

WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the: **Cabinet**

Held on: **Wednesday 9 January 2008**

Held at: **Council Chamber, Bradley Road, Trowbridge**

Present:

Councillors: Payne (Leader), Conley, Davis, Eaton, Fortescue, March, Mounde, Phillips OBE, While and Wiltshire

Also present: Cllrs Brown, H Osborn and J Osborn,

Officers: Chief Executive (AP), Principal Lawyer (AA-P), Head of Finance (IJ), Management Accountant (SH), Corporate Director (TD) Corporate Director (IG) Head of Human Resources and Customer Services (SL) and Member Support Officer (AM)

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

4. Presentation of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee

Cllr J Osborn presented a report to Cabinet containing the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee concerning:

- Post Office Ltd's plans to close or downgrade eight Post Offices in West Wiltshire.
- Current and outstanding Section 106 Agreements, signed for various planning permissions.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

With regard to the Post Office Closures:

- **Recommends that Members reply as local Councillors to Post Office Ltd as part of the consultation process concerning the proposed closures and down-grading of a number of post offices within the District.**
- **Encourages Members to work closely with Parish Councils to produce a local response to the consultation, this could include:-**
 - **The excessive use of local Post Offices in the towns and villages**
 - **The fact that as a result of previous closures members of the public had been given other Post Offices as alternatives but these alternatives are now under threat of closure in the current proposals**
- **Endorses a Corporate response to the proposed post office closures from West Wiltshire District Council to be sent by the end of the consultation period, 31 January 2008. This will include the recommendation from Scrutiny Committee as follows:**
 - **This Council is strongly opposed to all cutbacks of Post Office services in West Wiltshire on the grounds of social inclusion, social deprivation and the environment (climate change). These cutbacks will particularly affect the most vulnerable members of society and those who live in rural communities.**
- **Requests further information on the legal position regarding the Governments ability to offer financial assistance to the Post Office to help prevent the closures and downgrading.**

With regard to the Monitoring of Planning obligations – Section 106 Agreements and a report to be produced by June 2008 detailing current and outstanding obligations:

- **Notes the comments made by Scrutiny Committee**

5. Announcements from the Leader

1. The Chief Executive of West Wiltshire District Council, Andrew Pate, has tendered his resignation with the Authority and will be leaving in March 2008.

The Leader paid tribute to the work Andrew has done whilst with West Wiltshire District Council. Andrew has overseen a major restructuring of the way the Council works, which has enabled us to provide significantly improved services. He has been instrumental in helping us to achieve a clear sense of direction, become one of the most efficient Districts in the country, yet remain ambitious to achieve major advances in regeneration and affordable housing. The Council wishes him well as he moves into new challenges in his new post.

2. The Leader announced the appointment of two members to the Interim County Implementation Executive. The Members appointed were Cllr Phillips and Cllr Eaton. Two reserve members were also appointed; these were Cllr Conley and Cllr Payne. Council will be informed when the Implementation Executive becomes a formal body.
3. Members were reminded of the Seminar scheduled for Monday 21 January 2008 to be held at The Corn Exchange, Devizes. The purpose of this seminar is to work together to develop effective community area engagement within the county.

6. Transforming Trowbridge

Open Forum speaker:

Mr Francis Morland

Cllr Mounde and the Corporate Director presented a report that explored options to ensure that the St. Stephens Place and Castle Place sites will be brought forward for redevelopment at the earliest possible opportunity. The report asked Cabinet to identify its preferred option so that Officers can move forward to start to implement the work and provide Cabinet with more detailed advice.

Prior to presenting the report Cllr Mounde thanked Cllr Parks for standing in for him during his absence from Cabinet.

The report also advised Cabinet on the work that is in hand to ensure that there is adequate temporary car parking available during the works to the multi-storey car park and other developments coming forward within Trowbridge.

The Corporate Director identified a number of key dates and issues/actions that had occurred during discussions with the current owners of the sites these included:-

Date	Issue/action
2005	Planning Application
2006	Lease Drafted
2007	Parking Orders

Since 2007, there has been no action by the Contractor to move the development forward. The Corporate Director was satisfied that the Contractor will take no further action. He is looking to ensure adequate car parking when the other development occurs and will report back in March.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

- **Request that the Corporate Director circulate a more detailed and extensive list of key dates to Cabinet Members.**
- **Agree to seek the advice of an appropriately experienced planning solicitor with a further report to Cabinet in March.**
- **Confirm to the Development Control Manger that the required legal agreements are unlikely to be completed.**
- **Note and agree the work to ensure that adequate provision of temporary car parking is in place prior to and during the development phases of key projects and works to the multi-storey car park (MSCP) and request a further report in March on options.**

Key decision box

Statement of reason for key decision	Impact on the Community
Options considered and rejected	These are addressed in the report
Date of implementation	If agreed the recommendations in this report establish that further work be carried out and advice taken. There will be no implementation of any options until Cabinet have considered further reports in March.

7. Financial Monitoring 2007-08

Cllr While presented a report to inform members of the Council's financial position for the period ending 30 November 2007.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet notes the current financial position and the likely out-turn.

8. Budget Report 2008/09

Cllr While presented a report that detailed the revenue budget, capital programme, fees and charges and level of reserves for the 2008/09 budget. The assumptions in the report were based on the provisional local government settlement, which will be finalised at the end of January 2008.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

- a) Approves the Fees and Charges for 2008/09 as detailed in Appendix two.**
- b) Agrees the overall budget for each service and the projected General Fund revenue budget of £15.363 million for 2008/09 and recommends a council tax level band d of £142.29 - an increase of 2.0% - to Full Council on 20 February 2008.**
- c) Agrees the capital programme of gross £2,375,600 and net £1,050,000 for 2008/09 as shown in Appendix three.**

subject to any comments received from Scrutiny Committee and the consideration of those comments at Cabinet on 6 February.

Key decision box

Statement of reasons for key decision	Requirement of constitution
Options considered and rejected	Councillors had opportunities to consider alternatives at various budget meetings
Date of Implementation (not less than 5 days after date of decision)	15 January 2008

9. Council Tax Base

Cllr While presented a report requesting approval for the Council tax base which will then be used to set the council tax for the following year. This is a legal requirement.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet agrees

- **The second homes discount continues unchanged at 10%.**
- **The long term empty homes discount continues unchanged at 10%.**
- **The calculation of the Council's taxbase for the whole and parts of the District as set out in Appendix A for 2008/09 be approved.**
- **In accordance with the Local Authorities (calculation of the tax base) Regulations 1992, the amount calculated by West Wiltshire District Council as its tax base for the whole of the area for the year 2008/09 shall be 47,580.78.**

Key decision box

Statement of reason for key decision	To approve the tax base calculation for 2008/09
Options considered and rejected	Statutory requirement
Date of implementation	1 April 2008

10. Update on Local Government Reorganisation

Cllr Eaton updated Members on the progress with the Local Government Reorganisation. There was no further update, as there had been no Implementation Executive Committee since the last meeting of the Cabinet, other than to inform Members that the Final Draft Orders had been received.

11. Cabinet Forward Work Plan February – May 2008

The Leader presented the Cabinet forward Workplan for February – May 2008.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet approves the Forward Work Plan February – May 2008

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Cabinet is scheduled for Wednesday 6 February 2008 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, at the Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge.

(7.00 – 8.25pm)

These minutes were prepared by Andrew Mitchell, Member Support Officer, who can be contacted on Tel: 01225 776655 ext. 242

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