

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at the Civic Centre, Barnstaple on Thursday 12th March 2015 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Members representing North Devon Council:

Councillor Biederman (Chairman)

Councillors Brown, Chesters, Clark, Haywood, Lane, Lucas, Luggar, Moores, Tucker and White.

Councillors Moore attended the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 9 (3).

Officers:

Planning Manager (MK), Lead Planning Officer (JW), Enforcement Officer (FS), Enforcement Officer (DS), Regulatory Services Manager, Community Development Officer (HH) and Member Services Officer (JG).

89 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gurney.

90 MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2015 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

91 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Biederman declared a personal interest in item 7 on the agenda as a user of the North Devon Leisure Centre facilities.

92 ORDER OF AGENDA

RESOLVED, that item 8 be considered prior to item 7 on the agenda.

93 JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WATER QUALITY TASK TEAM

RESOLVED, that the notes of the joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Water Quality Task Team held on 9 February 2015 (circulated previously) be noted.

94 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT ACTION

The Committee received a presentation by the Lead Planning Officer in respect of the Enforcement Process, copies of which were tabled for information. She thanked the Committee for providing an opportunity for her to meet with Members and to discuss the role of enforcement.

The following points were discussed following the presentation:

- The importance of maintaining public confidence in the planning system
- Government stance on the taking of enforcement action as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework
- North Devon Council had served more enforcement notices than virtually any other authority in the South West
- The need to explain to complainants, in a little more detail, when closing down a case the reasoning behind the decisions taken
- The tests undertaken when determining whether or not enforcement action should be taken
- The wide scope of activities that could be undertaken without the requirement of planning permission
- The possibility of consulting with the local ward member as part of the process of determining whether or not to take enforcement action
- The offer of Planning Enforcement Workshops to Town/Parish Councils via the Devon Association of Parish Councils
- The need to continually improve the methods of communication throughout the process upon receipt of a complaint regarding possible enforcement action
- Proactive work undertaken by the enforcement team in respect of boarded up windows, untidy sites etc.
- A request for a breakdown of the budget in terms of money spent on enforcement matters
- There were currently 2.6 officers in post working within the planning enforcement team
- The need to review the drafting of conditions on the approvals of planning permissions to ensure they were enforceable and required

The Committee thanked the Lead Planning Officer on the detailed and informative presentation. It further congratulated staff on the work undertaken by the enforcement team.

95 LEISURE PROVISION AT SEVEN BRETHERN: LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020

The Committee considered a report by the Contracts Delivery Manager (circulated previously) in respect of the leisure provision at Seven Brethren, Barnstaple.

Copies of the decisions of the Executive held on 3 March 2015 were tabled for information.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the report and Executive recommendations be noted and supported; and
- (b) that a copy of the scoping paper with the intent of providing a new purpose built Leisure Centre together with regular updates be provided to future meetings of the Committee.

96 REPORT OF JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WATER QUALITY TASK TEAM

The Committee considered a report by the Community Development Officer (circulated previously) in respect of the provision of a response to the Environment Agency's statutory River Basin Plan that was out for consultation together with the investigation of potential water quality issues in the Taw and Torridge Estuary.

RESOLVED, that the response to the River Basin Plan and recommendations therein be approved.

97 WORK PROGRAMME/FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the work programme (circulated previously).

RESOLVED, that the work programme be noted.

98 WORK OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee considered a report by the Chairman of the Committee (circulated previously), setting out the achievements of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and forthcoming work that lay ahead.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 3.35 p.m.

NOTE: These minutes will be confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting of the Committee.