

**NORTH DEVON COMMUNITY ALLIANCE**

Minutes of a meeting of the NORTH DEVON COMMUNITY ALLIANCE held at the Cedars Inn, Bickington Road, Barnstaple on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Representing:

Archdeaconry of Barnstaple: Reverend M. Jones  
Devon and Cornwall Constabulary: Inspector V. Puffitt  
Devon County Council: Councillors Cann and Mrs Jenkins  
Environment Agency: Mr K. Baker  
Exmoor National Park: Ms T. Roberts  
Local Community Alliances: Councillors Pearson and  
Mrs Webber  
North Devon College: Ms J. Sparling  
North Devon Voluntary Services: Mr P. Hamilton  
North Devon District Council: Councillors Ms Davis, Prowse  
and Mrs Shapland (Chairman)  
Parish Councils: Councillors Fraser-Smith and Geen  
Primary Care Trust: Dr K. Gronqvist  
South Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust: Mr M. Baddick  
South West Regional Development Agency: Ms E. Farrell  
Taw Torridge Estuary Forum: Mrs R. Day  
Transform: Mr M. Taylor  
Voluntary Sector: Mrs D. Bracher and Mr P. Davey

Officers:

Devon County Council

Ms. A. Boyd, Assistant County Community Strategy Officer.

North Devon District Council

S. Pitcher - Executive Director, J. Lee - Culture and Recreation Manager, Miss R. Allen - Community Development Co-ordinator, M. Kelly - Planning Manager and Ms B. Greenslade - Member Services Co-ordinator.

Also Present:

Mr C. Marrow  
Ms J. Anderton      Devon Rural Network  
Mr K. Osbourne      Devon Community Banking Partnership

**25                      REVEREND MICHAEL JONES**

The Chairman reported that Reverend Michael Jones would be retiring shortly and therefore this would be the last meeting of the Alliance that he would be attending.

The Alliance thanked Reverend Jones for his contribution to the Alliance over the years and wished him well in his retirement.

## **26 MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2006 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **27 PLANNING IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The Alliance received a presentation by M. Kelly regarding the outcomes of the Audit Commission's recent inspection of the Planning Unit of North Devon District Council. He stated that the outcomes of the Audit Commission's report had been presented to the Planning Committee. The main outcomes of the inspection were that the Council had a fair planning service with uncertain prospects for improvement and that the Council had an improved delivery of affordable housing.

Councillor Mrs Webber expressed concern regarding people that were unable to read or write being unable to make representations to the development briefs and codes of practice that were currently out for consultation. She suggested that a questionnaire should be produced to obtain views on the Anchorwood Bank and Queen Street/Bear Street development briefs and that this could be carried out via the Barnstaple Alliance. In respect of the planning appeals process, she suggested that there should also be an opportunity for oral representations to be made.

## **28 PROPOSED FERRY LINK FROM ILFRACOMBE TO WALES**

The Alliance received a presentation by C. Marrow regarding a proposed ferry link from Ilfracombe to Wales. He advised the Alliance of the types of vessels that had been used in the past to transport passengers from the Westcountry to Wales and the reasons as to why these services had failed previously. He believed that a proposed ferry link from Ilfracombe to Wales would be profitable. There was now a need for a comprehensive survey to be carried out and a business case to be prepared. This needed to be carried out jointly by the relevant Councils. He outlined the proposed benefits of a ferry link from Ilfracombe to Wales.

Councillor Pearson stated that the hinterlands in Devon and Wales would benefit from a ferry link.

K. Baker stated that he would welcome a detailed study of the environmental impact and impact on the carbon footprint.

M. Taylor stated that improvements needed to be made to the infrastructure in North Devon prior to a ferry link being put in place.

S. Pitcher stated that with the support of the Regional Development Agency, the Council had commissioned a number of studies, which included the Ilfracombe Harbour, and the regeneration of Ilfracombe. The

results of these studies would provide information as to what further development was needed and the resources that would be required. He stated that the Alliance would be kept informed of the outcomes of the studies.

## **29 DRAFT SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

J. Lee stated that consultation had now been carried out on the draft Sustainable Community Strategy. Very few comments had been received. He stated that the printing of the final version of the Sustainable Community Strategy would cost £1,000 and he requested that the main organisations make contributions to the printing costs.

The Project Leaders for each of the projects within the Sustainable Community Strategy updated the Alliance on progress made on their projects.

Reverend Jones stated that when he first moved to Barnstaple he provided food vouchers to those people that were in need. Since that time an organisation called the Freedom Trust had been established which provided food, clothes and washing facilities to those people that were in need. In order for the Trust to continue to provide these services more funding was required. He stated that it would be tragic if the Trust was forced to close due to the lack of funding.

Councillor Prowse stated that the Freedom Trust should be jointly funded. He requested further information regarding the Trust and stated that he would then discuss this issue at a meeting of the Devon L.A.A. Steering Group.

K. Baker made comments on the draft Sustainable Community Strategy. He stated that the strategy should have greater clarity on diversity and equality. The sustainability clause should be amended to state "will balance actions" and take on board the principles of the Government Office of the South West.

The Alliance agreed the following:

- (a) that J. Lee in consultation with the Chairman of the Alliance be given delegated authority to make amendments to the draft Sustainable Community Strategy as a result of the consultation responses received;
- (b) that the monitoring of progress made against actions contained within the Sustainable Community Strategy be a standing item on the agenda of future meetings of the Alliance;

- (c) that a standing item on the Local Area Agreement and how it was being developed and delivered across the county be placed on agenda of future meetings of the Alliance;
- (d) that a multi-agency presentation be given to a future meeting of the Alliance outlining statistics of the levels of deprivation and homelessness in North Devon.

S. Pitcher declared a prejudicial interest in the issue regarding the Freedom Trust and left the meeting during the consideration thereof.

### **30 (A) PRIMARY CARE TRUST: UPDATE**

Dr K. Gronqvist reported that the 6 Primary Care Trusts in Devon had now been disbanded with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006 and had been replaced by the new Primary Care Trust for Devon. The Chief Executive and six non-Executive Members had now been appointed to the Trust. Business would continue from the existing localities for the time being. No business development decisions could be made at present until the new Trust Board was in place. The Transitional Board was being led by Pam Smith until December 2006.

She further stated that as previously reported at the meeting of the Alliance on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2006, the responsibility of some services had now been transferred from the Primary Care Trust to the Northern Devon Healthcare Trust. Robust agreements had been put in place for the services that had been transferred to the Northern Devon Healthcare Trust. Jac Kelly had been appointed interim Chief Executive of the Northern Devon Healthcare Trust.

She advised that the structures for the new Primary Care Trust would be in place by December 2006.

### **(B) DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT**

The Alliance received a presentation by Dr. Gronqvist regarding the Director of Public Health Annual Report (circulated previously).

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Webber, Dr. Gronqvist stated that the life expectancy statistics did not take account of people moving to the area. However, feedback that had been received from G.P.s indicated that the majority of people moving to the area were healthy.

S. Pitcher stated that the statistics indicated that there was a second area of deprivation which may be associated with rurality.

Dr Gronqvist stated that she was involved in a project under the Local Area Agreement to look at rural deprivation in rural Torridge. She stated that there needed to be a way to look at deprivation in rural areas differently.

### **31                    DEVON RURAL NETWORK**

The Alliance received a presentation by Jen Anderton regarding the Devon Rural Network. She outlined the background of how the Network was formed, its aims and objectives, its structure, actions groups that had been formed, communications that were produced and a summary of responses received in respect of the Devon Rural Strategy and the key changes that had been made to the Strategy following the consultation process. She also outlined statistics for Devon in relation to the age population, ratio of house prices to income, transport and access, the South West Health Observatory analysis against indicators, economic health of rural Devon, employment types, productivity, proportion of agricultural land use in Devon and climate change and environment.

Councillor Mrs Webber suggested that there should be a Member on the Alliance who was a representative for transport.

Councillor Cann stated that John Richardson-Dawes, of Devon County Council would be the most appropriate person as he was responsible for co-ordinating transport in Devon.

### **32                    JOINT WORKING WITH TORRIDGE LSP**

The Alliance received a presentation by Councillor Mrs Shapland regarding joint working with Torrridge LSP. She outlined the case for change and joining with Torrridge, critical issues, a possible organisation structure and a possible make-up of a Joint LSP Executive.

Ms Boyd stated that the issue of joint working with the Torrridge LSP had been discussed and agreed in principle at the North Devon and Torrridge County Committees. The final decision would need to be made by the Devon County Council Executive.

Councillor Prowse stated that there was a need for more joint working with Torrridge. He stated that if a Joint LSP was formed, groups could be formed to meet to discuss particular issues rather than the whole of the LSP meeting.

The Alliance agreed the following:

- (a) that a joint Local Strategic Partnership between North Devon and Torrridge be agreed in principle;
- (b) that a meeting with locality alliances be arranged to discuss the possibility of forming a joint Local Strategic Partnership and that the outcomes of this meeting be reported back to the Alliance.

### **33 BRIDGES PROJECT**

The Alliance considered a paper by Ian Hobbs regarding the Bridges Project and an invitation to the Bridges Project launch (circulated previously).

The Alliance agreed the following:

- (a) that the outcomes of the report be welcomed;
- (b) that the actions arising from the project be supported;
- (c) that the celebration event to be held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2006 at South Molton be noted and that Members of the Alliance encourage attendance at this event within their local communities;
- (d) that it be noted that Mrs Hannah Harrington would represent the Alliance on the Database Project Steering Group.

### **34 DEVON POUND**

The Alliance received a presentation by Kevin Osbourne regarding the Devon Pound. He outlined Devon Pound's philosophy and its five steps to financial inclusion, which were: assistance, budgeting, credit, deposits and education.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Webber, K. Osbourne stated that they could consider the issue of providing assistance to people who were unable to raise a deposit to buy a property.

In response to a question from S. Pitcher, K. Osbourne stated that he was liaising with the Citizens Advice Bureaux on a regional basis. However, Devon Pound could only provide 3 hours of support to the Bureaux per week.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 1.25 p.m.