

WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the: **CABINET (SPECIAL MEETING)**

Held on: **WEDNESDAY 29 JULY 2003**

Held at: **COUNCIL CHAMBER, BRADLEY ROAD,
TROWBRIDGE**

Present: Councillors Phillips (Leader), Clark, Mounde, Payne, and
Wiltshire.

Also present: Councillors, Brice, Brown, Osborn and Wells

Officers: Chief Executive, Corporate Officer (Policy), Head of Strategy,
Head of Financial Services, Head of Housing Services,
Member Support Officer (YR)

117 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Newbury and While.

118 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of Cabinet held on 16 July 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

119 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interests were made.

120 ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE LEADER

No announcements were made.

121 UPDATES BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

No updates were made.

KEY DECISIONS

122 HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

Councillor Mounde as Portfolio Holder for Housing and Economic Development presented the Council's Homelessness Strategy for Cabinet's consideration and adoption. He reminded Members that at the last meeting he had referred to various initiatives being undertaken within the Housing Area.

At the last meeting the Cabinet had adopted the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy and agreed on measures to reduce the escalating costs of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless people.

He explained that the Council was required under the Homelessness Act 2002 to prepare a strategy to address any needs and gaps in the provision of help for homeless people. The Council had until 30 July 2003 to publish its strategy.

It was noted that the Council had been reviewing its services for homeless people over the past 18 months. In view of the resources required to bring the homelessness service back in house, work on the Homelessness Strategy did not commence in detail until May 2003 when consultants had been appointed to carry out a Homelessness Review and Resources Audit. This process was completed in early July 2003. The Consultant's draft reports were made available to partners and stakeholders and copies were also published on the Council's web site. A draft action plan was also developed drawing on the housing needs and resource audit. Consultation on the strategy culminated in the Homelessness Strategy Conference held on 18 July with over 80 attendees. A further report had been circulated to Members, which set out the Council's proposed action plan for implementing the strategy. Councillor Mounde concluded his presentation by moving the recommendations contained in the report which was duly seconded.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Cabinet adopts the Homelessness Strategy.**
- (b) That Cabinet requires updates on progress against the action plan to be reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.**

Statement of reason for key decision	We are required to have a Homelessness Strategy as defined in the Homelessness Act 2002
Options considered and rejected	In developing the Strategy, a range of options were considered and detailed consultation undertaken.
Date of implementation (not less than five days after date of decision)	Will be published on 30 July 2003

123 DEPLOYMENT OF PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT 2003/04

At the last meeting of Cabinet, Councillor Newbury referred to a report he had prepared as Planning Portfolio Holder regarding the deployment of the Planning Delivery Grant which had been circulated to Cabinet members. The report could not be considered at that meeting. However, the Leader did assure Cabinet that the matter would be considered at this special meeting.

Accordingly the report was presented for the Cabinet's consideration together with a report from the Chief Executive and Head of Financial Services which drew Cabinet's attention to the corporate and constitutional implications of the report submitted by Councillor Newbury.

The report submitted by Councillor Newbury had sought Cabinet's approval for the deployment of the Planning Delivery Grant for 2003/04 by the creation in the Development Control service of two temporary posts for 2003/04 (a temporary Planning Inquiry Officer and temporary CAPS System Officer), the conversion of one existing 0.5 full time equivalent post into a permanent full time post (Landscape Officer) and by a commitment to employ consultants to further reduce the backlog of work. The report referred to the shortcomings in the Development Control Service which had been identified in 2001/02, in particular the difficulties facing the section in meeting National Performance targets.

The report from the Chief Executive and Head of Financial Services referred to the financial position of the Council which had been previously reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 16 July. In particular the financial results for 2002/03 which resulted in an overspend of £220k to be met from balances; an overspend of £255k on the projected results of 2003/04 and a decline in the Council's general fund reserve balances to £592k. The report also stressed the need to ensure that any decision made to increase the establishment was dealt with in accordance with the terms of the Constitution.

RESOLVED: That the Head of Paid Service be asked to increase the overall staffing structure in accordance with the Constitution.

(7.02pm – 7.18pm)

These minutes were prepared by Yamina Rhouati, Member Support Officer who can be contacted on direct line 01225 770322 or email yrhouati@westwiltshire.gov.uk