

NORTH DEVON COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

Minutes of a meeting of the NORTH DEVON COMMUNITY ALLIANCE held at the Cedars Inn, Bickington Road, Barnstaple on Monday, 20th October 2003 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Representing

Archdeaconry of Barnstaple: Reverend M. Jones
Barnstaple Town Council: Councillor Hawes
Community Health Council: Mr S. McKibbin
Devon and Cornwall Constabulary: Chief Inspector Caldwell
Devon County Council: Councillors Knight and Spear
English Nature: Mr J. Diamond
Ilfracombe Town Council: Councillor Thompson
Job Centre Plus: Ms. J. Sinclair
Local Community Alliances: Mr M. Taylor, Councillors Ridd-Jones,
Pearson and Mrs Sewell
North Devon College: Mr D. Trueman
North Devon Homes: Mr J. Davies
North Devon Voluntary Action Forum: Mrs P. Jackson
North Devon District Council: Councillors Lucas, Prowse and Mrs
Shapland (Chairman)
North Devon Economic Partnership: Mr D. Whiteley
North Devon Primary Care Trust: Dr M. Owen
Torrige Local Strategic Partnership: Councillor Mrs Ferguson
Voluntary Sector: Mr B. Allen and Mrs Bracher

Officers:

Devon County Council

I. Hobbs - County Community Strategy Officer and A. Bell - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty/Countryside Development Officer.

North Devon District Council

S. Pitcher - Executive Director, B. Holme - Community Development Manager, Ms B. Venn - Housing Enabling Manager, Miss T. Faulkner - Social Policy Officer and Miss B. Greenslade - Member Services Co-ordinator.

Also Present:

Ms S. Gear North Devon Regeneration Company

17 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman announced that a number of members of the Alliance would be leaving the meeting early owing to a funeral taking place of a former District Councillor's wife.

18 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2003 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising to be discussed.

20 NORTH DEVON REGENERATION COMPANY

The Alliance received a presentation by Sue Gear regarding how the North Devon Regeneration Company was established, the role of the Company and the projects that the Company was involved with.

A copy of the presentation slides was tabled.

21 PROPOSALS FOR A 20 YEAR VISION FOR NORTHERN DEVON

D. Whiteley reported on the outcomes of an Away Day that had been held in Instow. The key outcome of the day was for the Economic Partnership to focus on the region's unique selling point which was the environment. The environment was the key economic driver. The vision for Northern Devon was to ensure that the environment was protected, that the G.D.P. for the area was raised, improved job opportunities and to gain a wider understanding of how the community and visitors can enjoy the environment.

D. Whiteley stated that a consultant had been appointed to prepare an Economic Strategy for Northern Devon. The final strategy would be published during February 2004.

S. Pitcher asked whether a consultation process would form part of the preparation of the Economic Strategy and if the Alliance would be consulted on the draft Strategy.

D. Whiteley suggested that an interim report on the draft Strategy could be brought to the next meeting of the Alliance in January 2004.

Councillor Hawes stated that climate change should be included within the Economic Strategy.

The Alliance agreed that a report on the draft Economic Strategy for Northern Devon be brought to the next meeting of the Alliance on 26th January 2004.

22 **CONSULTATION AND FINAL DRAFT OF "A FAIRER
NORTH DEVON - A SOCIAL INCLUSION AND
NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL STRATEGY"**

The Alliance received a presentation by Tracey Faulkner, Social Policy Officer and considered a paper regarding the consultation and final draft of "A Fairer North Devon - A Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy".

She further reported that a Senior Working Group would need to be established to prepare Action Plans for each organisation.

I. Hobbs agreed to form part of the Senior Working Group. He stated that there was a need for partners to consider how their work contributed towards the Strategy and how they would address issues raised in the Strategy.

Councillor Prowse stated that the Strategy provided an opportunity for the partners to work more closely together and produce a more seamless approach to services for members of the public.

In response to a question from Councillor Pearson, Tracey Faulkner reported that Sure Start had had an input in to the Strategy.

S. Pitcher summarised the debate:

- (a) There was a need to ensure that the strategy was strategic. Many actions were likely to be local priorities rather than strategic priorities.
- (b) There was a need for a procedure to be put in place to ensure the co-ordination of the work of the partners.
- (c) There were limited areas where there were genuine gaps within the strategy. The action plan should contain some headline actions at a strategic level.

Councillor Mrs Shapland stated that there was a need for the main partners to be involved in the Senior Working Group.

The Alliance agreed that the Strategy be adopted and that an update report be brought to the next meeting of the Alliance on 26th January 2004.

23 **HOUSING ISSUES**

The Alliance received a presentation by Barbara Venn regarding Housing Issues. She outlined a scenario of an average family household becoming homeless and the various costs that the family and the various agencies would incur. She stated that in order for homelessness to be addressed, there was a need for more houses to be built. There was a need for the various agencies involved to agree the best use of resources to solve the problem of homelessness.

She stated that North Devon District Council had been approached by more families than the normal, owing to the high prices of houses and landlords selling their properties.

J. Davies stated that there would be a shortfall in the provision of housing every year as only those people registered as homeless would be offered any available housing and there would not be enough housing to house all of those people registered as homeless.

Barbara Venn stated that there was a need to try to find alternative ways to building houses.

Councillor Prowse stated that North Devon District Council had sold its housing stock to North Devon Homes to release funding to build new houses. Owing to a decision made by the Government, the Council was no longer able to use the funding to provide new housing. There was also a need to use the Local Plan process to use brownfield sites for the provision of housing. There was a need to make the provision of housing a political priority. He stated that the outcomes of the special meeting of the North Devon Community Alliance which was held on 17th June 2002 regarding housing should be presented to the Local Community Alliances.

Councillor Mrs Shapland stated that a property had been located in Barnstaple to provide emergency housing for young people. However, the Government had now decided not to provide revenue funding to run the premises. Alternative funding was now being sought to provide revenue funding for the premises. There was need for agencies to work together to provide places for young people to live.

Mr. D. Trueman suggested that the Community Strategy should focus primarily on the provision of housing and job creation.

The Alliance agreed the following:

- (a) that the principal authorities in Devon be recommended to agree the ring fencing of 95% of Council Tax on second homes in Devon, for housing purposes only and top slicing a percentage for revenue support for supported housing;
- (b) that the Alliance engage in the process of preparing a Housing Strategy and that a report be brought to the next meeting of the Alliance on 26th January 2004;
- (c) That the Local Community Alliances be invited to give a high priority to affordable housing in preparing its Community Action Plans and in responding to the planning process.

24 REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY ALLIANCES

The Alliance noted the reports of the Local Community Alliances (circulated previously).

25 NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT - ILFRACOMBE, COMBE MARTIN AND BRATTON FLEMING

The Alliance considered a joint paper by I. Hobbs and B. Holme (circulated previously) regarding Neighbourhood Management in the areas of Ilfracombe, Combe Martin and Bratton Fleming.

The Alliance received a presentation by I. Hobbs regarding the principles of Neighbourhood Management, why it was needed and the aims of the pathfinder programme. He circulated a slip to all members of the Alliance to invite them to indicate their top 3 priorities for those areas. The deadline for the receipt of the full submission was by 7th November 2003. The decision on the submission would be made on 24th November 2003 and it would be announced on 4th December 2003. The signs that the submission would be successful were encouraging but much work remained to be done to secure the programme.

The Alliance agreed the following:

- (a) That Steve Pitcher, Ian Hobbs and Brian Holme be thanked for their hard work in submitting the expression of interest and preparation of the full proposal to the Government Office for the South West;
- (b) That the success of the application to secure neighbourhood management status and resources for this area be welcomed and that partners urgently consider how they could contribute to the development phase;
- (c) That consideration be given to any other programmes or service developments that should be integrated with the design phase of this programme;
- (d) That the approval of the final submission to the Government Office for the South West be delegated to Steve Pitcher, Ian Hobbs and Brian Holme in consultation with the Chairman of the Alliance;
- (e) That all partners sign up to the submission of the proposal.

26 VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMPACT

Councillor Mrs Shapland reported that the proposals which came out of a Devon Strategic Partnership working group meeting held on 8th October 2003 would have to be re-written. Therefore the consideration of the item would be deferred until the next meeting of the Alliance on 26th January 2004. Eddie Farwell would present the new proposals to the meeting and Penny Jackson would report on how the proposals would affect the voluntary sector.

27 PROGRESSING THE REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The Alliance considered a paper by Ian Hobbs (circulated previously) regarding progressing the review of the Community Strategy.

The Alliance agreed the following:

- (a) that the Alliance consider ways of aligning its revised community strategy and the emerging Devon Strategy (and supporting processes) where appropriate;

- (b) that the Alliance opens discussion with the Devon Strategic Partnership regarding ways in which consultation on the Devon Community Strategy can best be conducted locally.

28 CHAIRING THE MEETING

Councillor Mrs Shapland left the meeting and Steve Pitcher was appointed to Chair the remainder of the meeting.

29 DEVELOPING A LOCAL TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP (LTP) FOR NORTH DEVON

The Alliance considered a paper by Ian Hobbs (circulated previously) regarding developing a Local Transport Partnership for North Devon.

I. Hobbs reported that the Community Transport Association provided the development worker to support the Local Transport Partnership. The contract expired in May 2004 and resources were required to secure this position to serve the Partnership.

Councillor Knight stated that the Local Transport Partnership for North Devon should relate to the Partnership that had been established for the Torridge area as people travelled between the two areas for work.

I. Hobbs reported that the terms of reference for the Local Transport Partnership had been omitted from the agenda and would therefore be circulated to all Members with the minutes. He requested that Members inform Miss B. Greenslade of any comments on the terms of reference.

The Alliance agreed the following:

- (a) That the North Devon Local Transport Partnership (LTP) be formally recognised as a sub-group of the Alliance;
- (b) That Members of the Alliance be invited to comment on the terms of reference that would be circulated with the minutes of the meeting, on the initial priorities of the Partnership and any areas that needed to be considered by the Partnership and that all comments be forwarded to Miss Greenslade;
- (c) That all Local Community Alliances alert their membership to the development of the Local Transport Partnership and feed any issues to it that they would like to be discussed;
- (d) That all partners be requested to consider the contribution of resources towards the shortfall of funding for the development worker post.

30 COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA STRATEGY

The Alliance considered a paper by the Alliance Support Group (circulated previously) regarding a communications and media strategy.

Councillor Pearson stated that the Northern Devon Healthcare Trust had not been mentioned in participating in a North Devon edition of Devon Talk. He suggested that he could raise the issue of the Healthcare Trust participating in a North Devon edition of Devon Talk at its meeting on 21st October 2003.

The Alliance agreed that investigations be undertaken into the potential for developing a North Devon edition of Devon Talk as a cost effective means of publicising the work of the Alliance and other partnerships.

31 **PRESS RELEASE ON HOUSING**

The Alliance agreed that a press release, on behalf of the Alliance, be issued on the outcomes of the earlier debate on housing.

32 **IMPROVING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MARKET**

The Alliance considered a paper by Charlotte Benson and Dr Jo Little (circulated previously) regarding improving the role of women in the labour market.

The Alliance endorsed the paper in principle and agreed that a report be brought to a future meeting of the Alliance when the project had been completed.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 1.02 p.m.