

CABINET CAPITAL ASSETS COMMITTEE

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CABINET CAPITAL ASSETS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 7 FEBRUARY 2011 AT COMMITTEE ROOM III - 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 and Cllr Jeff Osborn

1. **Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 10 January 2011 were presented and it was,

Resolved:

To approve and sign the minutes as a correct record.

3. **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

4. **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

5. **Capital Budget Monitoring Report**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Risk introduced the item and outlined the scope of the report and purpose of the proposals contained therein.

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

The Interim Head of Financial Planning also clarified that the figure of £1.462m in point c) of the recommendations had been approved by the secretary of state and was now confirmed.

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:

- a) **To note the current position of the 2010-11 capital programme.**
- b) **Note the budget changes in section 1 of Appendix B.**
- c) **To recommend to council the addition of £1.462m in the 2010-11 Capital Programme for capitalisation of redundancy costs as approved by the secretary of state.**
- d) **To note the budget virements detailed in paragraphs 8 to 10 of the report.**
- e) **To note the requirements of reintroducing the £1.025m Hubs Strategy contribution back into the Workplace Transformation Project for the 2011-12 Capital Programme.**

5a. **Capital Programme Proposals**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Risk introduced the item and outlined the scope of the report and purpose 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 were as follows:

- Report addresses the outstanding capital spending from the paper presented to the Cabinet Capital Assets Committee on 10 January 2011
- Key areas of capital investment are on highways, education, waste, workplace transformation, broadband and the libraries RFID request considered later in the meeting
- Proposals fit within the context of the 'no further changes' policy as set out and approved in the previous meeting of the Cabinet Committee
- That the proposals, if approved, were scheduled to be considered by Scrutiny on 10 February and recommended to Cabinet on 15 February.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Communities and Libraries sought clarification on the figures contained in paragraph 11 of the report, and it was confirmed that the £0.505m value related to annual budget savings, and was contextualised within that section of the report.

The Committee received a question from Cllr Tony Deane, Vice-Chair of the Budget & Performance Task Group, in relation to whether Wiltshire Council had a dedicated in-house team responsible for the renegotiation of contracts and lobbying central government to repeal legislation impeding their capacity to do so. It was confirmed that no such distinct team existed, but that all service areas were expected to identify any legislative limitations on their ability to deliver best value for their particular service needs this way. The Corporate Leadership Team would also be lobbying ministers directly to this effect.

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:

That the Cabinet Capital Assets Committee make the following recommendations to Cabinet on 15 February 2011 which will be presented to Scrutiny on 10 February 2011:

- a) **To approve the Wiltshire Council Capital Programme for 2011-12 to 2014-15 as shown in Appendix A of the report.**

6. Local Transport Plan and Highway Funding

The Service Director, Strategic Services, introduced the item and outlined the scope of the report and general aims of the proposals contained therein.

The Committee then received a presentation setting out the contents of the report and making recommendations as per the report.

Key points raised were as follows:

- Reasons for increased cost of highways maintenance, including addressing specific highways issues and a backlog of work in general
- Guarantee of Local Transport Plan grant funding for 2011-12, as announced by the Department for Transport in December 2010, where previously this had been provided through supported borrowing
- No guarantee that additional central government funding would be provided to address Winter weather damage to highways, therefore this would have to be accommodated within Council capital budget as requested
- The allocation of funding set out in the report related solely to highway maintenance and not to highway improvements
- Consultation at local level has placed highways as a key issue for local people and one to which feedback has suggested more resource should be allocated

The Leader of the Council sought clarification that the proposals contained in the Service Director's report correlated with the values set out in the report of the Interim Head of Financial Planning at agenda item 5a. It was confirmed that this was the case, and that these plans were encapsulated within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

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, Strategic Services, as follows:

That the capital programme for 2011/12 should include:

- (i) £250,000 for footway reconstruction and surfacing.**
- (ii) £500,000 for additional carriageway surface dressing.**

7. **Workplace Transformation Programme - Depot Facilities Strategy and Implementation Plan**

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the item and outlined the scope of the report and general aims of the proposals contained therein.

The Committee then received a presentation setting out the contents of the report and making recommendations as per the report.

Key points raised were as follows:

- Current stock of 12 main Council depots poses significant issues around suitability and physical condition
- Proliferation of depots is due to the number of duplicate facilities inherited from the four district councils and former County Council
- Depot strategy aims to address facilities stock issues whilst serving as an exercise in future cost avoidance
- Anticipated future costs include maintenance and improvement, running costs and carbon emissions costs
- Limited scope for redistribution or expansion of the 25 services currently housed in existing depots
- Prospect of an interim merger of the depots at Wilton and Churchfields in Salisbury in order to begin site disposal
- Request for capital investment in the depot strategy in order to realise revenue savings over the next 25 years has previously been agreed by the Committee as part of the capital programme, therefore Committee is asked to endorse the strategy and implementation plan

The Committee received a question from Cllr Jeff Osborn, Chair of the Organisation and Resources Select Committee in relation to the extent of bureaucracy inherent in the sourcing of three new suitable sites and the resource implications of this. It was acknowledged that this was an issue, but confirmed that this would be considered in the assessment of prospective new sites.

Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Waste, Property and Environment, raised a concern regarding a Department for Communities and Local Government request for an exhaustive list of council-owned properties from Wiltshire Council, and the misleading appearance of this raw data in the current state of flux. It was confirmed that any information provided would be accompanied by an explanatory note, but agreed that the prospect of asset values being used to estimate Council reserves at this time would pose a risk.

The Leader raised a query regarding the cost of an interim merger of the facilities at Wilton and Churchfields, including the bureaucratic demands of this. It was confirmed, however, that this would still be the preferred and most cost efficient option due to the marketability implications of the Wilton depot site upon its future disposal and the benefits of early co-location to the performance of the service.

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

Resolved:

To approve the recommendations of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood and Planning, as follows:

That the Cabinet Capital Assets Committee endorse the depot facilities strategy and outline implementation plan as part of the Workplace Transformation Programme subject to funding approval via the capital programme.

8. Libraries Service Review - RFID Capital Investment Proposal

The Cabinet Member, Adult Care, Communities and Libraries, introduced the item and outlined the scope of the report and general aims of the proposals contained therein.

The Committee then received a presentation setting out the contents of the report, drawing attention to the business case at Appendix I, and making recommendations as per the report.

Key points raised were as follows:

- Requested capital investment serves as part of the Libraries Service Review, to be approved in full by Cabinet
- Anticipated that the £546,450 of capital investment requested would realise £505,000 year-on-year in revenue savings
- Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology proposed would enable a greater level of self-service at Wiltshire's public libraries
- Overall positive response to proposed strategy received at local level
- Increased community control facilitated through the strategy falls in line with the wider Big Society agenda
- Strategy of utilising voluntary staff from the community as well as RFID technology is backed by advice at central government level

The Committee received a comment from Cllr Jeff Osborn, Chair of the Organisation and Resources Select Committee, to the effect that Scrutiny had been consulted throughout the process and were satisfied with the strategy adopted as a means of ensuring future service delivery.

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

Resolved:

To approve the recommendations of the Director of Community Services as follows:

To approve the bid for capital investment in R.F.I.D technology, subject to the Council's capital programme setting process. The council would then be in a position to provide:

- **21 council operated libraries**

- **5 mobile libraries including a special service mobile**
- **10 libraries operated in partnership with local communities – providing opportunities for volunteers**
- **Opportunities for volunteers to extend the opening hours available at many local libraries, and for the library service to make best use of staff to keep libraries open for core/streamlined hours**

9. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 2.30 - 3.10 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Chris Marsh, of Democratic & Members' Services, direct line (01225) 713058, e-mail chris.marsh@wiltshire.gov.uk

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