

WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the: **Cabinet**

Held on: **Wednesday 7 May 2008**

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

Present:

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

Also present: Cllr J Osborn

Officers: Corporate Director (IG), Corporate Director (TD), Policy & Performance Services Manager (PM), Housing Services Manager (GH), Solicitor (SMS), Property & Estate Services Manager (JF), Member Support Officer (SRS)

56. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr While.

57. Declarations of Interest

Personal interest – Member may be affected by loss of significant allowances

Cllrs Conley, Eaton, Fortescue, March, Mounde, Parks, Payne, Phillips OBE, and Wiltshire

Personal interest – Member may be affected by loss of significant allowances, also Member serves on the County Council.

Cllr Davis

58. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

59. Recommendations from Scrutiny Committee

Cllr J Osborn presented a report asking Cabinet to consider the comments and recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

- **That the Cabinet will support the planning policy staff so that vital work, such as on the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, can be completed.**
- **That the previous procedure of issuing neighbour notice letters for planning applications be re-instated as of 12 May 2008.**
- **That the possibility of a proactive approach to tackling graffiti on private property requires further discussion. Officers are asked to produce a paper on this matter to inform this discussion.**

60. Announcements from the Leader

- The Leader had written to The Rt Hon Hazel Blears MP (Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government) on Local Government Reorganisation, and after a delay of six months, had received a reply from John Healey MP (Minister of State) saying that all concerned should make the transition to a unitary authority a success.
- The Leader reported that he had attended a meeting at County Hall to discuss Veterans' Day (Friday 27 June). The Ministry of Defence takes the view that Trowbridge is a 'beacon' in regard to this celebration, which will form part of the wider 'Community Spotlight' weekend (28/29 June) in Trowbridge Park.

There will be a parade in Trowbridge on Friday 27 June, when approximately four hundred soldiers (with band) who have served in Afghanistan and Iraq, will march through the town. The salute will be taken by the Lord-Lieutenant, who will be joined on the dais by the Chairmen of West Wiltshire District and Wiltshire County Councils, followed by a reception at the Civic Centre. This Council will be providing £3,000 towards the costs of this event, as well as providing parking space for the soldiers' coaches, and assisting with road closures.

61. CPO issues relating to St Stephens Place

The Corporate Director (IG) presented a report on the compulsory purchase orders related to St Stephens Place.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the advice received to date with regard to the CPO process and associated legal fees.
2. To agree to proceed with a CPO of St. Stephen's Place and request officers develop a project plan to include full costings and timescales.
3. To authorise officers to identify and enter discussions with potential development partners and appropriate legal/professional services and report the outcome of these to a future meeting of Cabinet.
4. To seek the support and engagement of partners including the County and Town Councils through the Transforming Trowbridge Steering Group.
5. To authorise officers to seek a valuation of St. Stephen's Place from the District Valuer.
6. To authorise officers to inform the current site owner of the Council's intention to proceed with a CPO.
7. To request regular updates to Cabinet and reports as appropriate.
8. To request that the Development Control Manager investigate all suitable planning powers to address the current condition of the site.

62. Historic Buildings and Area Grants: Annual Report (2007/08)

Cllr Phillips OBE presented the Annual Report of the Historic Buildings and Area Grants scheme for the period 2007-2008.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet noted that the new scheme for Historic Buildings & Area Grants is working well and noted the projects supported under the new system.

63. Service and Resource Plans 2008-09 including the Local Area Agreement

Cllr Davis introduced the new Service and Resource Plans for 2008/09, and gave an update on the Local Agreement for Wiltshire, including the Local Area Agreement.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- **Approves the Service and Resource Plans for 2008-09.**

- **Delegates any further minor changes and updates to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader as required, prior to final publication on the Council website by the end of June.**
- **Refers the update on the Wiltshire LAW and LAA for consideration by the full Council meeting on 14 May 2008 rather than by Cabinet.**

64. Homes 4 Wiltshire – Sub regional Choice Based Lettings

Cllr Fortescue presented a report on the sub-regional Choice Based Lettings (CBL) policy “Homes 4 Wiltshire”, which highlighted the main differences from the policy currently in operation.

RESOLVED:

- **That Cabinet approves the new Homes 4 Wiltshire policy and allow delegated authority to the Housing Services Manager for any minor changes.**
- **To delegate the decision, regarding the key issues relating to rent arrears and antisocial behaviour, within the draft policy, to the Housing Services Manager, in consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder.**

65. Update on Local Government Reorganisation

Cllr Eaton gave a verbal update on Local Government Reorganisation. This included the following:

- Fewer staff than before are leaving the District Council’s employment – approximately four per month.
- Plans for the early amalgamation of services are proceeding in agreement with the Heads of Paid Service of each of the District Councils.
- The senior appointments will be made by a committee of the Implementation Executive.
- A ‘job description’ is being drawn up for unitary councillors; amongst other things the question of the timings of meetings has yet to be decided – the view of this Council, which has been expressed within the Implementation Executive, is that meetings should be in the evening.
- The question of how Scrutiny and Oversight in the new authority will be handled is being addressed by the Implementation Executive.
- A meeting will take place tomorrow between WCC and the Boundary Committee for England to discuss the number of electors per member for the new authority, and therefore the number of members the new authority will have.

RESOLVED:

That the Leader write to the Leader of Wiltshire County Council to emphasise the importance of involving staff through their representatives and trade unions in negotiations at each stage of the Local Government Reorganisation process.

66. Cabinet Forward Work Plan

The Leader asked members to note that meetings were now every two months as part of LGR and to enable Cabinet Members to spend more time with their Departments and Officers.

The Leader gave his opinion that the final three months of this Council will perhaps be the most difficult of the LGR process but urged that a high standard of service to the public must continue to be provided.

67. Items referred to Cabinet from Area Seminars – future provision of Trowbridge public toilets

Cllr Jeff Osborn as the Chairman of the Trowbridge Area Seminar expressed concern that this Council at present provides only one public toilet in Trowbridge (in Trowbridge Park) and that the proposed Waterside development in Trowbridge town centre does not include provision for any more.

It was noted by the meeting that future provision of public toilets throughout the District area will be a matter for the unitary authority.

68. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of Cabinet is scheduled for Wednesday 2 July 2008 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, at the Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge.

(7.00 – 8.30pm)

These minutes were prepared by Sean Semple, Member Support Officer, who can be contacted on Tel: 01225 776655 ext 204, email ssemple@westwiltshire.gov.uk.