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COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 7 April 2016 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Matlock at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor Richard FitzHerbert - In the Chair

Councillors Jason Atkin, Deborah Botham, Richard Bright, Martin Burfoot, Sue Burfoot, Albert Catt, David Chapman, Tom Donnelly, Ann Elliott, Graham Elliott, Steve Flitter, Helen Froggatt, Chris Furness, Susan Hobson, Vicky Massey, Tony Millward BEM, Jean Monks, Tony Morley, Garry Purdy, Irene Ratcliffe, Mike Ratcliffe, Lewis Rose OBE, Peter Slack, Andrew Statham, Jacquie Stevens, John Tibenham, Philippa Tilbrook and Joanne Wild.

Dorcas Bunton (Chief Executive), Sandra Lamb (Head of Corporate Services), Paul Wilson (Corporate Director), Tim Braund (Head of Regulatory Services), Karen Henriksen (Head of Resources), Rob Cogings (Head of Housing), Jim Fearn (Communications and Marketing Manager) and Jackie Cullen (Committee Assistant).

Anthony Riley, Director of Development and Operations, Waterloo Housing Group.

PRESENTATION

Anthony Riley, Director of Development and Operations, Waterloo Housing Group, gave a short presentation on the background of Waterloo Housing and the reasons for, and benefits of, their merger with Dales Housing Group.

Mr Riley then took questions from the floor.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jennifer Bower, Sue Bull, Alyson Hill, Joyce Pawley, Mark Salt, Andrew Shirley and Colin Swindell.

373/15 – MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, seconded by Councillor Tony Millward BEM and

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Council meetings held on 3 March 2016,
(unanimously) Special Council on 3 March 2016 and Special Council on 16 March
2016 be approved as a correct record.

The Minutes were signed by the Chairman.

374/15 – CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

A list of the Chairman’s engagements between 29th January and 7th April 2016 was distributed at the meeting.

375/15 – COMMITTEES

It was moved by Councillor Jean Monks, seconded by Councillor Tom Donnelly and

RESOLVED That the non-exempt minutes of the Committees listed in the Minute
(unanimously) Book for the period 3 March 2016 to 17 March 2016 be received.

376/15 – QUESTIONS (RULE OF PROCEDURE 15)

Councillor Mike Ratcliffe asked the following question of Councillor Lewis Rose, Leader of the Council:

“Devolution will only succeed if the public sees that local areas are leading on it. Having made a majority decision to sign up as constituent members of the North Midlands Devolution Agreement would the Leader of the Council please update us on the current situation and whether this local authority is making efforts to persuade Whitehall to accept the agreement albeit it with a reduced membership?”

Councillor Rose responded as follows:

Council agreed to support constituent membership of the North Midlands Combined Authority and Devolution Deal but subject to an equitable balance of local authorities.

As Leader of the Council, I continue to attend meetings to seek progress on the North Midlands deal. The last meeting I attended was with the Permanent Secretary of DCLG, Melanie Dawes, who made it clear that the Government position remains that it is for the local partners to sort out the geography, and not the Government. She did state however that the Government understands that the reality of geography in this part of the world is ‘messy’.

Members will be aware that Chesterfield have opted for constituent Membership at SCR, and the County Council are challenging this position.

Members also know that South Derbyshire, Erewash, High Peak and Amber Valley have opted not to join the North Midland deal agreements. So not only is the geography question

unsettled, in terms of Derbyshire representation at the table, it is decidedly unbalanced currently.

The Government has also made it clear with the PCC and local government elections and Referendum to come, and the consequent purdah periods these bring, there will be little work done on further negotiations over the coming months. However it is something they wish to come back to – the Permanent Secretary made it clear Mayoral Combined Authorities will in time become the rule rather than the exception.

So we continue to attend meetings and contribute to the debates, but there are still many matters to resolve before any final decisions are made and unless the current geographical make-up changes, the equitable balance question will remain an issue for this Council.

Supplementary comment from Councillor Ratcliffe:

Councillor Ratcliffe thanked Councillor Rose for his informative answer, and acknowledged the important financial consequences from the devolution agreement that would benefit this authority, such as the ability to access funds to assist the Derbyshire Dales to achieve its housing quotas. In this regard, Councillor Ratcliffe asked for reassurance that the Council would seek funding wherever the opportunity arose (for example Government provision to assist in the remediation of brownfield sites), and to make such applications irrespective of the outcome of the devolution deal.

Councillor Rose replied that Derbyshire Dales District Council had always tried to bid for whatever funds were available, including LEPs and European Funding applications.

377/15 – SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

Council considered a report giving an update on the Syrian refugee crisis, following the Prime Minister's announcement in 2015 that the UK would accept 20,000 Syrian refugees. Local authorities had been encouraged to commit to accommodating families and many had responded positively to the crisis. The Minister for Syrian Refugees, Richard Harrington MP, had contacted council leaders asking for their help and visited regions to reinforce the Government's commitment to the programme; however it seemed very unlikely that Derbyshire Dales would be considered as an area for Asylum seeker dispersal.

A group of officers from a wide range of county council departments, district councils, Clinical Commissioning Groups and the voluntary sector had formed the Derbyshire Syrian VPR (Vulnerable Person Resettlement) Partnership Group, chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive at Derbyshire County Council. The Group met regularly and was supported by East Midlands Councils. Taking into account the information provided by districts and boroughs, the partnership was working on an offer to Government of 50 families/homes over two intakes of 25 per intake; and Derbyshire Dales was working on an offer of accommodation for around 8 families, in areas with the greatest number of social rented homes, focusing on Ashbourne and Matlock with potential in Wirksworth and Darley Dale. Initial discussions with local housing providers were at an early stage.

Funding for the programme was projected to cover the costs associated with health services and local authorities. Essentially, Government funding tapered over 5 years to a point where families would be integrated and paying their own way. It was anticipated that

people would either stay or return to Syria. Fundamental to resettlement was a focused programme of support, usually provided by a 3rd sector agency, such as the Red Cross or similar. In broad terms Government funding would be claimed by the county council and then used to cover the costs of agencies.

One of the most important learning points from the first wave of authorities had been the need to adequately resource the coordinating and planning role. To that end Derbyshire County Council had asked partner agencies to contribute funding for two full time equivalent posts for the first 6 month posts as pump priming for the programme. It was proposed that Derbyshire Dales DC contributed £5,000 from the Homelessness Grant programme. Once refugees arrived in Derbyshire, funding to support them could be claimed from government and the programme team should quickly become self-funding.

It was moved by Councillor Lewis Rose, OBE, seconded by Councillor Irene Ratcliffe and

- RESOLVED**
(unanimously)
1. That progress in bringing forward the resettlement of Syrians in Derbyshire is noted;
 2. That a one-off contribution of £5,000 from the District Council's Homeless Prevention Fund is allocated to Derbyshire County Council in order to fund two posts, a coordinator and project officer, working across the county.

378/15 – TECHNICAL CONSULTATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANNING CHANGES

The Council considered a report regarding a consultation from the Department for Communities and Local Government on changes to the local authority planning system, which covered the areas listed in the report. Approval was sought for a draft response to the consultation, prepared by officers, to allow submission of comments by 15 April 2016, the consultation closing date. Officers had prepared suggested responses to those questions that were considered to have most relevance to Derbyshire Dales District Council as a local planning authority. The consultation was included as Appendix 1 to the report and the questions, together with the proposed responses, were included as Appendix 2 to the report.

The following suggestions/comments were raised by Members:

- More content in the response regarding heritage assets.
- Question 2.1 –there could be more explanation regarding concerns with Neighbourhood plans and how they could be improved to make them more acceptable as qualifying documents. Same comment regarding brownfield site registers.
- There were concerns over the implications of Chapter 8, in particular with regard to privatisation 'through the back door' and applicants' rights to choose either a local planning authority or an 'approved provider'. It was felt that the response should indicate more robustly that the District Council resists all such proposals.

- Concern was raised over potential extra expense incurred by the Council to approve applications submitted by external providers (8.8).

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, seconded by Councillor Tony Millward BEM and

RESOLVED That the draft response to the consultation from DCLG, taking into account its comments above, on the implementation of planning changes, for submission by the closing date of 15 April 2016, be approved.
(Unanimously)

379/15 – VACATION OF OFFICE DISPENSATION

The Council considered a request for a dispensation to allow Councillor Sue Bull to be absent from meetings of the Council for a period exceeding six months.

It was moved by Councillor Tony Millward BEM, seconded by Councillor Tom Donnelly and

RESOLVED That Councillor Sue Bull be granted a dispensation to be absent from meetings of the Council until the end of October 2016.
(unanimously)

380/15 – DRAFT PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2016/17

Council were asked to consider the revised Draft Programme of Meetings for 2016/17, as distributed at the meeting, for approval at the Annual Meeting on 19 May 2016.

It was moved by Councillor Joanne Wild, seconded by Councillor Peter Slack and

RESOLVED That the draft programme of meetings for 2016/17 be noted.
(unanimously)

381/15 – SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

It was moved by Councillor Jean Monks, seconded by Councillor Vicky Massey and

RESOLVED That the common seal of the Council be affixed to those documents, if any, required to complete transactions undertaken by Committees or by way of delegated authority to officers since the last meeting of the Council.
(unanimously)

MEETING CLOSED 7.14PM

CHAIRMAN