

Draft Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Tuesday 26 February 2008 at the Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham.

Present:

Chairman.....Councillor C Crisp

Councillors DB Allen, C Berry, CMR Boase, S. Bodman, AM Bucknell, R Causer, RL Cinnamond, A Clements, PCB Coleman, PR Darby, JP Doubell, SK Doubell, PJ Doyle, GR Greenaway, H. Greenman, MEM Groom, JL Hall, J Hartless, MP Hatton, IJ Henderson, JR Henning, A.K. Hill, PJ Hutton, T Jones, J Lay, RB MacGregor, E Marston, SB Meadowcroft, S Meadows, S Parker, JA Phillips, A Pier, HR Plenty, CV Ramsey, C Reid, P Roberts, WF Roberts, R Sanderson, J.A. Scott, J. Scragg, ML Singlehurst, SJ Still, TR Sturgis, J Thomson, RL Tonge, A, Trotman, VA Vines, AM Wannell and C Wannell.

Officers Present: D Burbidge (Chief Executive), P Jeremiah (Legal Services Manager) P Langcaster (Press and Media Officer), S McGregor (Section 151 Officer), M Todd (Senior Policy and Democratic Services Officer) and G Wilson (Assistant to the Deputy Chief Executives).

C76. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors KA Banks, CJ Caswill, N Phillips and J Whincup.

C77. Minutes

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 29 January 2008 were considered.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 29 January 2008 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

C78. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

C79. Chairman's Announcements

(a) North Wiltshire Planning Performance

The Chairman was pleased to announce that North Wiltshire District Council's Planning Department had been awarded a grant of £185,712 from Central Government to reward it for its speed in decision making when dealing with planning applications.

The Council is required to achieve 60% of all decisions on "major" applications within 13 weeks, 65% of all decisions on "minor" applications within 8 weeks and 80% of all decisions on "other" applications within 8 weeks. North Wiltshire had consistently exceeded all of these targets, on an annual basis for the past 4 years and this had therefore been recognised in the reward for good service by the Government.

The Council congratulated the planning staff on their award.



(b) One Council for Wiltshire

The Chairman informed members that the Order creating one Council for Wiltshire had now completed its passage through both Houses of Parliament. This meant that the Implementation Executive now had the power to make decisions regarding the transition and that the Boundary Committee would be able to start work on the boundary review for the area.

C80. Public Questions/Receipt of Petitions

(a) Public Question – Mr John Webb, Bradenstoke

Mr John Webb from Bradenstoke asked the following public question:

From attending the last Area 2 Committee I understand that the Area Committees in North Wiltshire are to be used as a pilot for the new Area Boards.

I have been talking to colleagues from across North Wiltshire and from the lowly viewpoint of the rural Parish Councillor this plan seems to raise some important questions, namely:

- (a) Can we assume that County Councillors, who are not District Councillors, or are District Councillors in a different Community Area, will now be invited to Area Committee meetings?
- (b) Will they be invited as members of the Committee/Board?
- (c) If they are members of the Committee/Board what will be their voting status, with special reference to:
 - (i) voting on how District Council monies are spent through Community Grants; and
 - (ii) any other voting rights if their County Ward sits in more than one Community Area?

and finally:

- (d) Will all the Parish and Town Councils of North Wiltshire be informed of how these changes are going to work prior to the pilot commencing?

Councillor A Bucknell, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Democracy, responded to the above questions stating that the format of the Area Board pilots across the District was within the remit of the County Council and not the District Council, although officers and members of North Wiltshire District Council were part of the process which would be formulating the plan.

Communication to Town and Parish Councils regarding the status of Unitary was also a County Council responsibility, although North Wiltshire District Council would endeavour to answer any specific questions where possible.

The exact format of the pilots had yet to be decided. The decision taken by the Area Committees and by this Council's Executive was to pass on the desire of the five Area Committees to be part of the pilot scheme. It appeared that this request would be taken up.

The pilot Area Boards would have no decision making powers, no legal or democratic status and no specific funding. The idea behind the pilots was to try out different ways of running the Boards to find out what may or may not work.

Local County Councillors had always been invited to the Area Committee meetings and the meetings were open to any Councillor and to members of the public. County Councillors would not be invited as members of the Area Committee. There would be no changes to the Area Committees in North Wiltshire.

(b) Petition

Dr Ahilan presented a petition containing 39 signatures in support of the move to make London Road, Chippenham into a residents only parking zone. It was agreed that the petition should be referred to the Car Parking Working Party for consideration.

C81. Question Time

(a) Councillor D Allen – Minute No. CH59 – Consultation re Monkton Park

It has come to light that the implementation of the improvements to Monkton Park, using £100,000 of Section 106 money, allocated for open spaces, has been reprioritised, moving it down the list for action.

“Improving park facilities, especially at Monkton Park, creating safe places for children to meet” is the first of three priorities identified by the Chippenham Children's Parliament.

Which project has supplanted the Monkton Park improvements and is there an assurance that the £100,000 will definitely be spent on the Monkton Park scheme?

Councillor V Vines, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Economy, stated that he would send a written response to the question.

(b) Councillor S Doubell – Minute No. E165 – Draft Transitional Corporate Plan 2008/09

How many households are there on the waiting list for a green waste collection who have been waiting for more than one year?

If so, are they being informed as to when they might expect to be included in the collection round?

What are the plans to bring the service to these areas?

What is the percentage of households at present receiving the green waste collection?

In hoping to increase the target up to 15% by more efficient routing what methods will be employed to inform householders in the areas presently collected that this service is available?

Councillor T Sturgis, Portfolio Holder for Waste and Sustainability, stated that he would provide a written response to the questions.

C82. Transitional Corporate Plan 2008/09

Consideration was given to report No. 7 which set out the Transitional Corporate Plan for 2008/09.

A question was asked regarding the redevelopment of the Bath Road site in Chippenham. The Leader of the Council confirmed that officers were currently working to overcome some legal difficulties relating to the site.

Resolved that the Transitional Corporate Plan for 2008/09 set out in the Appendix to the report be approved.

C83. Budget and Council Tax Proposals 2008/09

(a) Council Wide Revenue and Capital Budgets 2008/09

Consideration was given to report no. 8a, which set out the proposed North Wiltshire District Council budget for 2008/09.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor R Tonge, gave his budget speech highlighting in particular the budget provision for leisure, community funding and affordable housing and other housing grants.

Councillor R Tonge then moved and Cllr A Bucknell seconded the recommendations set out in report number 8a.

Cllr S Doubell then responded to the budget speech and moved the following amendment which was seconded by Cllr R Henning:

“The proposed revenue budget is amended by reducing the £500,000 contingency for unitary staffing by £104,935.40. This reduction would enable the Council to freeze its precept on the Council Tax at its 2007/08 level.”

On being put to the vote the amendment was **lost**.

Councillor C Reid then moved and Councillor S Meadowcroft seconded the following amendment:

“The one hour free parking be reinstated to all North Wiltshire towns to be paid for by using £96,000 from the parking initiatives budget and the remainder from the unitary contingency fund.”

On being put to the vote the amendment was **lost**.

Councillor S Doubell then moved and Councillor R Henning seconded the following amendment:

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“The proposed capital budget is amended by adding:

- (i) £90,000 for the provision of a piece of play equipment in all the District Council owned play areas that can be used by children with disabilities.
- (ii) £90,000 to be spent on the general refurbishment of all the District Council owned play areas that require it.
- (iii) £50,000 to provide an additional 30 car parking spaces in the District Council owned car park in Cricklade.

Members discussed the above amendment and Councillor R Tonge moved and Councillor A Bucknell seconded an amendment as follows:

“That the Executive requests reports on the three proposed changes to the capital budget and considers whether these can be accommodated within underspends on the capital budget.”

Councillors S Doubell and R Henning accepted the above change to the amendment and on being put to the vote the revised amendment was **carried**.

Resolved that

- (1) The Net Base Budget for North Wiltshire District Council for 2008/09 of £20,910,415 be approved;
- (2) A Minimum General Fund Reserve of 2.4m be approved;
- (3) Unallocated inflation be held as a contingent budget, to be allocated by the Head of Finance and Resources as and when excess inflation pressures arise;
- (4) The adequacy of reserves, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (5) The robustness of the budget estimates, as set out in Appendix B to the report, be noted;
- (6) The creation of earmarked reserves from surplus General Fund balances for Unitary risks of £500,000, for Concessionary Fares £400,000 and the replenishment of the Insurance Fund £200,000 be noted;
- (7) An increase in Council tax by 1.6% for 2008/09 for the Council's own purposes be approved;
- (8) The Executive requests reports on the following proposed amendments to the capital budget and considers whether these

can be accommodated within underspends on the capital budget:

- £90,000 for the provision of a piece of play equipment in all the District Council owned play areas that can be used by children with disabilities.
- £90,000 to be spent on the general refurbishment of all the District Council owned play areas that require it.
- £50,000 to provide an additional 30 car parking spaces in the District Council owned car park in Cricklade.

(9) The policy changes implied by the budgets be approved;

(b) Council Tax Proposals 2008/09

Consideration was given to report no. 8b, which asked members to set the Council Tax for 2008/09. Members thanked officers for all the work they had undertaken on this year's budget.

Resolved that:

- (1) The final effect on the Council's budget requirement for 2008/09 (excluding Parish and Town Council Precepts) be noted;
- (2) The Council Tax resolution for 2008/09 be adopted as set out in Annex B to the report.
- (3) Authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer), in consultation with the relevant managers, to make any technical presentational changes to the final published budget as deemed necessary to meet external reporting obligations;
- (4) Authority be delegated to the Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer), or any officer designated by him, to deal with all matters relating to the Council Tax administration, billing, collection, recovery and administration of Council Tax benefits.

- (5) Authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer) to meet estimated capital and revenue expenditure in accordance with the approved estimates including use of earmarked and General Fund reserves for the purposes stated.

C84. Annual Prudential Indicators Statement

Consideration was given to report no. 9, which proposed the Council's prudential indicators for 2008/09 as part of the budget setting process. It was noted that the movement to Unitary Council in 2009/10 avoided the normal three year plan.

Resolved that the Prudential Indicators be approved as set out in the report.

C85. Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2008/09

Consideration was given to report No. 10, which set out the objectives of the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy and policies in force to enable their achievement.

Resolved that the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2008/09 be adopted.

C86. Supporting Councillors: A Manifesto for Councils

Consideration was given to report no. 11, which asked the Council to consider signing up to the Manifesto for Councils put forward by the Local Government Information Unit.

Resolved that North Wiltshire District Council support and sign up to the Manifesto for Councils attached as an Appendix to the report.

C87. Report on Implementation Executive Meeting

Councillor A Bucknell gave a verbal update on the meeting of the Implementation Executive held on 13 February 2008. It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 19 March 2008.

C88. Questions on Notice from Councillors – Council Procedure Rule 14.2

No questions from Councillors were received.

C89. Notices of Motion – Council Procedure Rule 15

No Notices of Motion were received.

The meeting started at 7.00pm and finished at 8.15pm.

There were 7 members of the public present.