

# Minutes

**Meeting of** : The Cabinet  
**Meeting held in** : The Alamein Suite City Hall, Salisbury  
**Date** : Wednesday 15 November 2006  
**Commencing at** : 5.00 pm

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**Present:**

Councillor F Westmoreland (Deputy Leader in the Chair for the meeting)

Councillors Mrs P J Brown and P V H Paisey (Planning and Economic Development), D W Brown (Environment and Transport), J A Cole-Morgan and J R L Nettle (Community and Housing) and D A Culver and Mrs S A Willan (Resources)

Apologies were received from Councillors R Britton (Leader) and J A Brady (Environment and Transport)

The Cabinet noted that the Leader's wife was having an operation that day and the Members wished her a speedy recovery.

Councillor Hewitt was also in attendance and with the permission of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet on minute 897 below.

878 **Declarations of Interest:**

None were declared.

879 **Minutes of last Meeting:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

880 **Public Question and Statement Time:**

There were none.

881 **Forward Plan:**

The Deputy Leader presented his Forward Plan for the period 1 December 2006 – 31 March 2007 (previously circulated) that would be published on 14 November 2006 to become operational from 1 December 2006.

**Agreed** - that the Leader's Forward Plan be adopted for publication, as revised below.

**December 2006**

(1) item 7 "creating better places framework" to be subsumed into the wider item of the Local Government White Paper.

(2) new item " Older persons housing strategy framework

**January 2007** - Golden Telephone Numbers - this has been deferred from December

882 **Call-in Decisions:**

There were none.



Awarded in:  
Housing Services  
Waste and Recycling Services



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## ***Recommendation to the Council***

*(The recommendation set out below will be considered by the Council on 11 December 2006)*

883 **Statement of Gambling Policy:**

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport introduced the previously circulated report of the Acting Head of Environmental Services. The Cabinet noted that adoption of this policy was a Full Council matter and not within the remit of Cabinet as indicated in the report and that the policy went before the Environment and Transport Scrutiny Panel and not the Planning and Economic Development Scrutiny Panel as depicted in the report.

**Recommended to Full Council – that**

- (1) the revised Statement of Licensing Policy be approved;
- (2) fee-setting when clarified and determined by DCMS be delegated to the Head of Environmental Services to implement (thereby avoiding the need for this to be referred back to Full Council at a later date) with the proviso that the guidance and range of fees (when published by DCMS) be discussed with the Portfolio Holder and Chairman of the Licensing Committee prior to inclusion as part of the Licensing Policy.

884 **Adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI):**

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development introduced the previously circulated report of the Principal Forward Planning Officer. Councillor Cole-Morgan advised that a number of literal amendments needed to be made to the document prior to its presentation to Full Council.

**Recommended to Full Council – that** the Statement of Community Involvement attached at Appendix A to the report be adopted.

## ***Recommendation to the Council***

*(The recommendation set out below will be considered by the Council at a  
Special meeting on 18 December 2006)*

885 **Local Government White Paper - Urgent Business:**

The Chairman agreed to consider the acting Chief Executive's previously circulated report (attached for convenience as **Appendix A** to these minutes) under urgent business in view of the need for the Council to take a view on the Local Government White Paper before the closing date for responses.

The Deputy Leader introduced the above report.

**Recommended to Full Council on 18 December –**

- (1) that the Cabinet considers the Officers to be correct in their assessment of the prospects for a South Wiltshire Unitary Authority bid, and therefore recommends to the Council at a special meeting to be held on 18 December 2006, that such a bid should not be pursued;
- (2) in the light of the strength and success of the Customer First Partnership, in which Officers of this Council are taking leading roles, a bid for Pathfinder status would at this time be inappropriate.

**Resolved** - that the Leader and Officers be authorised to discuss the County Council's approach with its Leader and Chief Executive. Any bid by the County Council will be reported to the February 2007 Cabinet meeting.

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## **Cabinet Decisions**

*All decisions set out in this section of the minutes will be implemented on or after 27 November 2006  
(unless called in for consideration by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel)*

**886 Draft Development Brief : Old Swimming Pool Site College Street:**

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development introduced the previously circulated report of the Forward Planning Officer together with the recommendations from the City Area Committee from its meeting on 9 November 2006.

**Agreed** – that the proposed changes in the revised Development Brief (previously circulated) be accepted and that the Brief be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Adopted Local Plan.

**887 Medium Term Financial Strategy:**

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the previously circulated report from the Head of Financial Services.

**Agreed** – that

- (1) the updated MTFS be approved;
- (2) the principal risks and drivers for change be noted.
- (3) it be noted that the strategy will require a comprehensive review following conclusion of events outlined in 5.4 to 5.6 of the previously circulated report.

**888 Travel Plan for Bourne Hill Office Project:**

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the previously circulated report from the Transportation Officer together with the comments from Resources Scrutiny Panel from its meeting on 13 November 2006 and the Environment and Transport Scrutiny Panel from its meeting on 6 November 2006. The Cabinet noted that the Travel Plan had the support of the Trades Unions and that most of the document had been through the Joint Consultative Forum.

**Agreed** – that the previously circulated document be adopted as the workplace travel plan for Salisbury District Council, to replace the 2001 Green Travel Plan, with a review date of Autumn 2008.

**889 Disposal of Land at Trinity Road Shrewton:**

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the previously circulated report of the Head of Strategic Housing Services.

**Agreed** – that the land be sold, as outlined on the previously circulated plan, to the Rural Housing Trust for the sum of £12,000

**890 Admin Business Support Integration:**

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the previously circulated report of the Head of Customer Services, which the Cabinet agreed should be slightly revised by the inclusion in bullet point 4 of the principles section, of the following words "and specialities" after the words "existing systems"

**Agreed** – that subject to the above addition

- (1) the PID be noted;
- (2) the Improving Customer Services Board (ICSB) be requested to monitor progress on the project and report any relevant issues to Cabinet;and
- (3) the work of the ICSB, E Gov and the other operational Boards be regularly reported to Cabinet Members.

**891 Good Governance in Local Government: A Framework:**

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the recommendation arising from the Audit Committee's meeting held on 26 September (the accompanying report was also previously circulated).

**Agreed** – that

- (1) the draft timetable contained within the report be agreed.
- (2) the review of corporate governance be included in the Resources portfolio plan for 2007/08.

**892 Comprehensive Performance Assessment – the Future Approach:**

The Deputy Leader presented the previously circulated report of the Policy Director, Debbie Dixon. Councillor Westmoreland advised that the working group was scheduled to meet on 16 November 2006, to consider the assessment criteria which it was hoped would now be clearer.

**Agreed** – that

- (1) the revised framework be noted;
- (2) the Member Working Group be requested to bring forward proposals for Cabinet consideration after May 2007.

**893 Feedback from the 4Ps on the Gateway 2 Review of Office Centralisation:**

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the previously circulated report of the Policy Director, Debbie Dixon.

**Agreed** – that

- (1) the excellent feedback from the review be noted (the Council has been given a green light for the project, which only 5% of projects achieve);
- (2) "Gateway 4" be undertaken in 2008 subject to the views of the Improving Customer Services Board;
- (3) The Policy Director, Debbie Dixon and her team be congratulated for this outstanding result.

**894 Review of Progress - Audit Commission Inspection of Customer Focus:**

The Deputy Leader presented the previously circulated report of the Policy Director, Debbie Dixon.

**Agreed** – that the progress and the anticipated return visit be noted and the team involved be congratulated.

**895 Performance Monitoring Review of the Second Quarter:**

The Deputy Leader presented the previously circulated report of the Policy Director Debbie Dixon and the Head of Financial Services. Councillor Cole-Morgan explained the reasons for the below target performance concerning the Delivering More Affordable Housing indicators.

**Agreed** – that

- (1) the areas of concern be noted and the proposed remedial action be agreed;
- (2) Scrutiny be invited to consider exploring in more depth areas of concern;
- (3) the complaints statistics be noted and
  - (a) the proposed actions to improve reporting and
  - (b) corporate training to reduce complaints related to unsatisfactory customer skills be agreed.

**896 Customer First Partnership – Current Position:**

The Deputy Leader presented the previously circulated report of Policy Director, Debbie Dixon.

**Agreed – that**

- (1) Progress be noted;
- (2) Cabinet consider the Customer First Partnership further in 2007;
- (3) the contribution of the Head of Legal and Property Services in concluding the call off contract be recognised and a report in 6 months be invited into the contract to review its effectiveness and likely savings.

**897 Setting up of the Local Development Framework Management Board:**

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development presented the previously circulated report of the Team Leader Forward Planning and Conservation.

**Agreed – that** the formation of a Local Development Framework Management Board be endorsed and its composition be slightly revised from that detailed in the report with the Head of Community Initiatives being included and the Chair of Scrutiny being removed as it is considered that Scrutiny Members would be better placed performing the critical friend role.

**898 Local Area Agreement and Sustainable Strategy for Wiltshire:**

The Cabinet Member for Community and Housing presented the previously circulated report of Policy Director, David Neudegg.

**Resolved – that**

- (1) the revised framework for the Sustainable Strategy for Wiltshire and the Local Area Agreement outcomes are considered County Council centric, lacking in focus, containing more objectives than achievements and do not appear to have a strong enough basis of community level input
- (2) the proposed consultation feedback set out in paragraphs 3 and 4 of this report be approved, with particular note taken of the last sentence in paragraph 4.
- (3) to approve in principle the prioritised outcomes identified in bold in Appendix 2, and to note the areas where support is current or likely in the future whilst acknowledging that unless further resources are forthcoming, it is unlikely that the council will be able to sign up to any additional activities over and above what it is currently being undertaken.

**899 Special Delegation Procedure:**

The Cabinet noted the matters determined under the above procedure as per the papers circulated under agenda item 22, namely:-

- (a) amendments to the off street parking order including Park and Phone (for which the Cabinet would like to see increased publicity in the run up to Christmas).
- (b) ICT Technical Support for Councillors.
- (c) Salisbury District Council design and heritage champion.

*The meeting concluded at 6.30 pm  
Number of public present 2*

# Report

**Report subject** : Local Government White Paper  
**Report to** : The Cabinet  
**Date** : 15 November 2006  
**Author** : David Crook  
**Leader** : Cllr Richard Britton

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## 1 Purpose of report:

1.1 To consider the contents of the "Invitation to councils in England" issued in conjunction with the White Paper. A copy is available on request.

## 2 Background:

- 2.1 The White paper "Strong and Prosperous Communities" was received on the 26 October 2006. A summary of the paper has been issued to each councillor.
- 2.2 The White Paper is lengthy and complex and a full report will be made to the Cabinet meeting in December. However, part of the White Paper deals with the issue of two tier local authorities and this issue is dealt with in the accompanying document (to be re-circulated with the Council agenda)
- 2.3 This document invites English local authorities to make a bid either
- o To become a unitary authority; or
  - o To band together within County boundaries to become "Pathfinder" models
- 2.4 Each of these issues is set out in more detail below.

## 3 Unitary Status:

- 3.1 Although the document seeks invitations, it is clear that it envisages a limited impact.
- o It predicts the creation of around 8 new unitary authorities (there are 200 plus two tier authorities in England)
  - o Proposals would need to cover the WHOLE area of one or more councils (ie no splitting of district boundaries to create new unitaries)



Awarded in:  
Housing Services  
Waste and Recycling Services



3.2 Further criteria include

- Affordability
- Broad cross section of support
- Strategic leadership

3.3 The requirements for affordability are particularly stringent.

- Transitional costs must be offset by savings
- Payback period limited to 5 years
- Costs must be met locally without increasing council tax

**4 Pathfinder status:**

4.1 As an alternative to unitary status, the document invites submissions from partnerships of county and district councils to set up “virtual” unitary structures through joint working both of members and officers.

4.2 It invites submission from partnerships on innovative models for working, including any legislative measures needed, eg to create “a single cadre of councillors within the county area”.

4.3 The objectives of a Pathfinder are described as

- Unified service delivery
- Strong leadership
- Effective accountability arrangements
- Shared back office functions

**5 Implications;**

5.1 Members should note that the deadline for response to either of the above is 25 January 2007. Members should also note that at its meeting on 7 November 2006, the County Council considered the “Invitation” document and resolved:

“ notes in particular the deadline for the invitation to councils in two tier counties to submit bids for “Pathfinder” status and / or to submit proposals for unitary local government and requests the Chief Executive to prepare a further report on these opportunities, working with district council sand other partners, including county councillors;

agrees to hold an extraordinary meeting on the 23 January 2007 in order to consider that report and to decide whether to submit proposals by the deadline of 25 January 2007”

5.2 Unitary Status

5.2.1 Officers do not believe that a unitary bid for South Wiltshire would succeed, given the cost criteria. The document prohibits the establishment of a broader boundary for South Wiltshire other than by combining with another district council. This might overcome the cost hurdle, but would not offer the “sense of place” required.

5.2.2 The County Council might argue for a county-wide unitary. This would almost certainly overcome the cost criteria, but such a large council might struggle to offer the “sense of place” and leadership required. It should be noted, however, that district councils cannot veto a submission by the County Council

5.3 Pathfinder status

5.3.1 The requisite district / county partnership exists. Indeed it is an objective of the partnership to establish shared services through Customer First. It might, therefore, be argued that a Pathfinder bid would be a natural progression.

5.3.2 However, the scope and speed expected of a Pathfinder bid go far beyond the Customer First approach. Despite the document’s argument that it envisages no transitional costs attached to pathfinder status, in fact the resource impact on district councils is likely to be very considerable.



- 5.3.3 Members will need to weigh the impact of a Pathfinder bid and the requisite resources against a more organic approach of supporting shared services through Customer First.
- 5.3.4 On 10<sup>th</sup> November Salisbury District Council was approached by the Partnership Manager of Customer First (who is funded by the Districts and County Council) to invite the partners to take the lead in developing the Pathfinder option.
- “Wiltshire County Council suggested that:
- Wiltshire Customer First Partnership develops the Pathfinder Partnership option.
  - All information relevant to both the Pathfinder and Unitary options, including finance and service performance information, is held in common and fully and openly shared.”

Whilst there is logic in the Customer First Partnership developing the Pathfinder option, members may be concerned about sharing information that would support a county-wide Unitary bid.

Cabinet may wish to consider if they would wish to pursue the Pathfinder option but with certain caveats.

## **6 Recommendations:**

- 6.1 Cabinet is requested to give its view to Full Council on whether it wishes to respond to the invitation for unitary or pathfinder status and if the latter is favoured any caveats the Cabinet would wish to make.
- 6.2 Cabinet is requested to authorise the Leader and officers to discuss the County's approach with its leader and Chief Executive. Any bid by the county Council to be reported to the February Cabinet meeting.
- 6.3 Cabinet to agree to refer 6.1 to a Special Full Council Meeting to be held on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2006.