

# WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## MINUTES

Minutes of the: **Cabinet**

Held on: **Wednesday 3 September 2008**

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

Present:

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

Also present: Cllrs Brown and Clark

Officers: Finance Service Manager (AB), Conservation Officer (RB), Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer (TD), Corporate Director and Head of Paid Services (IG), Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer (IJ), Member Support Officer (HP), Housing Options Team Leader (AR), Parking Project Manager (RS), Solicitor (SMS), Planning Policy and Conservation Services Manager (JS)

### 31. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Fortescue.

### 32. Declarations of Interest

Item	Cllr / Officer	Reason
Item 6 - West Wiltshire Core Strategy – Issues and Options Consultation	Cllr Clark	Personal interest: Chaired a public meeting attended by a representative of this authority to discuss the issues and options consultation. Also Chaired the meeting of Hilperton Parish Council when their response to both the issues and options consultation and the strategic housing and availability assessment were formulated.

### 33. Minutes

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

#### **34. Announcements from the Leader**

The Leader made the following announcements:

- Pressure is being applied to the receivers responsible for clearing rubble from the former Tesco site in Trowbridge (known locally as 'Mount Crushmore') to complete the job as soon as possible. After the original contractors were discharged, the second contractors have been made aware of the urgency of their task;
- Trowbridge's newly renovated multi-storey car park will be received back from contractors by the council in two weeks time;
- After recent reports in the media of a national shortage of wheelie bins, the Leader offered assurances that this district will soon receive a large consignment of them. Households without wheeled bins have been able to use black sacks as a temporary measure. If residents' bins are stolen they are advised to contact the Council as soon as possible.

#### **35. Verbal update on the Waterside Project**

The Corporate Director and Head of Paid Services (IG) reported excellent progress and strong interest in this scheme, with around 70% take-up of available rentals. The preferred developer, Modus, are currently talking to potential funders and are in discussions with a list of contractors interested in the tender. The economic climate has only had an impact in the areas that were not of particular focus; i.e. the proposed office element at County Hall has now been removed, and the overall number of residential units has been reduced.

#### **RESOLVED**

- **That Cabinet note the update.**

#### **36. West Wiltshire Core Strategy – Issues and Options Consultation**

Before the report was considered, Cllr Mounde gave a brief update on the excellent progress being made by Development Control in tackling the backlog of planning applications. All Section 106 agreements have now been entered into the computer system.

Cllr Mounde then introduced a report updating Members on the results of the Issues and Options consultation and seeking authority for the Planning Policy and Conservation Services Manager to develop an outline Spatial Strategy for

West Wiltshire based on the consultation responses. He thanked the people who had taken the time to complete the questionnaire.

Cllr Phillips OBE suggested a Policy Project Group should be set-up to make recommendations to the Implementation Executive, as this could be the last opportunity for the Council to have an influence on planning policy before the transition.

Cllr Eaton felt that the consultation had attracted insufficient respondents to accurately reflect local opinion, and that some of the questions contained in the questionnaire were loaded.

Cllr Clark expressed concern that many of the proposed allocations in Trowbridge are actually in Hilperton, and questioned the accuracy of the Strategic Land Availability Assessment, on which many of the allocations contained in the report are based.

Cllr Mounde reminded Cabinet that a more substantial document will be brought back to Cabinet in March 2009, and that the present document served purely as an information pack. Cllr Payne felt that recommendation ii. of the report was consequently inappropriate, and Cabinet duly voted in favour of amending the recommendations to those detailed below.

On a separate issue, Cllr Phillips OBE expressed concern that at a meeting of the regional assembly, representatives of the government office had been discussing downgrading the A350 road. The Leader agreed that the upgrading of the A350 is vital to the roads and areas around it, and assured those present that this Council will continue to pursue it. Cllr Mounde stated he would seek a formal response from the Wiltshire Strategic Economic Partnership on the matter.

## **RESOLVED**

### **That Cabinet:**

- 1. Note the development of the evidence base concerning the results of the Issues and Options consultation;**
- 2. Give authority for the Planning Policy and Conservation Services Manager to develop an outline Spatial Strategy for West Wiltshire based on the consultation responses, with further input from a Policy Project Group, to be recommended to the Implementation Executive for inclusion in the Wiltshire Core Strategy, subject to Cabinet approval before 31 March 2009; and**
- 3. Set up a Policy Project Group to facilitate the process outlined in resolution 2 (above).**

## **37. Review of Melksham Conservation Area – Boundary Changes**

Cllr Mounde introduced a report considering the findings of the Policy Project Group (PPG) for Melksham Conservation Area boundary changes as part of the on-going work for the District Council's Historic Environment Strategy.

#### **RESOLVED**

- **That Cabinet agree to go forward with a period of public consultation on the proposed boundary changes for the Melksham Conservation Area.**

#### **38. Update on Local Government Re-organisation**

Cllr Eaton reported the following:

- West Wilts rate of staff loss remains at a satisfactory level, at approximately two or three per month;
- The Implementation Executive is now placing greater emphasis on ensuring all is in place for 'Day One' of Wiltshire Council, rather than longer term measures; and
- It has been agreed that service directors will take up their posts no later than 1 January 2009.

Cllr Phillips OBE reported the following:

- The appointment of directors of Human Resources and Finance now appears unlikely to take place before December 2009. Cllr Eaton and Cllr Phillips OBE have been pressing for an interim arrangement to be put in place. No reply has yet been received from Cllr Jane Scott (WCC) in response to Cllr Payne's letter on this matter; and
- A Budget Working Group has been set up to draw up an interim budget for 2009.

#### **RESOLVED**

- **That Cabinet note the update.**

#### **39. Civil Parking Enforcement – Three Month Update**

Cllr Conley introduced a report updating Cabinet on the progress of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) since its implementation on 16 June 2008 and making recommendations of possible ways to improve the service provided.

The Leader encouraged a diplomatic, 'light touch' approach to enforcement, given that the implementation of this scheme had come after eight years of no enforcement. He welcomed the positive response to the scheme from disabled badge-holders, but did not feel that the recruitment of an extra officer was necessary.

Cllr Eaton expressed concern that three hundred successful appeals against tickets have been lodged, and suggested that those wishing to appeal should not be instantly exposed to the full £70 fine.

Cllr Brown asked for the portfolio holder's assistance in applying pressure to Wiltshire County Council to keep to their original timetable with regards to the residents' parking scheme in Bradford on Avon. Cllr Conley responded that she and officers had been working with George Batten (Head of Environment – WCC) to expedite this scheme and will continue to do so.

## **RESOLVED**

### **That Cabinet:**

- 1. Note progress with Civil Parking Enforcement; and**
- 2. Widen the dissemination of information on the issue and use of Blue Badges for disabled drivers.**

#### **40. Parking Permit Petition**

The Leader thanked the Wiltshire Times for compiling the petition.

Cllr Conley introduced a report briefing Cabinet on the petition received about parking permit charges and recommending a way forward.

The Leader suggested that offering six month and three month permits (at 50% and 25% of the yearly price respectively), might be a good way to assist drivers in the current economic climate. He also suggested that West Wiltshire representatives on the Implementation Executive recommend parking rates are frozen for 2009-10, as they have been in West Wiltshire for the past two years.

## **RESOLVED**

### **That Cabinet:**

- 1. Introduce a biannual and quarterly payment option for season tickets priced at £225.00 and £112.50 respectively; and**
- 2. Recommend to the Implementation Executive that parking rates are frozen for 2009-10.**

#### **41. Financial Monitoring 2008-09**

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

## **RESOLVED**

### **That Cabinet:**

1. **Notes the current financial position and the likely out-turn;**
2. **Agrees the changes to the Capital Programme and request full Council to approve these changes at its meeting on 22 October 2008;**
3. **Notes the progress on budget pressures identified at the previous meeting; and**
4. **Considers the options for further investment as set out under the paragraph 'Additional options for consideration'.**

#### **42. Annual Treasury Management Stewardship report for 2007-08**

Cllr While introduced a report covering the treasury activity and actual Prudential Indicators for 2007/08 in accordance with the requirements of the Prudential Code, and reviewing some of the 2008/09 indicators that needed to be updated as a consequence.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That Cabinet:**

1. **Note the treasury management stewardship report for 2007/08; and**
2. **Request that Council approve the revised Prudential Indicators for 2008/09, as set out in Appendix B, subject to a review by the Audit Committee at its meeting of 25 September 2008.**

#### **43. Court Desk Service**

The Housing Needs Manager (AR) introduced a report seeking approval for the establishment of a Service Level Agreement with the Citizen's Advice Bureau for the operation of a court desk service at Trowbridge Court for housing repossession cases.

#### **RESOLVED**

- **That Cabinet approve the establishment of a service level agreement with the Citizen's Advice Bureau for the operation of a court desk service at Trowbridge Court for housing repossession cases.**

#### **44. Homelessness Strategy Update**

The Housing Needs Manager (AR) introduced a report on the latest update of the Homelessness Strategy, which includes a small number of new objectives for completion by 31 March 2009, and informing the Cabinet of the objectives achieved since the previous update in April 2006.

**RESOLVED**

- **That Cabinet recommend to Council the adoption of the final update of the Homelessness Strategy.**

**45. Cabinet Forward Work Plan**

The latest version of the Cabinet Forward Work Plan for the period September 2008 – March 2009 was presented.

**RESOLVED:**

- **That Cabinet approve the Forward Work Plan.**

**46. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of Cabinet is scheduled for Wednesday 5 November 2008 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, at the Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge.

(7.00 – 9.30pm)

These minutes were prepared by Henry Powell, Member Support Officer, who can be contacted on tel: 01225 776655 ext. 242, or email: [hpowell@westwiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:hpowell@westwiltshire.gov.uk).