

WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the: **CABINET**

Held on: **WEDNESDAY 5 MAY 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, Brown, Conley and Viles

Officers: Chief Executive, Corporate Officer (Democratic Services), Corporate Officer (Policy), Head of Financial Services, Housing Services Manager, Planning Policy Manager, Contracts Manager Legal Services Manager, Best Value Officer, and Member Support Officer (YR)

282 APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

283 MINUTES

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

284 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

285 ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE LEADER

Councillor Jackie Wells

The Leader referred to the news that Councillor Jackie Wells had sadly died on 30 April following an illness. He said that he had personally held in her high esteem and that she had been cheerful and was very thoughtful of others despite her illness. Her funeral would be held on 12 May in East Finchley Cemetery, London at 12 noon with a memorial service at St Michael's Church, Melksham on 28 May at 2pm.

At the Leader's request, Members stood in silence for a moment as a mark of respect to Jackie.

Pay Claim

The Leader reported that unfortunately, no settlement had been reached over this year's pay claim. The Employers side had offered 7% over a 3 year period. The Leader did not think that this offer would be acceptable to the unions who would be discussing the matter at a meeting on 7 May 2004. He hoped that the matter would be settled as soon as possible and that industrial action would be avoided.

Revised report format

The Leader reported that the format of reports had been revised with the emphasis on shorter more focussed reports with unavoidably lengthy reports or appendices being made available on request and on the Council's website. Comments on this initiative would be welcomed by the Chief Executive.

Reconvened Annual Council/Seminar Meeting of Council – 12 May

The Leader reminded Members that a Seminar meeting of Council had been arranged for Wednesday 12 May at 7pm to consider on the management restructure which are being proposed to take account of the Council's priorities (please refer to minute no. 291 below). This would be followed by a reconvened meeting of Annual Council to conclude the business which was not transacted at the meeting on 21 April.

286 UPDATES BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Private Finance Initiative

Councillor Mounde asked the Housing Services Manager to report on the good news regarding the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) for affordable housing.

The Housing Services Manager explained that the Council had been informed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister that this Council was one of only 9 councils in the whole of England and the only district council to be successful in its bid for the PFI to provide affordable housing in the District. The Government Office for the South West had advised that it had been very impressed with the quality of the bid and its innovative nature.

Councillor Mounde paid tribute to the professionalism and hard work by the officers and consultants in putting together the bid.

Seminar Meeting of Council – 15 April 2004 – Health

Councillor Mounde referred to the Seminar Meeting of Council held on 15 April when senior representatives of the West Wiltshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) had attended to respond to Members' concerns over the provision of health care in the district and in particular the reported closure of local facilities. A meeting would be held soon with officers to agree a way forward on how best to maintain the

momentum in dealing with the various issues highlighted in order to be able to influence the PCT for the good of the residents of the district.

Housing Conference – 28 April

Councillor Mounde reported on the Housing Conference held on 28 April which he said had been very successful with good participation from those attending.

KEY DECISIONS

287. REFUSE COLLECTION – EXTENSION OF KERBSIDE COLLECTION OF RECYCLABLES

Councillor Wiltshire presented a report in which he sought Cabinet's approval to extend the kerbside collections of dry recyclables to Bradford on Avon, Warminster and Westbury.

It was noted that following a successful bid to DEFRA in 2003/04, collection of dry recyclables had started in the autumn of 2003 in Melksham, Melksham Without and Trowbridge. Unfortunately, a further bid to extend the service to Bradford on Avon, Warminster and Westbury had not been successful. However, Wiltshire County Council had made finance available for providing vehicles and collection boxes and to also cover the first year's operating costs. This will mean that the service could be extended in July 2004. The District Council would meet the revenue costs after the first year which should not be more than £185,000 a year until 2010. The consultant was of the view that this arrangement would provide good value for money.

Cabinet was updated on the current and future recycling targets. It was noted that the recycling scheme had begun to make a good impact on the recycling targets.

RESOLVED:

That approval be given to extend the kerbside collection of dry recyclables to Bradford on Avon, Warminster and Westbury.

Statement of reason for key decision	To achieve District Council recycling targets
Options considered and rejected	Delay in implementation
Date of implementation (not less than five days after date of decision)	June 2004

288. REFUSE COLLECTION – CLOSURE OF THE WESTBURY LANDFILL SITE

Councillor Wiltshire presented a report in which he informed Members that the Westbury Landfill site would close in July 2004. The report explained the financial

implications of this and sought Cabinet approval for a change in the refuse collection rounds.

The County Council had instructed this Council that the waste would be taken to Compton Bassett. As this was further away, there would be increased costs due to the increase in the number of vehicles required, the labour force and fuel used. Under the contract with Cleanaway, these costs would fall to this Council. However, Hills who ran the site at Compton Bassett had agreed to pay Cleanaway these additional costs. The County Council had also given an undertaking to cover the district council's reasonable additional costs as a result of the tip being moved.

The change to the refuse collection rounds would be to minimise the increase in costs and would result in a change in collection days for some people in parts of the District.

Councillor Newbury updated Cabinet on information being considered at County level. The County Council had set up a Waste Scrutiny Task Group in which they were suggesting that waste by means of incineration should be actively investigated. This would be considered by the County Council's Cabinet on 21 May 2004.

RESOLVED:

That approval be given to Cleanaway redesigning refuse collection works such as to limit the increased costs arising from the closure of the Westbury Landfill site.

Statement of reason for key decision	Closure of the Westbury landfill site
Options considered and rejected	Retention of current collection days
Date of implementation (not less than five days after date of decision)	19 July 2004

Note: Recorded Vote/Declaration of Interest

Councillor Payne requested that his abstention from voting on the above item be recorded as he had an interest in the matter of which he had previously given notice of.

289. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PARKS AND OPEN SPACES POLICY PROJECT GROUP

**Open Forum Speakers: Mr Brine – Heywood Parish Council
Mr Morland**

Councillor Clark referred to the work of the Parks and Open Spaces Policy Project Group (PPG) which had carried out a thorough review of the Council's provision and management of parks and open spaces. As a result, a comprehensive report had been prepared. It was noted that Cabinet had at its April meeting approved the Supplementary Planning Guidance which had picked up some of the PPG's

recommendations. Some of the PPG's recommendations cannot be implemented until the results of the Recreational Needs Assessment were known.

In the meantime, there were some issues which could be resolved by Cabinet on play areas, allotments, cemeteries and closed churchyards, parish and town councils, underused open space and enforcement as detailed in the report presented along with the PPG's recommendations.

In the debate which ensued, Councillor Payne requested the safeguarding of allotment land to keep them in perpetuity and asked if a legal clause to make them statutory allotments could be put in any transfers.

In proposing the recommendations in the report, Councillor Clark agreed to take on board Councillor Payne's comments about the safeguarding of allotment land.

The Corporate Officer (Democratic Services) clarified the point about the sale of underused open spaces. This was to sell small areas of open spaces which were not used very much, did not contribute much to amenity, were of little value and which were costing the council increasing amounts of money to maintain them. The sale of these areas of land should not cost the authority any money as all sale costs eg, marketing, conveyancing, surveying etc would be met from the sale proceeds. Cabinet also asked about the level of Member involvement in the sale of such land. It was agreed that following consultation, a report would be presented to a future meeting of Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That the proposals set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.6 of the report presented be approved subject to the following:

Paragraph 4.1 at the start of the 6th and 7th bullet points to add 'We consider that'

Paragraph 4.2 to note the comments by Councillor Payne regarding the safeguarding of allotment land and include that any land transferred in the way outlined in the paragraph would not allow a third party to make a profit by selling the land on.

**Paragraph 4.5 bullet point 2 – line 3 – delete 'and offer them for sale'
bullet point 4 – line 1 – replace 'revenue' with 'sale'**

Paragraph 4.6 bullet point 1 – line 1 replace 'fowling' with 'fouling'

Reason for key decision	To improve the provision and management of open space
Options considered and rejected	These are set out in the reports to and notes of the POSPPG
Date of implementation	As set out in section 4.8 of the report.

290. AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Councillor Newbury presented a report in which Cabinet was asked to consider the responses received to public consultation and to adopt amended affordable housing supplementary planning guidance.

A period of public consultation was held between 20 February 2004 and 2 April 2004. Responses were received from 14 organisations and individuals. Late representations were circulated at the meeting. Councillor Newbury referred two letters highlighting that parts of the Guidance were incomplete and requesting consultation on these aspects of the Guidance when drawn up.

A schedule giving details of all comments received during the period of public consultation was presented.

After hearing other Member's views, Councillor Newbury requested that this item be deferred and it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) That consideration of the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance be deferred.**
- (b) That a working group be established to look into the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Group to be chaired by the Portfolio Holder and include a representative from each of the political groups (to be nominated by the group leaders) and external representatives where appropriate. The remit of the Group would be to consider the yet to be completed parts of the Guidance and consider concerns which had already been expressed.**
- (c) That a report on the outcome of the deliberations of the working group be considered by Cabinet at its July meeting.**

Statement of reason for key decision	To be taken into account in the consideration of planning applications supplementary planning guidance should be subject to adoption by the District Council.
Options considered and rejected	To rely on the general planning policy to deliver affordable housing in West Wiltshire.
Date of Implementation	Once the District Plan 1 st Alteration has been adopted, this SPG becomes a significant material consideration.

NON-KEY DECISIONS

291. **CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

The Chief Executive presented a report in which he sought Cabinet's approval on a revised set of priorities to enable the Council to develop a clear way forward in its emerging corporate plan.

The proposed priorities were as follows:

- ? Development Control
- ? Recycling
- ? Affordable Housing
- ? Access to recreation
- ? Market town regeneration
- ? Customers First

These priorities were backed up with new supporting principles as set out in the report presented.

The Chief Executive explained that these priorities if approved, would be presented to the Seminar meeting of Council on 12 May in the context of the Council's management structure; development of the corporate plan and community strategies and the role of back bench members.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet adopts the revised corporate priorities as presented subject to the deletion of 'less traffic dominated' under market town regeneration.

292. **WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON CUSTOMER SERVICES PROGRAMME**

Councillor While presented a report which outlined proposals for continued partnership working between the Wiltshire and Swindon Councils.

The proposals grew out of the successful joint working on e-government that had taken place over the last two years or so. This had delivered a number of individual projects, such as: a benefits take-up campaign, IT learning centres and community web sites. The most recent funding will deliver systems for jointly managing web sites, change of address notifications and abandoned vehicles reporting.

Although the Government funding that supported this had now ceased, participating councils considered that there was much to be gained by continuing to work together in this way. The general view was that joining up and improving the way we deal

with customers would be the most productive area of work.

RESOLVED:

- (a) **That the Council participates in the Wiltshire and Swindon Customer Services Programme.**
- (b) **That Councillor While be appointed as the member representative with the Corporate Officer (Policy) – Tim Darsley as the officer representative for the Steering Group.**
- (c) **That Cabinet agrees to allocate a maximum of £20,000 from within existing IEG funding for the co-ordination and support of the programme.**

293. REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Councillor Payne presented a report proposing a review of the Council's complaints procedure. The purpose of the review was to make the complaints procedure an important tool for improving customer service.

At present complaints are handled by officers but there was no formal way for getting an overview of trends or recurrent problems.

The procedure was examined as part of a routine inspection by the Audit Commission in 2003. Whilst it had not criticised the procedure, the Audit Commission had recommended a number of improvements which prompted the review. The draft procedure had been considered and approved by the Standards Committee.

A number of options were presented for Cabinet's consideration.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That the complaints policy/procedure, subject to an amendment so that only stage 2 and 3 complaints be recorded, be approved and recommended to the Council for inclusion in the Constitution.

294. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Councillor While presented a report for Cabinet's information which showed the performance against the various Performance Indicators. The information had already been considered by the Corporate Team and Internal Overview Committee.

The final figures for 2003-04 were still subject to audit and so may change prior to final publication (in the 2004-05 best value performance plan on 30 June 2004).

The main points to note from the report are:

- ? The B&B target was reached ahead of time and sustained
- ? Hit 2 of the 3 statutory targets for development control, just missing the target on minor applications by 1%.
- ? Hit the initial 10% DEFRA target for recycling
- ? There is an increase in the number of working days lost due to sickness, this situation is being closely monitored by the corporate team, and personnel is working with service managers to target this for improvement.

Members were asked if they wished to request further information or detail in relation to any of the reported exception areas.

RESOLVED:

That the monitoring information for the quarter ended 31 March 2004 be noted.

295. EAST TROWBRIDGE DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

Councillor Newbury presented a report which sought Cabinet to approve the draft development brief for East Trowbridge for public consultation purposes.

The Brief would show in detail how the Council proposed to deliver the strategic housing site at East Trowbridge, allocated in the District Plan 1st Alteration for 550 dwellings, a new primary school, and a large part of the Biss Meadows Country Park.

A Policy Project Group (PPG) was set up to consider a draft Brief and meetings were held on 4 March 2004 and 6 April 2004. The PPG suggested amendments to the initial draft which had been incorporated into the draft Brief as presented.

One of the key issues for public consultation was to seek views on the location of the primary school.

A 6 week period of public consultation was suggested to be undertaken between 7 May and 18 June 2004, which would include circulating a leaflet to residents near the proposed site and a public exhibition at Paxcroft Mead, Hilperton village and Trowbridge town centre.

RESOLVED:

- (a) **approves the draft East Trowbridge Deveopment Brief for the purposes of public consultation;**
- (b) **approves the period of public consultation and the timetable to adoption set out in this report.**

296. ARTS DEVELOPMENT POLICY PROJECT GROUP

Councillor Clark presented a report in which he sought Cabinet's approval to the setting up of a Policy Project Group (PPG) to develop the Council's long term priorities and focus for arts development.

The PPG will be asked to consider the future role of arts development and its key audiences, and suggest how the Council may wish to prioritise this service's work over the next three years. The work of the PPG will be completed before the next budget setting and will therefore assist members in service and financial planning for 2005/06 and beyond.

RESOLVED:

That a Policy Project Group on Arts Development be established to be chaired by Councillor Clark with up to three non-executive members (to be nominated by group leaders) and up to two external representatives.

297. REVIEW OF FORWARD WORKPLAN

Cabinet received its forward workplan for the period June to September 2004.

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance – July

*Southwick Country Park – as soon as possible

- * Cabinet had at its meeting in March agreed that a further report on Southwick Country would be presented on completion of a Recreational Needs Assessment (RNA). It was noted that the terms of reference for the RNA were still in draft, but that every effort was being made to carry this out as soon as possible.

(7.00pm – 9.00pm)

These minutes were prepared by Yamina Rhouati, Member Support Officer
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