

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE
HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE ON THURSDAY, 8 APRIL 2010**

MEMBERS

* Cllr R J Tucker - Chairman

* Cllr P W Hitchins - Vice-Chairman

* Cllr H D Bastone

* Cllr M J Hicks

* Cllr B E Carson

* Cllr M J Howarth

∅ Cllr J D Hawkins

* Cllr M F Saltern

* Denotes attendance

∅ Denotes apology for absence

Also in attendance and participating:

Cllrs J H Baverstock, G J Fielden, R D Gilbert, F J Hawke, D W May, C M Pannell,
J T Pennington, J W Squire and R C Steer

Also in attendance but not participating:

Cllrs R J Carter and P H Cook

Officers in attendance:

All Agenda Items: Chief Executive, Strategic Director (Community), Strategic
Director (Resources) and Senior Member Support Officer;

Item 8 (minute E.114/09 below refers): Head of Landscape and Leisure; and
Items 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 (minutes E.115/09, E.116/09, E.117/09, E.118/09 and
E.119/09 below refer): Head of Property Services.

E.108/09 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 4 March 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

E.109/09 **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.113/09 below refers) – Cllr Pannell;

Item 8 (minute E.114/09 below refers) – Cllrs May, Pannell, Pennington and Steer;

Item 9 (minute E.115/09 below refers) – Cllrs Gilbert, May, Pennington and Squire;

Item 10 (minute E.116/09 below refers) – Cllr Pennington;

Item 11 (minute E.117/09 below refers) – Cllr Hawke; and

Item 12 (minutes E.118/09 and E.119/09 below refer) – Cllrs Baverstock, Fielden, Pannell and Squire.

E.110/09 URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman advised that the next scheduled meeting of the Executive on 6 May 2010 would be cancelled, as this was the day of the General Election. Therefore, the next meeting of the Executive would take place on 10 June 2010, unless any item of business required that an urgent meeting be convened.

E.111/09 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:

Cllrs Hicks and Hitchins both declared a personal interest in Item 13 – ‘Disposal of Two Properties – 17 Ebrington Street, Kingsbridge and the Former Telephone Exchange at Thurlestone and Amendment to Financial Instructions and the Scheme of Delegations’ (Minute E.120/09 below refers). Cllr Hicks declared his interest by virtue of being a Member of the Board of South Devon Rural Housing Association. Cllr Hitchins declared his interest by virtue of being a trustee of Woolwell Community Centre. Both Members remained in the meeting for the discussion and took part in the vote on this item.

Cllr Bastone declared a personal interest in Item 11 – Dartmouth Supermarkets s106 Agreements – Outline Expenditure Plan for Park and Ride Scheme (Minute E.117/09 below refers) by virtue of being a member of the Dartmouth Parking Group. He remained in the meeting and took part in the vote on this item.

E.112/09 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was noted that no public questions had been received.

E.113/09 SHARED SERVICES

The Leader introduced a report on shared services which provided Members with an update on progress made since the last Executive meeting. He advised that Members at both South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council felt positive about the progress being made.

It was then:

RESOLVED:-

That the report be noted.

E.114/09 LANDSCAPE AND LEISURE REVIEW – PRIORITISING IN TOUGH TIMES

Consideration was given to a report which outlined the options for the future delivery of functions currently provided by the Landscape and Leisure Service Group. These functions were predominately discretionary but highly valued by the community, with links to statutory legislation particularly relating to CP3. The work also included the duty of care placed upon the Council in the management and maintenance of Open Space Assets.

The Lead Executive Member for Distinct Environment introduced the report and stated that there were concerns over how the service could run in the future if cuts of 20% were imposed on local authorities. Mandatory services would still need to exist, so the pressure on discretionary services would be even higher. This report sought to establish the means to look at the options that may be available. A workshop of Members had been held and the overall conclusion was that money would need to be generated to offset the reduction in income. The Lead Executive Member then advised that he would like to amend the second recommendation contained in the report, to include the wording, 'as a means of generating additional income'.

During discussion, the following points were made:

- The Strategic Director (Community) advised that the review into sharing arrangements with West Devon Borough Council may need to be accelerated as a result of organisational changes taking place at the authority;
- The Head of Landscape and Leisure confirmed that the funding from the Strategic Issues Reserve would be used to research existing trusts and to take advice from targeted consultants. The Leader asked that Members be kept advised on how the money was being spent. The Head of Landscape and Leisure replied that Members would be included on the working group that would look at the options;
- An Executive Member stated that he was pleased to see this early initiative, however, he felt the timescale may need to be two to five years, rather than five to ten years. Another Member added that it was important to take advantage of early opportunities;
- An Executive Member asked that integrated work be considered, for example with Tor Homes and Devon County Council. The Strategic Director (Community) replied that discussions had taken place with Tor Homes and with the Head of Environment Services to progress integrated working;
- A Member asked that town and parish councils, and existing partners be included in the discussions. Another Member asked that the working group proceed with caution, and agreed that towns and parishes should be involved, particularly rural parishes who tended to do a lot of work themselves.

It was then:

RESOLVED:

1. That the investigation of a range of possible options for future delivery of the service, including the feasibility of establishing a Community Greenspace Trust/Social Enterprise partnership arrangement be approved, with a report to be presented back on the outcome at a future Executive meeting;
2. That approval be given to the establishment of a working group with the appropriate mix of professional skills and experience to examine the viability and business case for an alternative form of service delivery, including the possibility of creating either a new organisation or joining an existing body as a means of generating additional income;
3. That Member representatives be appointed to the working group to oversee the processes contained in an Improvement and Efficiency Project;
4. That the outcome of the Stokenham Pilot on devolved services and consultation on the potential transfer of assets as part of this work be taken into account; and
5. That the allocation of up to £10,000 from the Strategic issues Reserve be approved to support the review.

E.115/09 FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES

A report was considered which advised Members of the existing revenue costs of the Council's administrative building at Follaton House and to explain how these could be reduced by making better use of the accommodation and leasing parts of the building which would become surplus to our needs.

The Lead Executive Member for Prosperity introduced the report and advised that a working group had been established to look at the issues. There had been the opportunity for a large scale let to Devon County Council (DCC) although progress had stalled.

The Strategic Director (Community) advised that he had recently received a communication from (DCC) in relation to this matter and he quoted as follows:

“Devon County Council are considering a number of options in relation to office accommodation in Totnes and the surrounding area. One of the options being considered is the potential use of Follaton House and the authority will be seeking to ascertain the costs of occupancy to allow further consideration”.

During discussion, the following points were made:

- The advantages of a long term let to an established organisation, rather than short term lets to smaller businesses was highlighted;
- An Executive Member asked that space for start up business units be included, which would aid economic recovery in South Hams but the appropriateness of this approach was questioned;
- The need for this work to be carried out, regardless of whether DCC were involved;
- Whilst in favour of home working for staff, which would enable changes to accommodation to be made, it was important to ensure service needs were met;
- The fact that the business plan was key and the return on investment to make the necessary changes would not be expected in the first few years.

Finally, it was confirmed that there were no immediate plans to relocate the administration HQ of South Hams District Council to a more central location.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the principle of making more efficient use of the accommodation at Follaton House, including investigating leasing space to a range of external organisations, be supported;
2. That delegated authority be given to the Council's Head of Property Services to develop detailed proposals to more effectively allocate space within Follaton House and to investigate leasing space surplus to requirements, in consultation with the appropriate lead Executive Member; and
3. That the Head of Property Services report progress of the project to the Executive as part of the monitoring reports for the Capital Programme.

E.116/09

HOMES AND COMMUNITIES AGENCY (HCA) – THE SINGLE CONVERSATION – IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH HAMS

A report was considered which advised Members of the new process established by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and asked Members to confirm the investment programme across the district. The programme was based on the Local Development Framework and actions agreed in various other strategies such as the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Housing Strategy, Economic Development Action Plan and the Public Space Strategy.

The Lead Executive Member for Housing introduced the report and advised Members that the Council had no choice but to accept the recommendations in the report. The Leader added that there was an issue with the geographical split, which put South Hams District Council in a different area to Plymouth City Council. On a recent visit, the HCA officer also expressed his concerns. The Leader also asked that recommendation (b) be amended to allow for the Lead Executive Member for Housing to be included in any consultation on the document.

The Strategic Director (Community) explained that this process was being advocated across the wider Total Place agenda. It was a process set up for urban areas, where it would work well. However, it was more difficult to apply the same principle in a rural area.

Whilst some Members advocated a minimalist approach and felt the Council should do as little as possible, the Strategic Director (Community) advised that it was necessary to engage in the process to get the most from it, and that the document would require updating on a year on year basis.

It was then:

RESOLVED

- (i) That the report and appendix 1 as presented, represented the current investment priorities across the District for the purpose of the Homes and Communities Agency Single Conversation process; and
- (ii) That the Strategic Director (Community) be granted delegated authority to update the document on a regular basis, in consultation with the Leader and Lead Executive Member for Housing.

E.117/09 **DARTMOUTH SUPERMARKETS S106 AGREEMENTS – OUTLINE EXPENDITURE PLAN FOR PARK AND RIDE SCHEME**

A report was considered which sought the Executive's agreement in principle to indicative expenditure (as outlined in the presented report) as a contribution to the Park and Ride service and associated works. The report also sought authority to agree the delegation of responsibility for future spend to officers and Members as recommended in the report.

The Lead Executive Member for Prosperity advised that this was in fact a shared report, and the objective was to increase and maintain the footfall into Dartmouth. A Member added that recommendation b) should be amended to include the Member for Dartmouth Townstal, as traditionally all Dartmouth Members had worked together.

It was then:-

RESOLVED

- a) That agreement be given in principle to the indicative elements of expenditure in the presented report, as contributions towards Park and Ride projects as permitted in the two Section 106 agreements; and
- b) That responsibility for project expenditure be delegated to the Strategic Director (Resources), in consultation with the Executive Portfolio holder for Environment, the three Dartmouth and Kingswear Ward Members and the Dartmouth Townstal Ward Member.

E.118/09 **CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING**

A report was considered which advised Members of progress to the approved capital programme for 2009/10 to 2011/12 agreed at Council on 4 February 2010 (minute 82/09 refers).

In introducing the report, the Lead Executive Member for Prosperity highlighted progress in relation to Jubilee Pier and Ivybridge Swimming Pool.

A Member advised the Executive that there had been disappointment that the Environment Agency had decided not to contribute to the cost of work to reconstruct Jubilee Pier. There was, however, a link between Jubilee Pier and the Fish Quay and a feasibility study for work on the Fish Quay was imminent. In addition, The European Union was holding funds that would enable improvement works in relation to Fish Quays.

The Member asked that work on the Fish Quay be brought forward to help release funds which could contribute to works at both the Fish Quay and Jubilee Pier. The Head of Property Services agreed that this was an excellent idea and would progress as quickly as he could.

E.119/09 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED

That in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in order to avoid the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act

Members then discussed the exempt appendix which had been presented as part of the report. The Strategic Director (Community) explained that the appendix included information in relation to budgets set aside for projects, and therefore was commercially sensitive.

Discussion during this session included explanation in relation to items held for contingency, and, in response to a question from a local Ward Member, it was agreed that an update on the progress and timetable for Ivybridge Pool would be circulated to Members.

It was then:-

RESOLVED

That the public and press be readmitted.

It was then:-

RESOLVED

1. That Members welcome progress made to date on the implementation of the approved capital programme; and
2. That the award of the contract to replace the sports hall floor at Quayside Leisure Centre, as set out in the presented report, be approved.

E.120/09

DISPOSAL OF TWO PROPERTIES – 17 EBRINGTON STREET, KINGSBRIDGE AND THE FORMER TELEPHONE EXCHANGE AT THURLESTONE AND AMENDMENT TO FINANCIAL INSTRUCTIONS AND THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION

A report was considered which firstly sought approval for the disposal of one property on the open market and the transfer of a parcel of land to South Devon Rural Housing Association, and secondly, asked that in future, minor property transactions need not be the subject of a report to Executive by changing the delegated authority afforded to the Head of Property Services.

The Lead Executive Member for Prosperity introduced the report and then asked the Lead Executive Member for Housing to comment on the proposal for Thurlestone. He explained that this was an exciting project, which could see the first Code Level 5 properties in the District. The scheme proposed for Thurlestone was for pre-made units and they could be erected within a short timescale. The starting point for the project was the delivery of land and, whilst foregoing the market price, the Council was not losing the asset in total. Members queried the additional cost to achieve Code Level 5 over Code Level 4, and were told that this cost amounted to approximately £25,000 per unit. The housing would be offered for intermediate level rent. The detail of the project was still being worked up and officers would ensure that it represented value for money.

It was then:-

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Former Telephone Exchange, Thurlestone be declared surplus to requirements and transferred to South Devon Rural Housing Association on terms to be negotiated by the Head of Property Services;
- (2) That the Old Malthouse, 17 Ebrington Street, Kingsbridge be declared surplus to requirements and sold on the open market on terms to be negotiated by the Head of Property Services;
- (3) That the Monitoring Officer be requested to include in the forthcoming review of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers, provision for minor property transactions to be delegated to the Head of Property Services; and
- (4) That the Head of Property Services be given interim delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader, as set out in the presented report.

(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM 5.00PM ON MONDAY, 19 APRIL 2010 UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 18).

(Meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 11.45 am).

Chairman