

THE EXECUTIVE

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Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive held on Thursday 11th May 2006 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham commencing at 7.00 p.m.

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

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

Non-Executive Councillors Present: Councillors I. J. Henderson, T. R. Sturgis and
J. P. S. S. Thomson.

Officers Present: D. Burbidge (Chief Executive), L. Bell (Strategic Manager
Community & Environment), H. Braid (Policy & Democratic Services Officer),
V. Cradock (Financial Consultant), A. Davies (Strategic Manager Planning Services),
and B. Matthews (Performance Management Officer).

E228. Apologies for Absence

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

E229. Public Question Time/Receipt of Petitions

None.

E230. Questions from Non-Executive Councillors

None.



E231. Minutes

The Minutes of the Executive meetings held on 12th April and 20th April 2006 (circulated with the agenda) were considered.

Resolved that the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive held on 12th April and 20th April 2006 be confirmed and signed as correct records.

E232. Declarations of Interest

None.

E233. Leader's Announcements

None.

E234. Area Committees and the Voice to Choice Project

Consideration was given to Report No.7 (circulated with the agenda) which sought a decision about the District Council's involvement in the pilot of the Voice to Choice Project.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Funding from Wiltshire County Council of £200,000 per year for the next 3 years has been secured for community planning. A further £40,000 has been secured from the Wiltshire Capacity Building Programme.
- Recruitment is underway at Wiltshire County Council for 8 Community Officers to support Local Community Partnerships and Members in their Community Leadership role.
- The current proposal for working arrangements which will see Officers taking decisions which reflect the views of local Members has been developed due to the current legislative restrictions upon devolving individual decision-making to local Members.
- The priority of the Voice to Choice project is to ensure the delivery of the community plans to ensure momentum is not lost and partners do not become disillusioned with the process.
- The current indications are that the Local Government White Paper will not be published until September 2006 at the earliest.
- Concern that the proposals contained within the White Paper will be at odds with the proposals for the Voice to Choice project.
- The priority of NWDC was that any developments in partnership working encouraged democratic participation.

Resolved that

- (1) The District Council's involvement in one or two pilot projects be agreed in principle pending the publication of the Local Government White Paper in the summer, or receipt of sufficient information to develop proposals which are consistent with that White Paper, and NWDC Officers continue working with Wiltshire County Council to develop options.
- (2) NWDC Officers work with local partners to develop the Area Committees link to local stakeholders.
- (3) A progress report in respect of the development of options be brought to the Executive meeting on 31st August 2006.

***Note:** It was agreed that a copy of the relevant Wiltshire County Council Cabinet resolution will be circulated to Executive Members.*

E235. Delegated Authority Relating to the Local Development Framework

Consideration was given to Report No.8 (circulated with the agenda) which sought to establish an appropriate reporting process to the Executive and full Council for Local Development Framework documents prepared under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The proposed Spatial Planning Advisory Group will replace the current Public Spaces & Local Plans Panel.
- The experience of Regional Planning Bodies which involve representatives from a range of organisations.
- A further paper will be presented to the Executive with regard to the constitution and terms of reference of the proposed Advisory Group.
- The work currently being undertaken to review the operation of Working Groups and Task Groups at the Council.

Resolved that

- (1) The Spatial Plans Team Leader be delegated powers for all Local Development Framework responsibilities of the Executive, subject to consultation with a Spatial Planning Advisory Group as constituted by the Executive.

- (2) The Scheme of Delegation be amended accordingly.
- (3) That the operation of the delegation is subject to the approval and formal constitution and terms of reference of the Advisory Group by the Executive.

E236. Environmental Grants

Consideration was given to Report No.9 (circulated with the agenda) which recommended the payment of grants from the Environmental Grants budget for 2006/07.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Clarification will be provided to Members as to whether organisations are asked to provide details of their financial balances when making an application for an environmental grant.
- The Council is not at liberty to publish the financial position of other organisations.
- It is normal practice for Council appointees to Outside Bodies and Partnerships to have voting rights.
- Officers will review the applications of those organisations in receipt of smaller awards from the Environmental Grants budget to see if they can access other funding streams.

Resolved that

- (1) The report be noted.
- (2) The following grants be approved:

i.	Cotswolds AONB	£6,991
ii.	N. Wessex Downs AONB	£3,568
iii.	Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	£14,392
iv.	Great Western Community Forest	£4,000
v.	Cotswold Canal Trust	£550
vi.	Wilts & Berks Canal Trust	£1,500
vii.	BTCV	£699
	Total	£31,700

E237. Capital Strategy

Consideration was given to Report No.10 (circulated with the agenda) which presented the Capital Strategy for approval and adoption.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The Capital Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis to enable any changes to be reflected.
- The use of resources relating to assets impacts upon people and for this reason there are equality and diversity implications associated with the Capital Strategy.
- The impact that current proposals in respect of the Planning Gain Supplement may have for the Council.

Resolved that the Capital Strategy, as appended to Report No.10, be approved.

E238. Small Business Concordat

Consideration was given to Report No.11 (circulated with the agenda) which provided information to the Executive to enable a decision to be made on signing the Government initiative on the support for small local businesses.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- No specific reference is made to rural businesses within the concordat as they are categorised as small and medium sized enterprises with special requirements.
- The Concordat makes it easier to use procurement and support for the local economy through the use of a range of local organisations.

Resolved that

- (1) The primacy of a buoyant local economy is recognised.
- (2) A commitment be made to signing the Small Business Concordat and to the implementation of strategies to make the policy of small business support a principal goal in the Council's Corporate Plan.

E239. Recommendations of the Finance & Performance Monitoring Sub Committee

Consideration was given to Report No.12 (circulated with the agenda) which asked the Executive to consider the following recommendations from the Finance & Performance Monitoring Sub Committee:

- (1) That consideration be given to ensuring adequate provision in both revenue and capital budgets to meet maintenance costs of the current asset base and to take account of pipeline assets, specifically the Pound Arts Centre.
(Minute PMSC87 refers.)

- (2) That when reviewing Service Level Agreements with Partners only organisations which receive sizeable funding should be audited.
(Minute PMSC68 refers.)

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The range of factors to be taken into account when deciding upon the appropriate level of monitoring of partner organisations.
- The use of the Partnership Evaluation Tool in monitoring partnership arrangements.
- Concern that recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee were not accompanied by information supporting the rationale for the recommendation to ensure that all relevant issues can be considered by the Executive.

Resolved that the following responses be made to the Finance & Performance Monitoring Sub-Committee:

- (i) Following advice from the Section 151 Officer, it can be confirmed that ensuring adequate budgetary provision to meet maintenance costs of current and future assets will be considered within the budget setting process for 2007/08 and onwards.
- (ii) With regard to the recommendation as to the monitoring of Service Level Agreements with partners, this will be considered as part of the wide programme of work in respect of partnership working.

The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and concluded at 7.55pm.

There were no members of the public present.

Signed:

Dated: