

THE EXECUTIVE

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**Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive held on Thursday 16th November 2006
in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham
commencing at 7.00pm.**

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

Councillors P. G. Allnatt, H. M. Dixon, S. K. Doubell, D. J. E. Evans,
R. J. Henning, D. M. Moore, G. Offord and O. J. Thomas

Non-Executive Councillors Present:

Councillors J. H. Rooke, R. L. Tonge and S. R. Walls

Officers Present: L. Bell (Strategic Manager - Community and Environment), D. Burbidge (Chief Executive), N. Fenwick (Strategic Manager - Customer Services), P. Hawley (Chief Accountant), L. May (Policy & Democratic Services Assistant), S. Pangbourne (Strategic Manager Corporate Services), J. Poole (Temporary Policy & Democratic Services Assistant), P. Southway (Recovery Team Leader) and P. Timmins (Interim Section 151 Officer)

E99. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A. L. Davis.

E100. Public Question Time/Receipt of Petitions

1. Margaret Cleverley, the Doorway Manager of the Doorway Project had submitted the following question in respect of future funding for the Project.

“Doorway Project (formerly North Wiltshire Homelessness Project) is a partnership between The Salvation Army and CVS North Wiltshire, and provides a drop-in centre in Chippenham for homeless and other marginalised single adults with complex needs. There are four sessions each week – two offering hot meals, laundry and personal washing facilities, sleeping bags and



one to one support and two devoted to activities (arts and IT) designed to increase self confidence and teach new skills.

Our aim is to prevent homelessness by effective signposting to specialist services and to help our guests raise their aspirations and work towards social inclusion. There is evidence that violent and drug related crime have reduced in Chippenham since the centre open.

Doorway is the only service dedicated to this client group in North Wiltshire and is a key resource, cited in the District Council's draft Homelessness Strategy 2006-2011, Appendix 1, Priority 3: "Improve Services to Homeless People". The project also contributes statistics on rough sleeping in the district which have informed recommendations in the draft Homelessness Strategy and assists with NWDC consultations on homelessness issues from time to time.

In view of the key role that Doorway plays in the council's Homelessness Strategy, and the impact of the service on its guests as well as on community safety, can we hope that the Council will make an annual commitment to fund the project?"

Councillor C. O'Gorman, Leader, gave the following response:

"The Council plans its budget for 2007-08, from August 2006 to February 2007. It is too early to say how this will turn out, as the following will explain.

During the planning period, all requests for funding will be considered together, and compared to the Council's priorities. This is the fairest way ranking the requests, so that the most important issues are considered first. Finally, the Council has to consider what it can afford. Only when all these steps have taken place, will it be possible to answer your question."

A supplementary question was received from Councillor J. H. Rooke:

"Can you give us an indication of when this will be and whether Doorway would be kept informed of the situation?"

Councillor C. O'Gorman, Leader, gave the following response:

"We cannot give a definite time but as soon as we know you and Doorway will be informed."

2. Councillor P. G. Allnatt stated that Members had not had time to democratically discuss the Sustainable Strategy for Wiltshire, which had been circulated earlier in the week. He felt that the decision shouldn't be rushed and requested that officers inform the County Council that more time is needed for consideration of this document.

L. Bell (Strategic Manger - Community & Environment) responded that she would investigate if there was any room for manoeuvre in extending the deadline for responses to the document.

E101. Questions from Non-Executive Councillors

No questions were submitted.

E102. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 9th November 2006 (circulated on 14th November 2006) were considered.

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

E103. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

E104. Leader's Announcements

There were no announcements.

E105. Draft Corporate Plan 2007/10

Consideration was given to Report No.7 (circulated with the Agenda) which set out the key points that will be considered in drawing up the Corporate Plan for 2007/10.

The Corporate Plan 2007/10 would be brought to the Executive for approval alongside the budget for 2007/08 in February 2007.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- That this is a draft Corporate Plan and there would be opportunities to have more input into the final document;
- The possibility of including within the Plan wording such as “The Council will seek to provide those services for the public required by Parliament in an efficient, effective and economic manner; the Council will seek to provide those services for the public permitted by Parliament and desired by local communities as resources permit in an efficient, effective and economic manner; and where appropriate and possible Council will seek to carry out both required and permitted services in partnership with other public agencies, charitable and commercial sector organisations.”
- That the Council's Calendar of Meetings should be set with more consideration of school holidays, etc;
- The possibility of resident parking schemes being added to the Transport Parking Strategy within the Corporate Plan; and
- The possibility of changing the definition of ‘Vision’ with the Plan.

Resolved that the Executive agree that the Corporate Plan for 2007/10 be developed as outlined in this report.

E106. Budget 2007/08 Update

Consideration was given to Report No.8 (circulated on 14th November 2006) which updated the Executive on the 2007/08 Budget, giving details of the major issues and scene setting, the establishment of the base line budget for 2007/08, and details of the current efficiency savings and growth bids.

Appendix 8c was circulated at the meeting. This document was the 2007/10 Budget - Revenue Growth Bids - Scoring Matrix.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- That Members were willing to note the budget update, not agree to it yet as the figures were not yet able to be finalised;
- The possibility of Officers looking at the County Council methodology for producing hard copies of the budget book at any earlier stage in the budget process;
- Whether or not there was a Council policy on borrowing or leasing; and
- The possibility that other Council areas as well as Building Control had miscalculated VAT and why auditors and VAT inspectors had not discovered this mistake.

Resolved that the progress in compiling the proposed 2007-08 budget and the following two-year's forecasts be noted, and that further report would update the Executive on progress at the meeting on 14th December 2006.

E107. Council Tax Discount for Second and Long Term Empty Homes

Consideration was given to Report No.9 (circulated with the Agenda) which sought a determination of the level of Council Tax discount to be awarded to second and long term empty homes.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Whether any of the additional revenue raised by this reduction in discount could be directed to affordable housing; and
- Whether the additional revenue raised (approximately £20,000) outweighed the cost of implementing the change and collecting the money.

Resolved that

- (1) From 1st April 2007 the discount awarded to second and long term empty homes be reduced from 50% to 10%.

- (2) That a property is classed as long term empty after a period of six months.

E108. Calculation of Council Tax Base 2007/08

Consideration was given to Report No.10 (circulated with the Agenda) which informed the Executive of the recommended Council Tax Base for 2007/08 and the necessary statutory resolution on General Fund Expenses.

Resolved that:

- (1) In accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the amount calculated by North Wiltshire District Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2007/08 shall be as set out in **Column 12 of Appendix 1 (attached to these Minutes)**.
- (2) The amounts calculated as the Council Tax Bases of the various parish areas for 2007/08 shall be as set out in **Appendix 1 (attached to these Minutes)**.
- (3) For the purposes of Section 35 (1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, with the exception of special items (Parish Council Precepts), all expenses falling on the Council's General Fund be declared general expenses chargeable on the District as a whole.

The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and concluded at 7.50pm.

There were no members of the public present.