

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE
HELD AT IVYBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL ON THURSDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2008**

MEMBERS

* Cllr R J Tucker - Chairman

* Cllr P W Hitchins - Vice-Chairman

* Cllr N A Barnes

* Cllr T J Hewitt

* Cllr H D Bastone

* Cllr M J Hicks

* Cllr B E Carson

* Cllr M F Saltern

* Denotes attendance

Also in attendance at the invitation of the Chairman:
Cllrs K J Baldry, G J Fielden, D W May and J W Squire

Also in attendance but not participating:
Cllrs J I G Blackler and P Coulson

Officers in attendance:

All Agenda Items: Chief Executive, Strategic Director (Community);
Item 7 (minute E.56/08 below refers): Head of Planning and Building Control.
Items 7, 8 and 9 (minutes E.56/08, E.57/08 and E.58/08 below refer): Head of
Community Regeneration

E.52/08 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 4 September 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to resolution E.47/08 (f) being amended to read:-

‘That the current arrangements which currently provides free car parking in Ivybridge be continued until implementation of the above concessionary car parking scheme.’

E.53/08 MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

It was noted that the following Members were in attendance and participated during the discussion on the under-mentioned items:-.

Item 7 (minute E.56/08 below refers) – Cllr May;

Items 7, 8 and 10 (minute E.56/08, E.57/08 and E.59/08 below refer) – Cllr Baldry;

Items 8 and 9 (minute E.57/08 and E.59/08 below refer) – Cllr Squire;

Item 10 (minute E.59/08 below refers) – Cllr Fielden.

E.54/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting, these were recorded as follows:-

Cllr P W Hitchins declared a prejudicial interest in item 9 'Plymouth Urban Fringe DPD' (minute E.58/08 below refers) and left the meeting during the discussion and vote on this item.

E.55/08 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with Executive procedure rules, it was noted that one public question had been received as follows:-

Question received from Lydia Somerville

'Given the importance of the Sustainable Communities Act adopted by Parliament last year, and given the need of the community to know that their council is looking positively at the potential of the Act to improve the wellbeing of the area, when does the Council envisage debating this issue and within what timescale?'

In response it was noted that the Council understand that the Secretary of State would shortly be issuing guidance about how a Council, working with its local communities, could make proposals to Government under this legislation. Once this information had been received, the Council could consider how best to use the Act to the benefit of the district.

Following a supplementary question regarding whether there would be a designated Member to drive the issue forward, the Chairman advised that once all the information had been received, it was probable that a specific Member would be delegated to champion the issue.

E.56/08 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL – FEES FOR PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING ADVICE

Consideration was given to a report which provided a sixth monthly review of the initiative to charge for pre-application planning advice. It was noted that the pre-application charge had been in place for four months and there had been little resistance to the charges. However, some agents had questioned the charges for the smaller schemes involving a low number of dwellings being disproportionately high. Notwithstanding the fact that the charges were designed to reflect the amount of time spent in pre-application negotiations, rather than being an indirect tax on development, officers had concluded that there was scope to vary the fees. Overall, the charges were considered beneficial, as not only did they offset the cost of the service, but they also helped instil a discipline and focus for this important work.

Following a query regarding the timescale for pre application advice and how rigid it was to be applied, Members were advised that every effort would be made to deal with an enquiry within six weeks. To date no complaints had been received by the service, however, Members were requested to inform the Head of Planning and Building Control of any concerns they had received.

During discussion, a Member also expressed concern with the apparent cost difference between class C (6-9 dwellings) to class B (11-199 dwellings) feeling it was disproportionate. In response, it was noted that the number of dwellings being discussed did not necessarily imply that it would consume more or less officer time.

In conclusion, Members requested that a further monitoring report be presented to the Executive in six months time.

RESOLVED

1. That charges for pre-application advice be retained, but be amended as set out in paragraph 8 of the presented report;
2. That no fee be charged for parish council, voluntary sector, charitable trust, or not-for-profit organisation development enquires.

E.57/08

REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE SOUTH WEST – SECRETARY OF STATE’S PROPOSED CHANGES

Consideration was given to a report which recommends a response to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). It was noted that many of the Secretary of State’s proposed changes to the RSS were considered to add clarity to the document and would be welcomed. However, the report identified several concerns which, it was recommended, should be raised as comments on the proposed changes.

During discussion, reference was made to:-

- i. the reduced distinction in the RSS between the status of the region’s largest cities and towns. Members expressed concern that this would hamper the economic growth in the larger cities;
- ii. the lack of reference to strategic employment sites in the RSS. Members felt that strategically significant employment sites, such as Langage, should be identified in order to promote their development and champion the area. Therefore, Members **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** an addition to paragraph 17 (e), of the report, to seek specific reference in the RSS to the importance of Langage as a strategically significant quality employment site. Furthermore, the Strategic Director (Community) agreed to produce a supplementary

background paper, in consultation with partners, to promote Langage Business Park;

- iii. the difficulties of progressing affordable housing initiatives in the current economic climate. The importance of addressing how the Council could best respond to this and facilitate needed development and community well-being in the district as community leaders was noted. Members were advised that the RSS gave flexibility to be proactive in this area;
- iv. the increased scale of the Sherford new community. The report identified a proposed increase of 500 dwellings to a total 6,000 in the period to 2026. A Member expressed concern that this would adversely affect the balance and viability of Sherford and was not comfortable with this proposal. A Member also commented that the additional dwellings might be more sustainably accommodated elsewhere on the Plymouth fringes. In response, officers advised that work previously carried out on the sustainability of other locations for development had affirmed the relatively high sustainability credentials of the Sherford area, but that it was important to affirm that the provisions of the RSS must not breach the principles of the adopted Sherford Area Action Plan (AAP).

However, Members **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** that the response should state that the increased provision of 500 additional homes at Sherford was not welcomed;

- v. the importance of developing a gypsies and travellers policy.

It was then:-

RESOLVED

That the comments, as set out below, be agreed as the Council's response to the Secretary of State's proposed changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West:-

- a. The RSS should make the distinction in function between the region's larger and smaller SSCTs clearer in order that key regeneration programmes are supported and not hampered;
- b. The housing growth figures for the South Hams are acceptable on the basis that, in combination with the adopted South Hams LDF Core Strategy target of 50% affordable housing provision for the district as a whole, they will enable progress towards addressing the urgently pressing need for affordable homes;

- c. The reference to provision of affordable housing policy “with authorities specifying rates of up to 60% or higher in areas of greatest need” should be reinstated in order to add clarity to the manner in which policy should be applied across the region;
- d. The increased provision of 500 additional homes at Sherford is not welcomed but the RSS should make it clear that the increase should be delivered without breaching the development principles set out in the adopted Sherford AAP, particularly the built extent of the development;
- e. The increased provisions for employment growth are noted and the fact that they are based on HMAs and TTWAs will enable sub-regional and LDF work to secure the most appropriate local distribution. However, Langage should be specifically included as a strategically significant quality employment site;
- f. The RSS should more clearly support the vision for Plymouth’s renaissance through the regeneration of its urban area giving full recognition to the sensitive interface with adjoining rural areas including nationally designated landscapes;
- g. The RSS should continue to similarly promote Torbay’s regeneration through development of its urban area giving full recognition to the sensitive interface with adjoining rural areas including nationally designated landscapes;
- h. The provisions for gypsies and travellers are noted and appropriately expressed at a strategic level so that site locations will be determined locally

E.58/08 **PLYMOUTH URBAN FRINGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT**

A report was considered which recommended that a joint cross development plan document (DPD) be prepared with Plymouth City Council. It was felt that production of a joint DPD would be a more efficient and effective use of resources and enable better cross-boundary planning.

A non-Executive Member requested reassurance that significant decisions would come back to the relevant Council body for ratification and not be made under delegated authority by the joint committee. Officers advised that the draft Memorandum of Establishment required the unanimous agreement of Members of the joint committee in relation to the joint DPD. Furthermore, a number of non-Executive Members wished for their interest to be nominated onto the joint committee be noted.

RESOLVED

1. That the principle of producing a joint cross boundary DPD for the Plymouth Urban Fringe, subject to satisfactory governance arrangements, be endorsed;
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Strategic Director (Community), in consultation with the Leader, to finalise the joint arrangements.

E.59/08 CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING

Members considered a report which advised of progress made on the approved Capital Programme for 2008/2009 and 2009/2010, as agreed by Council (minute 40/08 refers).

In introducing the report, the Strategic Director (Community) advised that the projects were currently on target, although progress was slow on the replacement of the Leat at Dartmouth. It was noted that issues here were complex and required carefully considered pre-feasibility work and consultation. Furthermore, due to the current economic climate, there was concern in relation to the slow down in housing developments being brought forward. Officers were therefore investigating the feasibility of purchasing existing properties, in collaboration with the housing associations, to ensure an on going supply of affordable housing.

During discussion, Members expressed concern in relation to the problems facing officers in securing affordable housing. It was felt that a direct approach needed to be taken to secure housing and therefore Members supported the initiative of working with RSLs to help fund the purchasing of existing properties on the open market. Furthermore, Members also highlighted the importance of the Council's Corporate Priorities' 1 (Affordable Housing) and 2 (Good Jobs) and therefore an addition to the recommendation was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** to emphasise this and enable officers to investigate innovative ways to progress the key priorities.

It was then:-

RESOLVED

That the Executive:-

1. have noted the progress made to date on the implementation of the approved Capital Programme; and,

2. have reviewed the risks and opportunities relating to the various projects to provide direction to the Capital Programme Working Group;
3. support a broad ranging approach to achieving affordable housing by innovative methods including market appraisals and option enhancement. It further recognises the need for considerable emphasis to be placed on Corporate Priority 1 and Corporate Priority 2 in combination in view of the economic situation.

E.60/08 **PROPOSED DEED OF RATIFICATION – LAND AT FORE STREET CAR PARK, KINGBRIDGE**

Members considered a report which sought authority for the Council to enter into a Deed of ratification regarding a piece of land at Fore Street Car Park, Kingsbridge (and currently forming part of the Council's registered title under DN 522258) between the Council and the legal owners of 84 Fore Street, Kingsbridge. Furthermore, the report also sought approval for the Council's scheme of delegation to be altered so that minor property transactions of this type need not be referred to Executive for approval.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Council enters into a Deed of Ratification with legal owners of the piece of land at Fore Street Car Park, Kingsbridge (which is currently shown as forming part of the Council's title DN 522258); and,
- (ii) that the Council be **RECOMMENDED** that the scheme of delegation be amended in order that delegated authority be given to the head of Property Services to effect minor freehold disposals of land not required for operational purposes up to £25,000 in value to the owners of adjacent or nearby property of Statutory Undertakers.

E.61/08 **REPORTS OF OTHER BODIES**

RESOLVED

That the following be received and that any recommendations contained therein be approved:

Community Policy Development Group – 17 September 2008

CPDG.12/08 Homelessness Review and Strategy

Members **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** an amendment to the recommendation to ensure that authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (Community) in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing.

It was then:-

RESOLVED

That the strategy and action plan be adopted and that authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (Community) in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing to agree minor changes to the strategy and action plan.

(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM 5.00PM ON 13 OCTOBER 2008, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF E.60/08 (ii) WHICH IS A RECOMMENDATION TO THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING ON 13 OCTOBER 2008, UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 18).

(Meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 11.10 am).

Chairman