

THE EXECUTIVE

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Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive held on Thursday 20th April 2006 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham commencing at 7.20 p.m.

Present: Councillor C. O’Gorman, Leader in the Chair

Councillors H. M. Dixon, S. K. Doubell, D. J. E. Evans, D. M. Moore and O. J. Thomas.

Non-Executive Councillors Present: Councillors D. B. Allen, H. T Jones, T. J. A. Northey, M. Rousell, T. R. Sturgis, R. L. Tonge, S. R. Walls and J. Webb.

Officers Present: D. Burbidge (Chief Executive), L. Bell (Strategic Manager Community & Environment), S. Bowcock (Operations Co-Ordinator), H. Braid (Policy & Democratic Services Officer), K. Golledge (Principal Environmental Health Officer), P. Jeremiah (Legal Services Team Leader), T. McCutcheon (Principal Private Sector Housing Officer), J. O’Brien (Housing Team Leader), S. Pangbourne (Strategic Manager Corporate Services) and D. Stirling (Estate & Design Tem Leader).

E210. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors C. R. Coleman, G. Offord and C. Reid.

E211. Public Question Time/Receipt of Petitions

The following question had been submitted by Ms. S. Sorell of the North Wiltshire Citizens Advice Bureau in respect of Report No.15 – Housing Advice Review.

“Would the Executive consider delaying a decision on this report as the CAB have not been given a copy of the report and a chance to comment on it? The CAB are a member of the Review’s Project Steering group and we and other members of the group were told in December that the meeting to discuss the report was postponed as there were delays in finishing the report. The group have not met since then.”



The following written response from the Lead Member for Housing was circulated at the meeting:

“It would not be appropriate for the CAB to see the report prior to presentation to Executive and to be able to influence the outcome. The report concerns the provision of a statutory service and recommends a number of options for providing that service based on an independent review recently carried out. It would not be proper for a potential contractor to be involved in influencing the outcome of the report without also giving a similar opportunity to other potential service providers.

I understand Janet O’Brien met with you on Wednesday to discuss the report and to answer any questions you have as far as possible. However, I am unable to agree to recommend delaying a decision on the report.”

A petition was also presented to the Leader of the Council in respect of the closure of the public conveniences in Colerne. 450 people had indicated their objection to the proposed closure of the conveniences by the Market Place.

Note: The petition can be located in the Minute Book, with the signed Minutes of this meeting.

E212. Questions from Non-Executive Councillors

Questions in respect of Report No.15 – Housing Advice Review had been submitted by Councillor J. H. Rooke and a question in respect of Report No.18 – Future of Public Conveniences had been submitted by Councillor J. Webb. These questions, together with the responses provided, are filed with the official record of the meeting in the Minute Book.

E213. Minutes

The Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 9th March 2006 (circulated with the agenda) were considered.

Resolved that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 9th March 2006 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

E214. Declarations of Interest

Non-Executive Members

Name	Item	Type	Nature	Action
Cllr H. T. Jones	Agenda Item 16 – Rudloe Community Centre	Personal	Trustee of Rudloe Community Association	Remained in the meeting during this item.
Cllr J. H. Rooke	Item 15 – Housing Advice Review	Personal	NWDC Appointee to the Board of the North Wiltshire CAB	Remained in the meeting during this item.
Cllr M. Rousell	Item 16 – Rudloe Community Centre	Personal	Trustee of Rudloe Community Association	Remained in the meeting during this item.
	Item 18 – Future of Public Conveniences	Personal	Member of Box Parish Council.	Remained in the meeting during this item.

E215. Leader's Announcements

None.

E216. Annual Audit and Inspection Letter March 2006

Consideration was given to Report No.7 (circulated with the agenda) which provided the Executive with the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter (March 2006) and an overview action plan (and progress update) in response to recommendations made in Annual Audit and Inspection Letter.

Consideration was also given to the following recommendation made by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting also held on 20th April 2006:

- (1) That the monitoring of performance information, with particular reference to information collected annually, be made a priority; and
- (2) That where practicable this information be reported to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Data in respect of some Best Value Performance Indicators is dependent upon receiving information from other bodies.
- Quarterly monitoring information is provided to the Finance & Performance Monitoring Sub-Committee and the way that this information is presented is being enhanced.

Resolved

- (1) That the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter be noted.
- (2) That the action plan in response to recommendations made in the Audit and Inspection Letter be noted.
- (3) That the monitoring of performance information, with particular reference to information collected annually, be made a priority.
- (4) That, where practicable, updates on performance against annual performance indicators be reported to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis.

E217. Draft Audit & Inspection 2006/07

Consideration was given to Report No.8 (circulated with the agenda) which provided the Executive with the Draft Audit and Inspection Plan for 2006/07 and invited Members to make any appropriate comments about the draft Plan.

Resolved that the Draft Audit & Inspection Plan be noted.

E218. Policy & Budget Framework

Consideration was given to Report No.9 (circulated with the agenda) which set out proposals for revising the corporate policy and budget framework, to improve the robustness of the process and the inclusiveness of the linked consultation.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Consideration is being given to the most appropriate method of undertaking budget consultation. In previous years Area Committees have been used to facilitate elements of the budget consultation and consideration will be given as to whether this is still the most appropriate arena.
- The Budget & Strategic Planning Working Group will involve Lead Members.
- Consideration will be given to the most appropriate method of providing Members with budget summary information.

Recommended to Council that

- (1) **The revised Policy and Budget Framework as set out in this report be adopted.**
- (2) **The State of the Area Debate be removed from the Council's Constitution.**

E219. Draft Corporate Plan 2006/09

Consideration was given to Report No.10 (circulated with the agenda) which set out the draft of the Corporate Plan 2006/09.

Recommended to Council

- (1) **That the Corporate Plan 2006/09 be adopted.**
- (2) **That authority be delegated to the appropriate Strategic Manager to complete the performance information set against each corporate priority, prior to the Plan's publication.**

E220. Revenue Budget Monitoring 2005/06

Consideration was given to Report No.11 (circulated with the agenda) which informed the Executive of the Council's forecast overturn position, based on its income and expenditure to the end of February 2006.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Members will be informed of the current position with regard to the Council's request to the Department for Work & Pensions that a review of the housing benefit subsidy be undertaken.

Resolved that the report be noted.

E221. The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005

Consideration was given to Report No.12 (circulated with the agenda) which summarised the new powers given to Councils under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 to deal more effectively with litter, nuisance vehicles, fly-tipping, waste, noise and dogs. The report also sought delegated authority for officers to exercise these new powers and, where appropriate, existing powers.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Any devolution of services to Town & Parish Councils will be subject to detailed consultation.
- The rural implications of new powers in respect of the removal of waste will need to be taken into account.
- The resource implications of increased enforcement action across the district, especially in rural areas.
- There will be a training requirement for those Parish Councils which agree to provide additional devolved services.

Resolved that the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be amended to include the delegations set out at Appendix 1 to Report No.12.

E222. Housing Act 2004

Consideration was given to Report No.13 (circulated with the agenda) which advised the Executive of the changes made by the new Housing Act 2004 and requested that the necessary powers to enforce these new regulations be delegated to the relevant Council Officers.

Resolved that

- (1) The Scheme of Delegation to Officers be amended to include the delegations set out at Appendix 1 & 2 to Report No.13.
- (2) The license application fee for Houses In Multiple Occupation be agreed as detailed in Appendix 3 to Report No.13.

E223. Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved that in accordance with Regulation 21 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the following items of business involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as follows:

Agenda Item/Report Name	Paragraph(s) of the Act / Schedule describing the exemption
Item 15 – Housing Advice Review	Paragraphs 3 & 4
Item 16 – Cotswold Water Park Society	Paragraph 3
Item 17 – Rudloe Community Centre	Paragraph 3
Item 18 – Future of Public Conveniences	Paragraph 4

E224. Housing Advice Review

Consideration was given to Report No.15 (circulated with the agenda) which informed Members of the outcome of the Housing Advice Review and sought a decision on implementing the recommendations.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The changing expectations for the way in which the Council delivers its homelessness and advice services.
- The focus of the review had been upon the quality of service for the customer.
- Officers with a variety of skill sets are required to deliver the service.
- It is essential that the effectiveness of the service can be reviewed on a regular basis and any necessary changes made as and when required.
- The problems experienced when consulting hard to reach groups.

Resolved that

- (1) A new homelessness prevention service is created in house and that provision is made to allow contracting out of specialist services as required and that an implementation plan for delivery be reported to a future meeting.
- (2) Authority be delegated to the Housing Team Leader in consultation with the Legal Services Team Leader to extend the existing contract with North Wiltshire Citizens Advice Bureau until the commencement of the new service.

Note: Councillor J. H. Rooke had declared a personal interest in this item as the North Wiltshire District Council representative on the North Wiltshire Citizens Advice Bureau Board.

E225. Cotswold Water Park Society

Consideration was given to Report No.16 (circulated with the agenda) which sought delegated authority to postpone the Council's charge over part of the Society's land and property.

Resolved that authority be delegated to the Legal Services Team Leader in consultation with the Finance Team Leader to enter into a deed postponing the Council's charge over part of the Society's land and property provided that the Council's security is not adversely affected.

E226. Rudloe Community Centre

Consideration was given to Report No.17 (circulated with the agenda) which advised the Executive of the current position at Rudloe Community Centre and sought approval for future action.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The history of the community centre.
- The report contains no reference to the scrutiny undertaken in respect of Rudloe Community Centre.
- It is anticipated that a report will be made back to the Executive by late August 2006.

Resolved that

- (1) A joint feasibility study be commissioned with Westlea Housing Association to enable the Council to decide on future proposals for Rudloe Community Centre. (This Council's contribution to be up to £5,000).
- (2) The existing rent free period be extended for a further 3-6 months whilst the feasibility study is carried out, the results analysed and recommendations made.
- (3) Work be undertaken with Rudloe Community Association and Westlea Housing Association to enable Westlea Housing Association to provide interim support to Rudloe Community Association for the building management.
- (4) Rudloe Community Association be provided with a grant of up to £1000 to cover extraordinary costs incurred until the interim arrangements are in place.

Note: Councillors H. T. Jones and M. Rousell had declared a personal interest in this item as Trustees of Rudloe Community Association.

E227. Future of Public Conveniences

Consideration was given to Report No.18 (circulated with the agenda) which advised the Executive of options for the future of selected public conveniences as resolved at the Executive meeting of 9th March 2006.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Any Parish & Town Councils who take responsibility for the management of the public conveniences in their area will need an adequate handover period and guidance from the District Council.
- Consideration is being given to monitoring the level of usage of various public conveniences in the District.
- No financial formula has been developed for the transfer of public conveniences to Town & Parish Councils owing to the differing circumstances in each case.
- The offer from the Procurement Champion to work with Officers to progress the transfer negotiations with Town & Parish Councils.
- A report on the outcome of the transfer negotiations will be made to the Executive by 31st August 2006 at the latest.

Resolved that the recommendations contained within Report No.18, as amended at the meeting, be approved.

Note: Councillor M. Rousell had declared a personal interest in this item as a Member of Box Parish Council.

The meeting commenced at 7.20pm and concluded at 8.35pm.

There were no members of the public present.

Signed:

Dated: