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COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING held at COUNTY HALL,
TROWBRIDGE on 10 JULY 2007.

PRESENT: Mrs J H Seager (Chairman), Mr ML Baker, Mr P Batchelor, Mrs NS Bryant, Mrs EA Chettleburgh, Mr TP Chivers, Mr M Connolly, Mr A Davis, Mr PR Davis, Mr AN Deane, Miss MF de Rhé-Philipe, Mrs HM Dixon, Mrs S K Doubell, Mrs MJ Douglas, Mrs MEM Groom, Brigadier RWS Hall, Mrs EM Hannaford-Dobson, Mr JR Henning, Mr M Hewson, Mr CP Humphries, Mr JP Johnson, Mr A Molland, Mr WR Moss, Mr CS Newbury, Mr JC Noeken, Mr JB Osborn, Mrs JH Rooke, Mrs P Rugg, Mrs JA Scott, Mrs CA Soden, Mr TR Sturgis, Mrs J Swabey, Mrs MSN Taylor, Mr JP Thomson, Mr AJ Trotman, Mrs BA Wayman, Mr IC West, Mr RS While, Mrs M White, Mr DJ Willmott, and Mr KC Wren.

Note: This meeting was preceded by a presentation to all Members of the Council from the Wiltshire Probation Service on Developing Effective Working Between the Wiltshire Criminal Justice Board and the Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership. The presentation was given by Diana Fulbrook, the Chair of the Wiltshire Criminal Justice Board and included the showing of a DVD entitled 'The Overdose Notes'.

76. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Hill, Mr Oldrieve, Ms Content, Mr Dalton, Mr Coleman, Mr Winchcombe and Mr Rogers.

77. **Members' Interests**

Mrs Dixon declared a personal interest in the presentation on Corporate Parenting (minute number 84 (b) refers) due to her experience of adoption and foster caring issues and that she was currently a foster carer.

78. **Minutes of Previous Meetings**

Following a motion by the Chairman and seconded by the Vice-Chairman, it was

Resolved:

To confirm and sign the minutes of the annual meeting held on 8 May 2007.

79. Communications by the Chairman

(a) Mr Humphries

The Chairman reported that it was a great pleasure to welcome Mr Humphries back to the Council Chamber following his accident earlier this year.

(b) Mrs Hill

The Chairman reported with regret, that Mrs Hill was still unwell and on the Council's behalf, wished her a speedy recovery.

(c) The Queen's Birthday Honours

The Chairman congratulated all those in Wiltshire who had received honours in the Queen's Birthday Honours. Among the recipients were, the actor George Baker MBE for services to the West Lavington Youth Club; Michael Williams MBE for services to business in the South West and the Council's Janet de Rhe Philipe MVO.

(d) Chloe Salter – Work Experience Placement

The Chairman welcomed Chloe Salter from Matravers School in Westbury who was undertaking a two week work experience placement with the Council. The Chairman wished her an enjoyable and informative time with the Council.

80. Petitions

The Government had announced plans to close 2,500 post offices in the country. The Leader presented a petition signed by 13,421 residents opposing the closure of post offices in Wiltshire particularly rural ones. It was noted that this figure was increasing on a daily basis. The Leader reported that she had organised the petition to give local people the opportunity to show their opposition to the closures.

She sought Council's support of the petition before forwarding to the Department for Trade and Industry.

Resolved:

- (i) That Council formally supports the petition and its referral to the Department for Trade and Industry copied to all Wiltshire Members of Parliament and Postwatch.**

- (ii) **That a press release be issued thanking members of the public and organisations for their support of the petition.**

81. **Public Participation**

No requests for public participation had been received.

82. **Council's Corporate Plan to 2009**

The Chairman invited the Leader to present the Council's Corporate Plan updated following her Cabinet's recommendation at its meeting held on 26 June 2007. The Plan detailed what the Council aimed to achieve over the next 10 years with specific targets for the next two years.

It was noted that a more concise version of the Plan would also be prepared.

The Leader sought Members' views on the Plan and undertook to take their comments on board. The Leader and other Members of the Cabinet responded to the points of detail raised by Members. The Leader took this opportunity to report that Mrs Douglas would now be referred to as the Cabinet Member for Culture which would include libraries and heritage.

Resolved:

That the Corporate Plan to 2009 be adopted and that delegated authority be given to the Leader and Chief Executive to finalise the Corporate Plan taking into account the views expressed by Members at this meeting.

83. **Best Value Performance Plan**

The Chairman invited the Leader to present the Council's Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) for 2007 for approval as recommended by Cabinet at its meeting on 26 June 2007.

As best value performance indicators (BVPI) would be withdrawn after this financial year, the BVPP had been prepared to meet the statutory requirements only. Furthermore, the Council's 4 Star CPA rating meant that the Council was only required to provide details of BVPI and a statement on contracts.

During discussion, it was agreed to provide a written answer to Mr Hewson concerning BVPI No. 82c (i) & (ii). Mr Hewson requested details of any figures or statistics available which showed the cost of 'recovery heat and power' as opposed to composting and other methods.

Resolved:

That the Best Value Performance Plan 2007 be approved.

84. **Cabinet Business**

(a) **Cabinet Forward Work Plan**

The Leader reported that in future, the Cabinet Forward Work Plan would appear as a standing item on Council agenda. This would enable Cabinet members to highlight to the Council any significant forthcoming issues within their respective portfolios and equally give Members an opportunity to raise questions on the items listed in the Plan.

(b) **Corporate Parenting**

Mrs Wayman, Cabinet Member for Children and Families gave a presentation on Corporate Parenting and answered Members' questions. This was in advance of the Policy being considered by the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee on 25 July and Cabinet on 25 September which would be recommending the Policy for adoption by Council at its meeting on 6 November.

Mrs Wayman undertook to reply in writing to the following questions:

- To Mrs Dixon on the difference if any, of foster carers' allowances between care provided by the Council and agency care.
- To Mr Molland on how corporate parenting responsibilities had been dealt with previously.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Wayman for such an interesting and informative presentation.

85. **Members' Questions**

A question was circulated from Mr Deane which was responded to by Miss de Rhe Philipe, Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport and Economic Development. The question was in respect of lorry use of the B3089 between Barford St Martin and Willoughby Hedge. Details of the question and response from the Cabinet Member were tabled at the meeting.

86. **Reports of Cabinet**

The minutes of Cabinet dated 22 May and 26 June 2007 were received.

87. **Questions: Cabinet**

No questions were raised.

88. **Reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee dated 7 June 2007 were received.

89. **Questions: Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

No questions were raised.

90. **Report of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The minutes of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 17 May 2007 were received.

91. **Questions: Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Minute number 24 – Alzheimer's Drugs – Mrs White expressed concern at the PCT's response that in following the NICE guidance it would not be prescribing the particular type of drug in question to those in the early stages of the condition. She urged the Council to put pressure on GP's via the PCT to reverse this stance.

Mrs Groom referred to the work of a particular Doctor who was advocating a mix of particular drugs that appeared to achieve good results in patients.

Minute number 27 – Great Western Ambulance Trust – Mr A Davis sought confirmation of the implications of proposals for the Air Ambulance Trust to form part of a larger Trust with other neighbouring Counties. He was concerned that this could mean losing the valuable input by the Police particularly at night.

Mr While, the Chairman of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee confirmed that these matters would be considered further by the Committee.

92. **Report of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

The minutes of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee dated 10 May 2007 were received.

93. **Questions: Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

Minute number 28 – The Development of Children's Centres – Mr Osborn praised the work of the Children's Centre at Studley Green, Trowbridge. He was however, concerned at any stigma that could be attached to centres which were located in what could be considered deprived areas. Mrs Bryant, Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Development commented that all concerned needed to work hard to raise the attainment level of children attending the centres in order to remove or at least reduce any such stigma.

94. **Reports of the Regulatory Committee**

The minutes of the Regulatory Committee dated 10 May and 13 June were received.

Minute number 18 of the minutes dated 13 June - Mrs Rugg pointed out that the minutes should have reflected that in declaring a personal interest, she had not taken any part in the discussion or voting.

(Note: This would be addressed when the minutes are presented for confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Regulatory Committee).

95. **Questions: Regulatory Committee**

No questions were raised.

96. **Report of the Standards Committee**

The minutes of the Standards Committee dated 4 July 2007 were received.

97. **New Code of Conduct for Members**

The Government had introduced a new statutory Code of Conduct for Members by means of the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007, which came into force on 3 May 2007. Authorities had until 1 October to adopt it. This Council had previously resolved to defer adopting the new Code until careful consideration had been given to its implications.

All Members and co-opted members had been given the opportunity of attending briefing sessions which focussed on the key changes between the old and new Codes of Conduct. The Standards Committee in considering the new Code of Conduct at its meeting on 4 July had recommended its adoption by the Council without amendment, except for the inclusion of the 10 General Principles governing the conduct of Members.

Guidance issued by the Standards Board for England on the Code of Conduct and full details of the Code of Conduct itself had been previously circulated to Members.

Resolved:

- (a) **To adopt the model Code of Conduct without amendment, save for the inclusion of a preamble outlining the 10 General Principles of Conduct.**
- (b) **To agree that the new Code of Conduct take effect from 1 September 2007.**

98. **Increasing the Size of the Standards Committee**

The Chairman presented the recommendations of the Standards Committee dated 4 July 2007 to increase the size of the Standards Committee. The increase was being sought to enable the Committee to carry out the work associated with the devolvement of most of the decision making on the conduct regime for local authority members from the Standards Board for England to local authorities.

The proposal was to increase the number of independent members from 4 to 6 and the number of members of the Council from 2 to 3. It was noted that the Standards Committee had recommended the appointment of Mrs Linda Liptrot and Mr Peter McGuigan, the former Chairman of the Committee as the additional independent members. It had been agreed at a recent Group Leaders' meeting that the third member of Council should come from the Labour group given that there was already one Conservative and one Liberal Democrat member. Mrs White was therefore nominated from the Labour group.

Resolved:

- (a) **That the Standards Committee increase its membership from 6 to 9 with the appointment of one additional elected member, namely Mrs White and two additional independent members, namely Mr Peter McGuigan and Mrs Linda Liptrott.**
- (b) **That the consequential amendments to the Constitution to reflect the size and added remit of the Committee be adopted.**

99. **Questions: Standards Committee**

Minute number 42 – Review of Arrangements for Involvement of Members in the Decision Making Process – Mr Osborn wished to point out that Members had not in fact raised any issues for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to consider. Although he welcomed Members to raise issues, it was also pointed out that the Committee had limited resources with which to consider further items of business.

100. **Report of the Final Accounts and Audit Committee**

The minutes of the Final Accounts and Audit Committee dated 28 June 2007 were received.

101. **Questions: Final Accounts and Audit Committee**

No questions were raised.

102. **Report of the Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee**

The minutes of the Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee dated 17, 19 and 25 April

and 20 June 2007 were received.

103. **Questions: Wiltshire Pension Fund**

No questions were raised.

104. **Report of the Staffing Policy Committee**

The minutes of the Staffing Policy Committee dated 9 May and 27 June 2007 were received.

105. **Terms of Reference of the Sub-Committees of the Staffing Policy Committee**

The Chairman asked Mr Baker, the Chairman of the Staffing Policy Committee to present the recommendation of the Committee dated 27 June 2007.

The recommendation was in respect of agreeing consequential amendments to the Constitution following changes made by the Committee to the terms of reference of its Sub-Committees to enable them to deal with a revised Grievance Procedure. Details of the consequential amendments to the Constitution were presented. It was noted that the Standards Committee had been consulted on this and raised no objection to the proposal.

Resolved:

That consequential changes to the Constitution following changes to the terms of reference of the Sub-Committees of the Staffing Policy Committee be approved.

106. **Questions: Staffing Policy Committee**

No questions were raised.

107. **Wiltshire and Swindon Fire Authority**

The minutes of the Wiltshire and Swindon Fire Authority as provided by the Fire Authority and dated 31 May 2007 were received with no questions having been received from Members.

108. **Wiltshire Police Authority**

The minutes of the Wiltshire Police Authority as provided by the Police Authority and dated 14 June 2007 were received.

The report of the Police Authority from Mrs Soden, was presented. It was noted that following concerns expressed by Members at the last meeting of Council, the report had been circulated earlier to enable Members to submit questions in advance if they wished to do so. Mr Osborn presented a question to which Mrs

Soden replied. In the question, Mr Osborn expressed concern over the reliability of the 0845 telephone system. Details of the question and reply were tabled.

109. **Non-Attendance at Meetings – Mr CP Humphries**

The Chairman reported that this item was no longer required in view of Mr Humphries' attendance at this meeting. The item was therefore withdrawn.

(Duration of meeting: 11.10am – 1.05pm)

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