

Minutes

Alamein Suite
City Hall, Salisbury
4.00 pm: 7 April 2004

Part I: Procedural Matters

ACTIONED BY
Cabinet Member
(Contact Officer)

276. Present:

Councillors K C Wren (Leader), J M Collier (Deputy Leader), J C Noeken & Mrs M M A Peach (Planning and Economic Development), D W Brown & E R Draper (Environment and Transport), J A Cole-Morgan & A G Peach (Community & Housing) and Mrs S A Warrander (Resources).

Apologies: Councillor D A Culver (Resources).

With the permission of the Chairman, the following Councillors addressed the Cabinet on the matters indicated - Councillor Britton (minute 289), Councillor Clegg (minutes 289 & 292), Councillor Mrs Evans (minute 289) Councillor Fear (minutes 292, 299 and 300) and Councillor Mills (minutes 279 & 292).

277. Code of Conduct - Members & Officers' Interests:

There were none.

Cllr Wren
(S Agland)

278. Minutes:

The minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman.

Cllr Wren
(S Agland)

279. Public/Councillor Questions and Statements:

Councillor C Mills asked the following question:

Cllr Wren
(S Agland)

"Item 12 on the agenda today refers to a Unison letter in respect to Stock Option proposals. The Stock Option appraisal board meeting referred to for the 13th has been cancelled the reason for this being that the Housing condition survey has not been completed. The links therefore between these is clear and the slippage on these matters does raise concern. In addition there has been a recent review in respect to Services to Older or Vulnerable People and a briefing paper on the Supporting People Issues. All these matters do have a relationship to one another and have when decisions are made the possibility of a marked effect on the service we provide to the citizens of Salisbury District. Would the Portfolio Holder or Policy Director please advise on how and when these matters of importance will be expedited, co-ordinated and brought back on track and time?"

The Portfolio Holder for Community & Housing, Councillor Cole Morgan replied as follows:

"I thank Councillor Mills for his question and appreciate and indeed share his frustration that a number of issues which fall within my remit have not, for a variety of reasons progressed as fast as we originally hoped.

That said, I do not accept the implied criticism of myself or officers that progress with the stock option appraisal, services to older or vulnerable people and issues relating to supporting people is due to any lack of effort or determination on the part of officers.

I can without equivocation confidently assert, for reasons which will become clear at a future date that both Housing Management and Housing Strategy have been performing to an extremely high level and meeting the priorities we set them.

This is evidenced by for example progress achieved with keeping rent arrears under strict control and the eradication of Bed & Breakfast well ahead of the Governments targets.

Turing to the specific points raise:

- 1. Stock Options – There have been a number of delays in this project, the latest of which is due to queries in the validation of the recently completed stock condition survey. There are complex guidelines to every aspect of the option appraisal process which need “signing off” by the Government Office for the South West and the Community Housing Task Force. It is important that the stock condition information is as accurate as it can be before undertaking detailed financial appraisals of the options. Cancelling the meeting was necessary to ensure adequate time for the financial analysis to be undertaken once the stock condition information is fully validated.*
- 2. Services to Older People and Supporting Issues – Implementation of the Best Value Review Service Continuous Improvement Plan was delayed last year pending the recruitment of a new Lead Officer for Services to Older People. As you are aware Sally Johnson has been in post since January and work has begun on addressing operational issues on Supporting People. This work is feeding into a more substantial report being produced by Head of Strategic Housing Services on the future delivery of Services to Older People. This is scheduled to be considered by the Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet in June."*

Councillor Fear stated:

That he welcomed the Portfolio Holder's comments and supported the deferment of any final decision on the Housing Stock Options. He indicated that this would provide additional time to ensure that all available options were properly evaluated. In his view, the main priority for the Council should be securing a solution that suited the needs of the Council's tenants and those in need of social housing and this should be put above all other considerations.

280. Call-in:

No decisions from the Cabinet's last meeting had been called-in.

*Cllr Wren
(S Agland)*

281. Forward Plan:

The Leader presented his Forward Plan for the period 1 June 2004 – 30 September 2004 (previously circulated) that would be published on 14 May 2004 to become operational from 1 June 2004.

*Cllr Wren
(S Agland)*

Agreed: that the Leader's previously circulated Forward Plan be adopted for publication on 14 May 2004.

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Part 2: Cabinet Decisions

*All decisions set out in this section of the minutes will be implemented on or after 22 April 2004
(unless called in for consideration by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel)*

ACTIONED BY
Cabinet Member
(Contact Officer)

282. Markets and Events on the Market Square Salisbury:

Further to minute 263 (3/3/04), the Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development reported on the arrangements for the Farmers' Market in the Market Square, Salisbury.

Cllr Mrs Peach
(G Gould)

Agreed: that the Farmers' Markets be held once a month from April to November on the First Wednesday of the month.

283. Recognition Agreement:

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the draft agreement set out in the report of the Employee Relations Manager (previously circulated) together with the recommendations arising from the Joint Consultative Forum meeting held on 22 March.

Cllr Mrs Warrander
(K Gard)

Agreed: that the Recognition Agreement between the Council and UNISON be adopted.

284. Childcare Vouchers:

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the draft agreement set out in the report of the Employee Relations Officer (previously circulated) together with the recommendations from the Joint Consultative Forum meeting held on 22 March.

Cllr Mrs Warrander
(A Wright)

Agreed: that the Childcare Voucher Scheme as set out in the above report be adopted.

285. Security of Employment & Redundancy Procedure:

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the draft agreement set out in the report of the Employee Relations Manager (previously circulated) together with the recommendations arising from the Joint Consultative Forum meeting held on 22 March.

Cllr Mrs Warrander
(K Gard)

Agreed:

- (I) that subject to the inclusion of an additional paragraph explaining the situation relating to the reclaiming of training fees, the Security of Employment and Redundancy Procedure be adopted;

- (2) that the Council continue to work with UNISON to ensure that the Procedure is kept under review and that further reports be brought to Cabinet as necessary; and
- (3) that the words 'an individual's' be inserted before the first bullet point of Paragraph 2 on the above mentioned report, in order that it should read: 'an individual's average overtime' rather than 'contractual overtime.'

286. Whistleblowing Policy:

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the policy as set out in the report of the Employee Relations Officer (previously circulated), incorporating the views of the Standards Committee and the Joint Consultative Forum following their respective meetings in January, including the Standard Committee's proposed wording for Paragraph 5.4.

Agreed: that the amendment proposed by the Standards Committee to Paragraph 5.4 of the Whistleblowing Policy be adopted.

*Cllr Mrs Warrander
(A Wright)*

287. Early Retirement Requests:

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the draft policy set out in the report of the Employee Relations Manager (previously circulated) together with the recommendations arising from the Joint Consultative Forum meeting held on 22 March.

Agreed: that the Early Retirement Requests Policy be adopted.

*Cllr Mrs Warrander
(K Gard)*

288. The Future of Council Housing:

The Cabinet deferred for further consideration the previously circulated letter from Unison and in particular the 4th Option which the Joint Consultative Forum at its meeting on 22 March had requested to be considered by the Cabinet and by the Stock Options Appraisal Board on 13 April 2004. Councillor Cole-Morgan's statement at Minute 279 refers.

*Cllr Cole-Morgan
(D Dixon)*

289. Improving the Council's Contribution to Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour:

Councillor Mrs Evans, Chair of the Community and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel introduced the recommendations of the review of anti-social behaviour. The Leader warmly welcomed the review and its recommendations and thanked Mrs Evans, the Panels, the Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group and Alison Egarr for the excellent work undertaken and particularly for their input to the Anti-Social Behaviour Protocol.

*Cllr Cole-Morgan
(A Egarr)*

Agreed:

- (1) that the recommendations of the Community & Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 March be adopted.
- (2) that an officer working group be established to develop and monitor an action plan to ensure effective implementation of the recommendations and the Protocol; and
- (3) that the Community and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel be invited to set up a small member group, meeting once or twice a year, to monitor progress against the action plan, reporting to cabinet as necessary.

290. Improving Community Safety – An update on the Council's Key Priorities:

The Cabinet Member for Community & Housing introduced the previously circulated report of the Community Safety Projects Manager.

Agreed:

- (1) that the key priorities identified for action during 2004/2005 be adopted;
- (2) that progress on the implementation of the Plan be reported to the Cabinet at 6 monthly intervals together with a brief analysis of the relevant Community Safety Performance Indicators;
- (3) that progress in improving community safety be reported to all Area Committees on an annual basis;
- (4) that the Portfolio Holder for Community & Housing be designated as one of the Salisbury District Council's elected representatives on the South Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership; and
- (5) that meetings between the Cabinet, Community Safety Partnership Officers and the Wiltshire Police be formalized and held three times a year to discuss and agree strategic priorities.

*Cllr Cole-Morgan
(A Egarr)*

291. Comprehensive Performance Assessment:

(a) Benefit Fraud Inspectorate Audit of Council's Housing & Council Tax Benefit Service and Council's Resultant Action Plan:

The Cabinet Member for Community & Housing introduced the previously circulated report of the Head of Revenues & Benefits. The Cabinet was concerned at the overall assessment of the service as 'fair' in view of the considerable improvements made by the staff over the previous 18 months.

Agreed:

- (1) that the report and Action Plan (Annex I of the report) be noted;
- (2) that the staff in the Revenues and Benefits Section be commended for their continuing efforts to improve the service.

(b) Preliminary Findings of Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Council's Response:

The Chief Executive gave a verbal update to the Cabinet. The Cabinet noted that the preliminary findings of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Team were confidential and that the Council's response had been submitted in accordance with the timetable given. The final results of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Review would be made public on 6th May 2004.

*Cllr Cole-Morgan
(P Ruddle)*

*Cllr Wren
(R Sheard)*

292. Supporting People – Commissioning Board Agreement:

The Cabinet Member for Community & Housing introduced the previously circulated report of the Head of Strategic Housing Services. The Cabinet questioned the definition of Best Value used by the County Council, considering that 'market-testing' was not the only factor that needed to be taken into account.

*Cllr Cole-Morgan
(A Reynolds)*

Agreed: that consideration of this matter be deferred until the May meeting to allow further discussion with the County Council.

293. Dealing with Illegal Fly Posting:

The Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport introduced the previously circulated report of the Parks Manager.

Agreed: that the recommendations set out in the above report be adopted.

*Cllr Brown
(R Williams)*

294. Public Conveniences:

The Cabinet deferred consideration of this item for further information.

*Cllr Brown
(G Silver)*

295. Health and Safety Recommendations from Unison Report:

The Cabinet deferred consideration of this item for further information.

*Cllr Mrs Warrander
(M Wareham)*

296. Internal Audit Strategic Plan 2004/05 to 2007/08:

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the previously circulated report of the Chief Internal Auditor.

Agreed that the Audit Plan for 2004/05 to 2007/08 be approved.

*Cllr Mrs Warrander
(D Melville)*

297. Joint Consultative Forum:

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the previously circulated minutes of the Forum meeting held on 22 March 2004. The recommendations of which had been dealt under minutes 283 – 287 above.

Agreed that the minutes be noted.

*Cllr Mrs Warrander
(D Crook)*

298. Exempt Information:

In view of the confidential and sensitive nature of the matters to be considered, it was:

Agreed: that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of those matters defined as 'Exempt' under the Access to Information Act 1985 as specified below:

Paragraph 1 namely: 'Information relating to a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of or a particular office-holder, former office-holder or applicant to become an office-holder under, the Authority'

Summary of Exempt Matters

Agenda Item 25 - Staffing Matter: Financial Services

Agenda Item 26 - Staffing Matter: Management Team

*There were 2 members
of the public present.*

*The meeting finished at
6.20 pm*