



Lewes District Council
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Devolution Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Devolution Committee** held in the **Room 7 and 8, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes** on **Monday 23 July 2007** at 10.00am.

Present:

Councillors I Eiloart (Chair on Election), S T Bratchie, C J Butler, L M Hallett, C S Lambert and D O Rogers.

Also Present:

Mr O Clifford, Community Services Manager
Mr D Feintuck, Committee Officer
Mr J Magness, Director of Finance and Community Services
Mr M Reynard, Assistant District Solicitor

	Minutes	Action
1	Election of Chair <u>Resolved:</u> 1.1 That Councillor Eiloart be elected Chair of the Committee for this meeting.	
2	Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor P Gander.	
3	Minutes <u>Resolved:</u> 3.1 That the minutes of the Devolution Committee held on 10 November 2004 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	

4 Declaration of Interests

Councillors declared that they were members of Town Councils as follows:

Councillors Butler and Rogers, Newhaven Town Council;

Councillors Bratchie and Hallett, Peacehaven Town Council;

Councillor Lambert, Seaford Town Council.

As these interests were personal and prejudicial, councillors were able to ask and respond to questions with respect to the matters concerning the town councils of which they were members, but then left the meeting and took no part in any substantive discussion and resolution which followed.

5 Devolution Proposals

The Committee considered Report No149/07 which informed the Committee of requests from Newhaven Town Council and Peacehaven Town Council for devolution of assets and services and considered terms upon which the Crypt could be transferred to Seaford Town Council.

The Director of Finance and Community Services outlined the Council's devolution framework, the criteria for which were contained in paragraph 1.3 of the Report. The role of quality parish councils in the devolution of assets to the local community was defined in paragraph 2 of the Report. The Director stated that at the next meeting of the committee a framework would be proposed for recommendations within the 2006 Outdoor Leisure Review to be progressed.

Newhaven Town Council request for Assets and Services to be Devolved

Devolution of Memorial Garden and Valley Ponds

The Director pointed out that the Town Council manages these areas in the past. The only cost to Lewes District Council would be the loss of a small wayleave. The strategic retention of land mentioned in paragraph 3.2.3 of the report referred to a small strip adjacent to the Memorial Garden which, in the Estate Officer's opinion, should be retained for strategic purposes. While there is no current vehicular access to that area, the value of that land would subsequently increase should planning permission for such access be given, although this was unlikely at the present. The Director explained, in response to a councillor's question with regard to the retention of land packet against future development, that the Council's active asset and risk managements recommended retention of this small area. The area outlined at Appendix 1 to the Report would enable the Town Council's devolution request for the Memorial Gardens to proceed.

The Valley Ponds area was clearly defined between the houses and Valley Road.

Fort Road Recreation Ground and Play Area

The Director pointed out that consultation was underway at present with interested parties with regard to these areas and no ownership was sought by the Town Council at present.

BMX Track at Lewes Road Recreation Ground

The Director indicated that the BMX Track would be on the raised area between Newhaven Civic Amenity site and the river known as Riverside Park. The Town Council's proposal would require the management agreement for the Recreation Ground to be updated and to include this extended area.

Lewes Road Recreation Ground

The Director pointed out that an open dialogue continued with the Town Council with regard to drainage and fencing issues before any request for devolution would be made.

Newhaven Town Council's request for assistance with Grounds Maintenance Services

The Director stated that this item was for information only.

Other District Open Space Assets in Newhaven

Officers would continue to progress the recommendations contained in the Outdoor Leisure Review and noted the comments from Newhaven Town Council. Officers would be visiting or contacting other councils to identify what alternative options there were to encourage local provision of services and what arrangements were considered best practice.

Councillors Butler and Rogers left the room while further discussions took place.

Resolved:

- 5.1 That the recommendations contained in paragraph 3.2 of the Report with regard to the devolution of the Memorial Garden and Valley Ponds be agreed;
- 5.2 That the Newhaven Town Council offer to fund a BMX facility at Lewes Road Recreation Ground as detailed in paragraph 3.5 of the Report, subject to updating the management arrangements of the site and to include this extended area, be agreed; and
- 5.3 That the remainder of the Report be noted.

DFCS/
CSM

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CSM

Peacehaven Town Council

The Community Services Manager stated that Peacehaven Town Council had requested that District Council land be made available for additional allotments. Possible locations were detailed at Appendix B. The land within Deed Packet 622 was, from the point of view of the Town Council, the best candidate at present. Issues such as use, access, parking and water supply, together with the view of local residents and other possible interested purchasers would need to be sought during negotiations.

The designated use of land covered by Deed Packet 622 was as agricultural land. The Community Services Manager commented that planners may need to determine whether allotments could be allowed within the current planning usage.

More strategic devolution might be possible in the future as a result of Section 106 Agreements and other sites could be considered in the future. The site at the end of Cornwall Avenue (Appendix 2 to the Report) was unsuitable for devolution as onerous conditions for its transfer have been opposed by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. While the Treasury was looking at "claw back" arrangements, it had not been possible to remove the conditions in the past but this matter would be kept under review. The land within Deed Packet 812 was probably unsuitable for release as it retained a potential housing development value.

Councillors Hallett and Bratchie left the room while further discussion took place.

Resolved:

- 5.4** That officers be requested to pursue the devolution of the land within Deed Packet 622 to Peacehaven Town Council as allotments together with other disposal possibilities; and
- 5.5** That discussion on other land for allotments to be devolved to Peacehaven Town Council be explored as appropriate, together with other sites not currently car parks or suitable for car parks.

DFCS/
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CSMSeaford Town Council

The Community Services Manager stated that tranches of land had been devolved to Seaford Town Council since its inception. The Crypt represented the last asset the Town Council wished to consider at present. Seaford Town Council would be considering the matter in August and the District Council table of costs appeared at Appendix C. The Community Services Manager assured councillors that the car park adjacent to The Crypt was not part of the devolution package. In answer to a councillor's question, the Community Services Manager stated that it was not possible to show National Non-Domestic Rates and energy costs for Thebes separate from the remainder of the Lewes House site whilst such statistics

were available for The Crypt.

Councillor Lambert left the room while further discussion took place.

Resolved:

5.6 That the Devolution Committee support the devolution of The Crypt to Seaford Town Council subject to the financial analysis shown at paragraph 5 of the Report and Appendix 3 and subject to subsequent Cabinet approval.

DFCS/
CSM

6 Councillors Training Requirements

Councillors considered Report 150/07 which allowed the meeting to identify any training needs for the coming year.

Resolved:

6.1 That officers be requested to provide electronic links to the Council's devolution framework and to the Government's Quality Council Scheme; and

Committee
Officer

6.2 That councillors be provided with full details of best practice at other councils once investigation by other officers had taken place.

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The meeting ended at 11.25am

I Eiloart
Chair