of the number of condition surveys carried out on private sector housing stock to which the Head of Housing responded.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor D. Kelly

RESOLVED that (1) the Homelessness Strategy and action plan be approved;

(2) the need to carry out a Private House Condition Survey be noted and reported to a future meeting.

REASON FOR DECISION: **To produce a Homelessness Strategy in accordance with the requirements of the 2002 Homelessness Act.**

(Assistant Director of Planning/Head of Democratic Services)

The Assistant Director of Planning left the meeting.

32. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Head of Housing presented the report to seek Executive approval of the initial capital programme for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Members' attention was drawn to the proposed budget for 2012/13 which was included in the report. Questions were raised in respect of unallocated amounts to which the Head of Housing responded.

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Moved by Councillor K. Bowman, seconded by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr
RESOLVED that the interim detailed HRA Capital Programme for 2012/13 be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION: **To allow capital works to be carried out on HRA properties.**

(Head of Housing)

The Customer Service and Access Officer joined the meeting.

33. HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (HAMS)

The Head of Housing presented the report to seek Member approval of the Housing Asset Management Strategy.

Members were advised that the majority of the Housing Revenue Account would be used to maintain and improve the condition of the current housing stock, however the new self financing arrangements would allow some headroom for other initiatives. The Housing Asset Management Strategy, which Members were requested to agree in principal, set out the main priorities for future capital work to be carried out.

Members asked questions in respect of changes to be implemented under the Localism Act 2011, including the production of a Tenancy Strategy, affordable rents, decent homes and assisted heating schemes, to which the Head of Housing responded.

Moved by Councillor K. Bowman, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor
RESOLVED that (1) the HRA Asset Management Strategy be adopted;

(2) delegated authority be given to the Head of Housing in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Housing Management Portfolio Holder to make minor changes to the Strategy arising from current work;

(3) the HRA Asset Management Strategy is reviewed, at least once a year by the Executive.

REASON FOR DECISION: **To agree the Housing Asset Management Strategy.**

(Head of Housing)

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34. WORKING NEIGHBOURHOODS FUND MONITORING REPORT – QUARTER 4 AND 2011/12 END OF YEAR UPDATE

The Chair presented the report to update Members on the Working Neighbourhoods fund for the 4th quarter and year end for 2011/12.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor E. Watts.
RESOLVED that the report be received.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure that WNF is targeted to best effect.

35. COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The Customer Service and Access Officer presented the report to provide Members with information in respect of the number of compliments, comments, complaints and Freedom of Information requests for the period 1st January 2012 to 31st March 2012.

Members' attention was drawn to the 2011/12 summary included in the report and statistical information for the last quarter was relayed to the meeting.

The Customer Service and Access Officer advised that the target of 100% has been achieved for responding to stage two complaints within 20 working days for 2011/12. All other customer service targets in respect of written comments, stage three complaints and freedom of information requests had also been achieved.

Questions were raised with regard to telephony waiting times, which, Members were advised, could be provided by the Customer Contact Manager.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor
RESOLVED that the report be received.

REASON FOR DECISION: To keep Members informed of volumes and trends regarding compliments, comments complaints and Freedom of Information requests.

The Customer Service and Access Officer left the meeting.

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36. REPAIRS TO PLEASLEY VALE POND

The Portfolio Holder for Social Inclusion presented the report to seek Executive approval for Transition Grant funding, to enable repairs to the mill pond at Pleasley Vale Outdoor Activity Centre to be carried out.

A leak in the pond had caused a significant reduction in water levels which had prevented water based activities being provided since August 2011. This had resulted in considerable loss of income to the Authority. The financial implications were detailed in the report.

Moved by Councillor A.M. Syrett, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor
RESOLVED that a sum of up to £32,000 is agreed to cover the costs of the works outlined within this report, with those costs to be met from the Transition Grant available to the Council in respect of the 2012/13 financial year.

REASON FOR DECISION: **In order to allow the reinstatement of the pond at Pleasley Vale Outdoor Activity Centre.**

(Director of Health and Well Being)

37. ARREARS IRRECOVERABLE ITEMS OVER £1,000

The Director of Corporate Resources presented the report to seek Members' approval to write off irrecoverable debts.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor
RESOLVED that approval be given to write off the irrecoverable items including costs amounting to £28,322.21 with the proviso that should any of the debts become collectable, the amounts be re-debited.

REASON FOR DECISION: **In order that outstanding debts can be written off.**

(Director of Corporate Resources)

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38. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor E. Watts

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the stated Paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and it is not in the public interest for that to be revealed.

39. ARREARS IRRECOVERABLE ITEMS OVER £1,000 EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 2

The Director of Corporate Resources presented the report to seek Members' approval to write off irrecoverable debts.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor

RESOLVED that approval be given to write off the irrecoverable items including costs amounting to £30,790.55 with the proviso that should any of the debts become collectable, the amounts be re-debited.

REASON FOR DECISION: **In order that outstanding debts can be written off.**

(Director of Corporate Resources)

40. LEASE OF LAND AT STANHOPE STREET, BRAMLEY VALE EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 3

The Head of Housing presented the report to seek Members' approval to lease a parcel of Council owned land to site an electricity sub station. The lease would provide a small annual income to the Council and was expected to improve the capacity and quality of service in the local area.

Members' attention was drawn to a plan of the proposed site.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor K. Bowman

RESOLVED that the Council grants a 21 year lease of land at Stanhope Street, Bramley Vale to Western Power Distribution for the location of an electricity sub station on the terms proposed.

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REASON FOR DECISION: To secure an annual income for the Council and improvements to the capacity and quality of service of the electricity infrastructure in the area.

(Senior Valuer/Solicitor to the Council)

The Head of Shared Procurement, Projects Officer and Clerk of Works joined the meeting.

41. COMMERCIAL PROPERTY LEASE APPROVAL EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 3

The Projects Officer, Policy and Research presented the report to seek Executive approval of five lease agreements which had been recently secured and to request delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director of Regeneration to agree future commercial property lease agreements.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor

RESOLVED that (1) the Council enters into the lease agreement relating to the Market Store, Clowne on the terms proposed and agreed with both Legal and Regeneration;

(2) the Council enters in to the lease agreement relating to the 2a Station Road, Clowne on the terms proposed and agreed with both Legal and Regeneration;

(3) the Council enters in to the lease agreement relating to the Retail Unit at Cavendish Walk on the terms proposed and agreed with both Legal and Regeneration;

(4) the Council enters in to the lease agreement relating to the 3 & 4 Vernon Street, Shirebrook on the terms proposed and agreed with both Legal and Regeneration;

(5) the Council enters in to the lease agreement relating to the Hilltop Barn, Bolsover on the terms proposed and agreed with both Legal and Regeneration.

RECOMMENDED that (6) Standards Committee and Council approve an amendment to the delegation scheme to include delegated authority for the Assistant Director of Regeneration to agree commercial property lease agreements relating to the Council's commercial property portfolio and for leases relating

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to electricity sub-stations and gas governor sites in consultation with the Strategic Alliance Management Team and the Leader and Deputy Leader.

REASON FOR DECISION: **To enable the Council to manage its commercial properties.**

(Assistant Director of Regeneration/Council/Standards)

42. TENDER EVALUATION OUTCOME – EXTERNAL INSULATION CONTRACT 2012 EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 3

The Head of Shared Procurement presented the report to seek Executive approval to appoint a contractor to supply external insulation to a number of Council properties.

Of the seven contractors invited to tender, four were received by the specified deadline. These had been evaluated on a cost and quality basis. The detailed evaluation was provided in the report for Members' consideration.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor
RESOLVED that the contract be awarded to K & E Peck Ltd in accordance with the details set out in the report.

REASON FOR DECISION: **To secure best value on a cost and quality basis.**

(Head of Shared Procurement)

The Project Co-ordinator and Clerk of Works left the meeting

43. TENDER EVALUATION OUTCOME – CCTV MONITORING, SYSTEM UPGRADE AND MAINTENANCE CONTRACT EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 3

The Director of Neighbourhoods presented the report to seek Members' views on the outcome of a tender evaluation exercise for CCTV monitoring, system upgrade and maintenance contract, which had been run in partnership with Bassetlaw District Council.

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Of the six companies invited to tender, three had been received by the specified deadline. The tenders were evaluated on a cost and quality basis and full details of the evaluation were outlined in the report for Members' consideration. The Director of Neighbourhoods provided Members with further detail and options to consider within the proposed scheme including the potential costs for a five year period. Members were advised that the proposals would exceed the current budgetary provision.

Members considered the number and proposed siting of cameras, the financial implications and potential involvement of Parish Councils and Derbyshire Police. Following discussion, Members agreed to support the scheme in principal but would not support the budget increase under the current proposed scheme. The Director of Neighbourhoods was requested to provide further information to a future meeting within the 90 days period that the tender was available for consideration.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor E. Watts

RESOLVED that the item be deferred with a further report be provided to a future meeting of the Executive.

REASON FOR DECISION: **To allow consideration to be given to the provision of an appropriate scheme within the content of the agreed budget provision.**

(Director of Neighbourhoods/Head of Democratic Services)

The meeting concluded at 1335 hours.