

WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the: **Cabinet**

Held on: **Wednesday 2 July 2008**

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

Present:

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

Also present: Cllr Brown, Carbin, and J Osborn

Officers: Corporate Director and Head of Paid Services (IG), Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer (TD), Corporate Director and Finance Officer (IJ), Housing Options Team Leader (AR), Policy Officer (HC), Conservation Officer (RB), Principal Environmental Health Officer (CH), Head of Legal Services (NM), Member Support Officer (HP)

14. Apologies

No apologies were received.

15. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received.

16. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17. Announcements from the Leader

A member of the public (Mr Stenning) spoke regarding his concerns over signage in Lovemead car park. Mr Stenning received a parking ticket for purchasing two concurrent one hour tickets, despite this rule not being clearly explained on the car park's signs. The Leader thanked Mr Stenning for bringing the matter to the Cabinet's attention and assured him that officers would be improving this car park's signage. He also advised Mr Stenning to begin the Council's parking ticket appeals process, or failing that, that of the Independent Traffic Penalty Tribunal.

The Leader thanked all those who attended the military parade in Trowbridge on 27th June 2008, and expressed hope that the new unitary authority will continue to cement close links with the armed forces.

At the last meeting of Full Council concerns was voiced that the Mills Waste operatives were leaving an unacceptable amount of mess behind them whilst making their rounds. The Leader advised that he had looked into this and that the problem should now be rectified.

Mindful of the current 'credit crunch', the Leader has asked officers from the Finance and Revenues & Benefits departments if extra funds can be directed toward raising public awareness of council tax and housing benefits available to them. CMT have also been asked to think of other ways we can assist the public during these precarious times.

The Leader had attended several Implementation Executive briefings and is happy to report a positive working atmosphere. Progress has been made in ensuring clear lines of communication between staff, management and members continue into the One Council.

18. Hackney Carriage Stands

Cllr Conley introduced a report seeking approval for agreement and consultation on amended taxi rank arrangements in the Market Place and High Street, Melksham.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- 1. Agrees to request the consent of the Highway Authority to the proposals in this report; and**
- 2. Agrees its intention to make a hackney carriage stand order to:**
 - a. Remove the current taxi rank in High Street, Melksham,**
 - b. Make the current taxi rank in Market Place, Melksham operational 7 days a week, and**
 - c. Subject to consent being given by the Highway Authority extend the front of the Market Place, Melksham rank by approximately 6.6 metres to provide an additional vehicle space.**

19. Financial Results 2007/08

Cllr While introduced a report informing Cabinet of the out-turn for 2007/08.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. Agrees slippage of £0.700 million in respect of capital programme in Appendix A;
2. Agrees the funding of reserve requests listed in Appendix B of the report from the General Fund Balance;
3. Agrees levels of significant reserves listed in Appendix C of the report;
4. Agrees the allocation of the surplus £338,000 General Fund Balance towards funding identified pressures in 2008/09; and
5. Note the revenue and capital out-turn for 2007-08 and the position on the General Fund Balance at 31 March 2008.

20. Financial Monitoring 2007/08

Cllr While introduced a report informing the Cabinet of the Council's financial position for the period ending 31 May 2008.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- **Note the current financial position and the likely out-turn.**

21. Write-Off Report

Cllr While introduced a report proposing the write-off of various debts as at 31 May 2008. The last write-off report was as at 31 January 2008.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. **Notes the action of the Section 151 officer in writing off the debts under £500 totalling £119,744.82;**
2. **Approves the write off of the debts over £500 totalling £185,551.56; and**
3. **Notes that the total amount of debt written off from the proposals above equals £305,296.38.**

22. Backward-looking Annual Efficiency Statement 2007-08

Cllr While introduced a report providing Cabinet

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- **Approves the backward look AES 2007-08, and delegates any further minor amendments as required to the Corporate Director**

and head of Paid Services in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance.

23. Graffiti on Private Property in West Wiltshire

Cllr March introduced a report summarising the procedures for dealing with graffiti on various categories of land, and raising the main issues with addressing graffiti on private property.

Cllr Payne thanked officers for their work on this matter.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. Service Managers are briefed on the effects of graffiti and how it can be discouraged;**
- 2. The proposed responsibilities for dealing with complaints of graffiti be adopted, implemented and publicised;**
- 3. The Grounds Maintenance and Community Safety teams deal with complaints of graffiti as an operational priority;**
- 4. The implications of using Defacement Removal Notices are investigated by the Legal Service and guidance in their use provided to the two frontline teams;**
- 5. A letter is drafted to WCC informing them of the measures being taken by WWDC to deal with graffiti on private property, and reminding them of their obligations regarding graffiti on County Council-owned property; and**
- 6. Officers investigate the methods used by other local authorities to deal with graffiti.**

24. Performance Monitoring 2007-08 Year End

Cllr Davis introduced a report summarising the Council's performance in 2007-08.

Cllr Payne expressed concern that other local authorities are referring people with housing needs to WWDC because they are unable to deal with cases in their own areas.

It was noted that the assessment had awarded 'red lights' (unsatisfactory performance ratings) when targets have been missed by only a fraction of a percentage.

Cllr While reported that improvements have been made in customer access to the housing and debt advice teams, so performance figures should soon start to reflect this.

Cllr Eaton and Cllr Phillips OBE expressed concern that the Implementation Executive has not yet finalised arrangements for Spatial Planning and

Development Control in One Council. They agreed to raise the matter at the Implementation Executive's next meeting.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- 1. Received and noted the report;**
- 2. Note that the data will be submitted to the Audit Commission before the year end performance monitoring report is formally considered by Cabinet on 2 July 2008; and**
- 3. Note that data for 3 BVPIs cannot be provided. This will result in these indicators being reserved and treated as bottom quartile by the Audit Commission. It may also prompt a more detailed external audit of BVPIs.**

25. Amendment to a Delegated Housing-Related Decision

Cllr Fortescue introduced a report amending the existing decision and power relating to homelessness grants and loans in the prevention of homelessness.

The Committee expressed concern that private landlords will keep increasing the charges they levy on new tenants to match or exceed the amounts Councils provide in grants or loans.

Cllr Payne expressed concern that arrangements for meeting housing needs under One Council are far from complete, and there is no room for error in such an important department. Cllr Eaton and Cllr Phillips OBE agreed to raise the matter at the next meeting of the Implementation Executive.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet approves the amended delegated decision as listed in the report to the Housing Services Manager.

26. Update on Local Government Reorganisation

Cllr Eaton and Cllr Phillips gave verbal updates:

- The number of staff leaving the Council is steady at approximately three to four per month;
- A job description for Unitary Councillors has been approved by I.E.
- Most of the main Committee meetings will probably take place during the day;
- The Boundary Committee has now published its recommendations. There will be ninety-eight Unitary Councillors; and
- Three further service director posts (in Human Resources, Finance, and Housing) are now being advertised to staff of the five authorities. The order

has only been laid down in draft, so technically all the appointments are subject to approval of the order.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet note the update.

27. Review of Melksham and Westbury Conservation Areas – Boundary Changes

Cllr Mounde introduced a report summarising the findings of the Policy Project Groups (PPGs) for Melksham and Westbury Conservation Areas boundary changes as part of the on-going work for the District Council's Historic Environment Strategy.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- 1. Agree to go forward with a period of public consultation on the proposed boundary changes for the Westbury Conservation Area; and**
- 2. Agree to consider boundary changes to the Melksham Conservation Area once they are resubmitted with alterations.**

28. River Biss Public Realm Design and Implementation Plan (PRDIP) SPD

Cllr Mounde introduced a report requesting that the Cabinet agree to go to public consultation on the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

It was noted, in the report, that the target finish date for the public consultation is listed as "29/07/08". It should read "29/08/08".

Cllr Phillips OBE expressed concern that the SPD gives inadequate deference to the fact that much of the proposed development lies within a flood plain.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approves the Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation; and**
- 2. The results of the consultation and final draft should be added to the Cabinet work plan for November.**

29. Cabinet Forward Work Plan

The Corporate Director (Head of Paid Services) reported that the Work Plan has now been populated with items and will be distributed shortly.

30. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Cabinet is scheduled for Wednesday 3 September 2008 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, at the Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge.

(7.00 – 8.50pm)

These minutes were prepared by Henry Powell, Member Support Officer, who can be contacted on Tel: 01225 776655 ext 242, email hpowell@westwiltshire.gov.uk.