

WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the: **CABINET**

Held on: **WEDNESDAY 7 APRIL 2004**

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

Present:

Councillors: Phillips (Leader), Bower, Clark, Manasseh, Mounde, Newbury,
Payne, While and Wiltshire

Also present: Councillors Brice, Marion Clegg, Hames, James, Osborn,
Rosier and Viles

Officers: Chief Executive, Head of Strategy, Housing Services Manager,
Planning Policy Manager, Principal Lawyer, Corporate
Communications Manager, Management Accountant, Northern
Area Co-ordinator and Member Support Officer (AB)

269 APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

270 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

271 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

272 ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE LEADER

The following announcements were made:

- (a) Members were reminded that a special meeting of Council would be held on 15 April 2004 to discuss current health issues. Representatives from the Primary Care Trust would be attending the meeting.
- (b) Central government had approved the setting up of a Board for the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

273 UPDATES BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Local Strategic Partnership

Councillor Bower reported that the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Board had arranged an 'away half-day' to discuss various issues.

In respect of the LSP Conference to be held on 7 July 2004 he informed Members that it might be necessary to draft in outside help due to the heavy workload.

West Wiltshire Housing Society Set-up Costs

Councillor Mounde informed Members that a successful resolution in respect of the repayment of set-up costs by the Housing Society had been reached. The monies received would be directed back into the housing budget. He thanked the parties involved for their work.

Hostels

Councillor Mounde reported that the Council was now in a position to give substantial consideration to the issue of hostels. Funding of approximately £300,000, which was not in the budget, was needed for hostels across the district and it was likely that the Council would have to consider disposal of Ethandune in Trowbridge. A report would be presented to the Internal Overview Committee on 14 April 2004 and the matter brought back to a future meeting of Cabinet.

274 RECOMMENDATION FROM NORTHERN AREA COMMITTEE

The Northern Area Committee at its meeting held on 12 February 2004 received a presentation on affordable housing and made the following recommendations to Cabinet:

- (i) That given the obvious difficulties which exist and requirements on developers to provide affordable housing, and have a viable business, there should be a comprehensive review of the provision of social housing.
- (ii) That the Committee regrets the loss of Local Authority Housing Support Grant and the consequent reliance on S106 Agreements.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet notes the recommendations of the Northern Area Committee and refers the Committee to the written response of the Housing Services Manager setting out the ways in which Members and stakeholders could participate in developing the affordable housing policy. In particular, Members' attention was drawn to the Housing Strategy Conference on 28 April 2004 at Trowbridge Civic Hall and the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance approved by Cabinet in February 2004.

KEY DECISIONS

275 **PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVE – THE NEXT STAGE**

Cabinet was asked to consider a report recommending the actions necessary should the initial submission for a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) receive the approval of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).

In November 2003 Cabinet agreed the submission of the initial bid to the ODPM requesting approval to deliver 500 new homes through the PFI Scheme. The Council had agreed a budget that accommodated the set-up costs for 2004/05. The portfolio holders involved acknowledged that in illustrating the network of reporting procedures the project plan had omitted the role of Cabinet. Councillor Mounde assured Cabinet that if approved, the report to Council would set out clearly, within the organisational chart, the clear role that Cabinet had in developing the project.

The outcome of the Council's bid was not yet known, but in preparation for what was hoped would be a positive response, Councillor Mounde presented his report which recommended the actions and resources necessary to progress the scheme as speedily and effectively as possible.

**RECOMMENDED
TO COUNCIL:**

That the preparation of the outline business case is commenced immediately on the approval of the bid by the ODPM.

RESOLVED:

- (a) **That the management structure outlined at paragraph 4 of the report presented be the basis of future work.**
- (b) **That the process of selecting a project manager be started immediately.**
- (c) **That the process of engaging a consultant(s) to assist the Council in preparation of the outline business case be started immediately.**

All the above are subject to the ODPM approving the Council's initial bid.

Statement of reason for decision	
Options considered and rejected	
Date for implementation	

276 OPEN SPACE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Councillor Newbury presented a report asking Cabinet to consider draft supplementary planning guidance to developers and landowners in respect of the way in which the Council intended to operate and implement its planning policy regarding the provision of open space in new housing developments.

This guide was intended to be used as an interim measure, pending the results of the recreational needs assessment and a future review of open space planning policies and standards.

There should be a six week period of public consultation following approval of the draft guidance by Cabinet, with all comments received being reported back to Cabinet for consideration. The opportunity should exist for the final guidance to be amended should Cabinet consider that the consultation had raised valid issues which needed to be addressed in the document.

- RESOLVED:**
- (a) **That the draft open space supplementary planning guidance for the purposes of development control and for the purposes of public consultation be approved**
 - (b) **That a six week period of public consultation and the timetable to adoption as set out in the report presented be approved.**

Statement of reason for decision	To be taken into account in the consideration of planning applications draft supplementary planning guidance should be subject to District Council approval.
Options considered and rejected	To rely on the general planning policy to deliver open space in West Wiltshire
Date for implementation	Once approved draft SPG immediately becomes a material consideration.

277 PROPOSED COMMUNITY CENTRE – AWDRY AVENUE, MELKSHAM

Councillor Clark presented a report asking Members to consider how, and whether, the Council could support the allocation of land and funding for the building of a community centre by a local charity.

The Forest ward had particular problems, being ranked within the top 20% of wards on the national indices of deprivation. These problems related in part to the lack of facilities and social support available locally to residents. There had been a longstanding desire by local people to secure investment for a multi-purpose activity centre that could become a focal point for the estate and for the provision of key services.

The District Council was in a position to support the project for a community centre by allocation of land and assistance with funding from a S106 Agreement from Newland Homes and transfer of land. The residents' group at the Forest estate had established itself as a registered charity and had prepared a business plan relating to the development of a community centre. Consultation exercises had also been carried out which underlined the need for a community centre and helped to inform the key project objectives.

RESOLVED:

- (a) **That this Council agrees in principle to grant Forest Community Centre (Charity No 1064323) a 99 year lease subject to:**
 - ? **The Council approving the Business Plan for the project**
 - ? **The construction works for the Centre commencing before 1 January 2009**
 - ? **The land being used solely for the purposes of the charity.**
- (b) **The land will either be disposed of at full value or authority to dispose of at an undervalue will be sought when the proper value is known. The lease will only be completed once the build contract for the construction of the centre has been let. A contract for lease may be issued in the meantime if required to assist in obtaining the New Opportunities Fund or other grant funding.**
- (c) **That on production of invoices for construction costs for the centre, that the £40,000 contribution received by this authority be added to the Capital Programme for that year to enable £40,000 to be paid to Forest Community Centre (Charity No 1064323).**
- (d) **That if the build contract has not been let by 1 January 2009 the availability of the land and the use of the contribution for other purposes appropriate to the area be considered.**

Statement of reason for decision	To honour a previous commitment and to benefit the local community
Options considered and rejected	Not to sell the land or to sell the land to someone
Date for implementation	May 2004

278 DRAFT CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Councillor Payne asked Cabinet to consider the draft of the Council's first Corporate Communications Strategy and to adopt it as policy.

The Council's communications structure was reorganised in 2001 and the Corporate Communications Team was established. Since then, a number of standards and action plans, notably in relation to internal communications and consultation, had been put in place. The Strategy was designed to set out the guiding principles that the Council would follow in all of its communications.

RESOLVED: **That the draft Corporate Communications Strategy be adopted.**

Statement of reason for decision	The Strategy is designed to have a beneficial impact on overall public satisfaction with the Council.
Options considered and rejected	Not to develop an overall communications strategy.
Date for implementation	As soon as the Strategy is adopted.

NON KEY DECISIONS

279 TROWBRIDGE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK – RESPONSES TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Cabinet was asked to consider the responses received to public consultation and to recommend adoption of the Urban Design Framework (UDF) by Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Following public consultation a number of proposed changes to the UDF were recommended in order to:

- ? clarify the status of the document
- ? update references to national and other policy documents
- ? update factual references

The responses received had generally been positive, with organisations supporting the Vision for Trowbridge project, and the design codes and principles set out in the UDF, as a positive way forward for the County town.

**RECOMMENDED
TO COUNCIL:**

- a) **That the recommended responses of the Council to each of the comments received, as set out in appendix 1 of the report presented, be approved.**

- (c) **That the Trowbridge Urban Design framework, as amended, be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.**

280 TROWBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL – REQUEST TO PROSECUTE RESIDENTS OVER PIGEON FEEDING

Open Forum Presentation: Mr Ross

Councillor Wiltshire presented a report asking Cabinet to consider a response to Trowbridge Town Council's request that the feeders of pigeons in the town centre be prosecuted. The report considered the facts underlying the request, the potential options and recommended a way forward.

It was not known whether the town had an excessive pigeon population and the Town Council had not analysed whether it was above or below average for

a town the size of Trowbridge. The Town Council had been asked to provide evidence of complaints regarding the depositing of seed and bread. No evidence had been received in the last year. There were no public health risks arising from this depositing as a change in cleaning routines had ensured that the waste seed and bread was removed promptly.

The cost of prosecuting the pigeon feeders would be relatively cheap. However, criminal prosecutions appeared to have no effect. Feeders generally only ceased when an injunction was sought to stop the offences continuing. An injunction would be costly and take several years to obtain.

The report presented detailed pigeon control techniques recommended by the Pigeon Control Advisory Service (PICAS). One of the options was that of egg collection and the District Council would be able to work with the Town Council on such a project.

- RESOLVED:**
- (a) **That the report be noted.**
 - (b) **That the Chief Executive and the Clerk to the Town Council meet to discuss how to progress a method of reducing the pigeon population through egg removal and to explore other options which would have the same effect.**

281 REVIEW OF CABINET FORWARD WORK PLAN

Cabinet received its Forward Work Plan for the period May to August 2004.

- RESOLVED:** **That the Work Plan be noted.**

(7.05pm – 8.43pm)

These minutes were prepared by Anna Browne, Member Support Officer
Telephone direct line 01225 770322 or email abrowne@westwiltshire.gov.uk