

CABINET CAPITAL ASSETS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE CABINET CAPITAL ASSETS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 JANUARY 2011 AT COMMITTEE ROOM V - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Cllr John Noeken, Cllr Fleur de Rhe-Philippe, Cllr Jane Scott OBE (Chair), Cllr Toby Sturgis and Cllr John Thomson

Also Present:

Cllr Tony Deane, Cllr Lionel Grundy OBE, Cllr Jeff Osborn, Cllr Dick Tonge and Cllr Anthony Trotman

1. **Chairmanship**

In accordance with Paragraph 20 of Part 7 of the Wiltshire Council Constitution, 'Cabinet Procedure Rules', the Leader will preside at any meeting of the Cabinet or its committees at which she is present, or may appoint another person to do so.

2. **Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

There were no minutes of previous meetings to sign as this was the inaugural meeting of the Committee.

4. **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's Announcements.

5. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

6. **Revisions to Capital Programme**

The Corporate Director, Neighbourhood and Planning, introduced the item and outlined the scope of the report and general aims of the proposals contained therein.

The Committee then received a presentation from the Interim Head of Financial Planning, setting out the contents of the report and making recommendations as per the report.

Key points raised were as follows:

- Capital programme has historically seen an underspend
- Deferrals of capital schemes could save £700,000 in revenue costs
- Proposed DDA Works, Highways Depot & office strategy and Libraries, Heritage & Arts schemes to be transferred to Workplace Transformation
- Reports on Highways and Education to follow, with a view to enabling further savings by re-profiling
- Deferral of Workplace Transformation, ICT Systems and Disabled Facilities Grant schemes, worth around £16m
- Proposed to fix the capital programme, if approved, with no new capital schemes outside the exceptions provided for in the report
- If approved, strategy would enable greater flexibility and opportunity to enable savings periodically in the capital programme

The Committee received a question from, Cllr Tony Trotman, Chair of the Section 106 Scrutiny Task Group, in relation to the prospect of including the costs of current Leisure and Waste transformation schemes within the capital programme. It was confirmed that this would be the case as soon as the schemes were approved by Cabinet and costs agreed through the budget-setting process.

The Committee received a question from, Cllr Jeff Osborn, Chair of the Organisation and Resources Select Committee, in relation to the transparency of the Workplace Transformation Programme as an umbrella heading for several projects. It was explained that this is inherent of the programme-based approach to achieving value for money, by focusing on outcomes rather than inputs and enabling flexibility and negotiation in the tendering process. As such, the remit of the Workplace Transformation Programme is likely to develop further in the coming weeks and, as this is refreshed, the overall outcomes required from the programme will be restated, as will its broad funding streams.

Following discussion regarding the points raised and recommendations made in the officer's report, it was,

Resolved:

To approve the recommendations of the Interim Head of Financial Planning, as follows:

For the review proposals [as set out in the report] to be accepted and the capital programme amended as follows:

- i. Re-profiling of the schemes reviewed, as outlined in the report.**
- ii. Virements of schemes to WTP, as outlined in the report.**
- iii. Virements and reduction of budget for ICT schemes, as outlined in the report.**

For the capital programme 2011/12 to 2012/13, after the review, to remain unchanged and for no further new bids to be accepted to the capital programme except for the following:

- i. New proposals brought forward for leisure and waste and approved as part of the council's budget setting process.**
- ii. Further reports on Highways and Education to be brought to the Committee to outline future spending proposals with a view to amending the approved programme.**
- iii. Any new schemes which clearly demonstrate revenue savings and have been brought to the Committee and approved.**

7. Transformation of Waste and Recycling Collection Services

The Corporate Director, Neighbourhood and Planning, introduced the item and outlined the scope of the report and general aims of the proposals contained therein.

The Committee then received a presentation from the Service Director, Waste Management Services, setting out the contents of the report and making recommendations as per the report.

Key points raised were as follows:

- Report is set within context of outcome of comprehensive spending review
- After proposal to defer until 2012/13, scheme to go ahead in 2011/12
- Requirement for capital investment of around £8.5m over the four years 2011/12 – 2014/15
- Transformation scheme will improve waste collection services for Wiltshire residents and increase recycling to meet targets
- Proposals brought to Cabinet Capital Assets Committee to implement the transformation scheme as approved on 19th October 2010

The Committee received a question from Cllr Tony Deane, Vice-Chair of the Budget & Performance Task Group in relation to whether the proposals and wider transformation scheme were intended to deliver service improvements or reduce costs including landfill taxes and increase value for money. It was confirmed that the proposal and service review sought to enable benefits across all of these factors.

The Committee received a question from Cllr Tony Trotman, Chair of the Section 106 Scrutiny Task Group, in relation to the anticipated timescale for implementation of the programme. It was confirmed that this was yet to be definitively established and that a report containing this information would be available from 22 February 2011.

Following discussion regarding the points raised and recommendations made in the officer's report, it was,

Resolved:

To approve the recommendations of the Service Director, Waste Management Services, as follows:

That the Committee agrees to include the proposed capital investment [as set out in the report], required to implement the new services for waste and recycling collection during 2011-12, in the council's future capital programme, to be approved through the budget setting process.

8. Community Asset Transfer Policy

The Committee then received a presentation from the Head of Strategic Property Services, setting out the contents of the report and making recommendations as per the report.

Key points raised were as follows:

- Existing community asset transfer policy has been in place for around a year, in which time Wiltshire Council's financial position has changed significantly
- Existing policy requires better definition around the classification of strategic and non-strategic assets; asset value threshold being insufficient
- Current internal resource required for facilitating transfers disproportionate to benefits enabled in many cases
- Need for increased consultation with communities, and for these to produce detailed business cases for asset use when bidding
- Potential for internal consultation where re-use of buildings is an option
- Many benefits still to be gained by transfer to community, for instance with registered charities' rates relief and tax breaks
- New policy will reflect Localism Bill once published, with sufficient provision as to respond to further legislative changes

The Committee received a question from Cllr Tony Trotman, Chair of the Section 106 Scrutiny Task Group, in relation to whether the authority had finance available to make buildings serviceable ready for transfer to communities, and if so, how this would be used. It was confirmed that no such budget exists and that communities should consider this in making transfer applications.

The Committee received a question from Cllr Tony Deane, Vice-Chair of the Budget & Performance Task Group in relation to the extent to which the report considers the links between community groups with their Area Board and Cabinet or Committee members and Scrutiny. It was confirmed that the full proposal for a revised policy would have regard to this issue.

The Committee received a second question from the Vice-Chair of the Budget & Performance Task Group in relation to the resources of Parish and Town Councils in terms of facilitating the community asset transfer process, given potential limitations. It was suggested that Parish and Town Councils would not necessarily play an integral role in the process but should support community groups in making applications.

Following discussion regarding the points raised and recommendations made in the officer's report, it was,

Resolved:

To approve the recommendations of the Head of Strategic Property Services, as follows:

That cabinet request the Director of Resources to carry out a review of the existing Community Asset Transfer Policy, and to report to a future Committee meeting with a proposed amended policy.

And that a full proposal for a replacement policy be brought to the soonest possible meeting of the Cabinet Capital Assets Committee.

9. Scrutiny of Section 106 Agreements

Owing to a conflicting appointment, the Chair apologised and left the meeting. The Chair appointed Cllr Fleur de Rhe-Philipe as Chair for the remainder of the meeting, as permitted by Paragraph of 20 Part 7 of the Wiltshire Council Constitution.

Councillor Fleur de Rhe-Philipe in the Chair.

The Committee received a presentation from the Senior Scrutiny Officer, setting out the contents of the report and making recommendations as per the report.

Key points raised were as follows:

- Need to reconcile pre-Wiltshire Council local authorities' databases of Section 106 commitments
- Concerns raised that some Section 106 commitments may expire without realising an community benefits if not closely monitored
- Current resource of one employee to consolidate all available records of outstanding Section 106 commitments

- Of £19m worth of Section 106 commitments for schemes valued at over £300,000, only £3m worth has been realised to date
- Difficulty of bringing forward outstanding commitments when developers merge or acquired by other firms
- Concerns raised that relevant departments are not aware of the gravity of the situation and limited time available for some commitments

The Committee received a question from Cllr Tony Trotman, Chair of the Section 106 Scrutiny Task Group, in relation to whether funding would be available to allocate additional resource to the consolidation of the Section 106 database. It was noted that it would be important to understand the full scale of the problem before commenting to this effect.

The Committee received a question from Cllr Jeff Osborn, Chair of the Organisation and Resources Select Committee, in relation to whether information relating to outstanding Section 106 commitments could be made available to Area Boards so that communities may be able to prioritise schemes and engage developers to bring these forward. It was acknowledged that this would be a positive step towards empowering communities and delivering best value.

Following discussion regarding the points raised and taking into account the recommendations made in the officer's report, it was,

Resolved:

That the Corporate Director, Resources, undertake immediate scoping work to address the issues raised with a view to identifying and implementing an action plan that will lead to a completed corporate Section 106 database.

10. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 12.00 - 1.20 pm)

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