

WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the: **CABINET**

Held on: **WEDNESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2004**

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

Present:

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

Also present: Councillors Carbin, John Clegg, Marion Clegg, Conley, Content, Cunliffe – Jones, James, Lewis, March, Osborn and Repton

Officers: Chief Executive, Corporate Officer (TD), Corporate Director, Head of Finance, Legal and Democratic Services Manager, Transport Officer, Arts Development Officer, Revenues and Benefits Manager, Conservation Officer, Management Accountant, Housing Services Service Manager, Communications Officer (Media) and Member Support Assistant (MS)

356 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence received.

357 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

358 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councilor Mounde commented upon minute number 367 and noted that although he was certain that it was not a personal interest he had married an ancestor of the family that once owned Brook Hall.

359 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER

The Leader announced that Yamina Rhouati, Member Support Officer would be on sick leave for a minimum of a month due to a serious eye infection, which had almost taken the sight of one eye. He wished her a quick recovery, noting that her presence was much missed, and these sentiments were echoed by the other Members present.

The Leader also announced that Doug Ross, Town Clerk to Trowbridge Town Council, was now home after being taken to hospital with a burst appendix. The Leader wished him a speedy recovery.

The Leader also noted with pleasure that Geoff Pell had been able to return to duties and was back before the Cabinet after a period of absence due to illness.

360 UPDATES BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Councillor Mounde reported on the PFI project. He had attended a Project Board Meeting on 9 September, a training day on 16 September and received a visit from officers of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. He advised the Cabinet that the project is progressing in accordance with the schedule. He noted that the authority is the only council from the South West remaining in this phase of the PFI round.

Councillor Bower reported that he and the Chief Executive had been able to attend the first Local Strategy Partnership (LSP) meeting. They had each taken their place on the Board of the LSP, where George Bright, Principal of Wiltshire College and a qualified Accountant, was the Chair.

Councillor While noted that he been able to attend the second meeting to discuss the Customer Relation System with the County Council. He informed the Cabinet that the system would be introduced across the District and two neighbouring District Councils next year. The Partnership has agreed to produce a report and send details to the Cabinet meeting on 3 November for discussion.

Councillor While also noted that the corporate team had prepared a project initiation document concerning the six corporate priorities with the intention of completing the all of the work identified within the programme within 18 months.

Councillor Clark noted that in July Cabinet had agreed a new structure and criteria for Community Development Grants. Part of this was an agreement to establish more Service Agreements with selected organisations. He reported that Service Agreements will be developed with the following organisations in line with the process laid out in the community development grants review:

- Charities Information Bureau
- Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation
- Voluntary Action West Wiltshire
- Wiltshire Racial Equality Council
- Action on Homelessness

Current Service Level Agreements with Community First and West Wiltshire-Wide Citizens Advice Bureau are also being reviewed in line with the process laid out in the community development grants review.

Councillor Fortescue reported on Choice Based Lettings. A Homelessness Resource Pack had been introduced and commended other members to look at one of the twenty copies that had been produced. Councillor Fortescue had also attended the West Wiltshire Housing Societies AGM which was well supported and paid tribute to Councillor Mounde for all of his hard work in dealing with this portfolio beforehand. Councillor Fortescue had attended a workshop on affordable home ownership and the Primary Care Trust AGM.

Councillor Wiltshire reported that during the first collection of green recyclable waste the authority had collected 267 tonnes and the second collection would be greater therefore WWDC were on way to achieving 14% target. He felt everyone had worked well together and thanked the public and officers in particular. He noted that there were only 20 households who had said that

they did not want a green bin when the first batch were delivered. There had been over 20,000 bins delivered. He felt the campaign had been particularly successful due to the children being educated to recycle and other organisation running recycling campaigns.

KEY DECISIONS

361 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

Councillor While presented the Medium Term Financial Plan for adoption. The Plan would be revised in accordance with the 2005/2006 local government finance settlement, but it was noted that the trend for settlements in the two successive years was for limited increases in the finances of the authority.

The future capital programme was likely to be challenging and Corporate Management Team and Cabinet would be working over the coming months to address issues as they arose following the publication of the exact allocation under this year's financial settlement were published. These decisions would be incorporated in the Plan.

RESOLVED: **That the current financial provision is noted and the medium term financial plan be agreed.**

362 DECRIMINALISED PARKING ENFORCEMENT

Councillor Wiltshire outlined the choices available to the District Council on the subject of decriminalised parking enforcement. The authority had the chance to consider the option of acting as an agent for enforcement a decriminalised parking enforcement regime, what should be included in such an arrangement and to make arrangements for consideration of the outcome by a Policy Project Group established by the authority.

The advantages of being involved in such a scheme included helping with delivery of objectives for the development of town centres, creating a simpler and more readily understood method of controlling parking, and providing a clearer division between the traffic functions of the County Council and the District Council. The disadvantages included a potential element of financial risk, a significant amount of preparatory work and the authority being involved in a contentious issue where it was not control of all of the changeable elements.

RESOLVED: **That:-**
(1) Cabinet supports detailed negotiations to develop proposals for a satisfactory agency agreement and administrative arrangements with this authority to implement decriminalised parking enforcement; and
(2) The Parking Policy Project Group be retained to oversee the details of agreements and implementation with representatives of each community area, residents and business with the Portfolio Holder as Chair.

363 ARTS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2005-8

Councillor Clark presented the proposal to develop the arts within the District for the next three years following the work of the Arts Development Policy Project Group which was set up in May 2004. The current service, the views of users, and comparisons with authorities had formed part of the considerations underlying the report.

A number of themes had emerged, including provision for young people, rural areas, the need to provide more arts and facilities, support for important local artistic organisations and groups, and

the impact of District Council funding on contributions made by others. A number of clear examples of District Council commitment bringing in significant investment from other bodies were noted, and the District was noted as spending less per head of population than other comparable authorities.

RESOLVED: That adoption of the draft Arts Development plan for 2005 – 2008 be approved subject to the necessary additional finance being made available during the next budget round.

364 COUNCIL TAX AND NON-DOMESTIC RATES COLLECTION

Councillor While presented a report concerning the current position on the collection of Council Tax and Non-Domestic rates and the use of external bailiff services. Although recovery rates have been increasing for the District as a whole benchmarking with other authorities has shown that recovery rates can be increased further through the use of external bailiffs. A partnership with Kennet District Council building on the work carried out by its bailiffs is the preferred option

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The procurement of an external bailiff partnership is supported to commence the earliest opportunity; and
- (2) The Contracts Procedure Rules shall not apply to the procurement of this partnership agreement; and
- (3) The Code of Conduct and Practice to be used by any external bailiffs be approved and adopted.

NON-KEY DECISIONS

365 REVERTING TO AREA COMMITTEES – NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Mounde presented a report discussing the issues surrounding the reversion to area committees following the Notice of Motion presented to Council on 21 July 2004 by Councillor Chivers and Councillor Barker. The report noted that there is no right or wrong committee system and that each had advantages and disadvantages. After a short discussion about ensuring that the Council had the chance to discuss all of the options the matter was concluded.

RESOLVED: That the report be commended to Council for it to debate and decide upon.

366 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2003-04

Councillor While presented a report giving details of the Council's treasury management activities for 2003 – 2004. Since March 2003 all funds have been managed in-house with advice from Sector in accordance with Treasury Management Policy and Strategy. The authority is currently debt-free and short term borrowing only has been required to cover short term cash deficits. Average fund investment has generated 4.10% return. A potential delay in the business rates refund had been raised with ODPM and had resulted the refund being paid promptly, gaining the authority useful additional earnings whilst the sum was held on deposit. Members congratulated Ian Jamieson on the result of his approach to ODPM.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

367 BROOK HALL

Open Forum Presentation – Mr Morland.

Michael Mounde presented a report to approve a long term strategy for the Early Wing and associated buildings at Brook Hall, Brokerswood. The current position of the Grade 1 Listed building, the Urgent Works Notice served on the Early Wing and the continued concern were described.

It was noted that adjacent buildings were beginning to show signs of deterioration too. An Urgent Works notice could be served on these properties too. The costs may be off set by a grant from English Heritage.

RESOLVED: That:-

- (1) an Urgent Works Notice be prepared to prevent further deterioration in buildings at the site; and**
- (2) the draft Statement of Significance and development Brief be approved for consultation;**
- (3) negotiations with the Wiltshire Historic buildings Trust be commenced; and**
- (4) the availability of grants to assist with the costs of any of the above be investigated; and**
- (5) it is noted that a further report on the final Brief and details of the suggested urgent Works Notice be put before Cabinet by the end of the year for consideration.**

368 FINANCIAL MONITORING

The Head of Finance presented a report informing Members of the Council's financial position for the period ending 31 July 2004.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

369 CABINET FORWARD WORKPLAN

Cabinet received its Forward Work Plan for the period September 2004 to April 2005.

RESOLVED: That the Work Plan be noted with the following additions:

**An additional Cabinet meeting to be held on 3 November due to the large agenda
'Customer First' be added to the agenda on 3 November**

370 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under S100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public including the press be excluded from the meeting during the following item of business on the grounds that it was likely in view of the nature of business to be transacted or the nature of proceedings, that if members of the public were present during this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as described in paragraph 12 of Schedule 12A to the said Act.

PART II

Item during consideration of which it is recommended that the press and public be excluded.

371 TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PROVISION

Cabinet received a confidential report from Councillor Fortescue about potential changes to the provision of temporary accommodation for homeless people and families.

RESOLVED:

That

- (a) Cabinet supports the disposal of Ethandune in principle; and**
- (b) additional information about the best value on disposal of Ethandune be obtained; and**
- (c) details of the work required and potential call on funds at both Hillside Hostel and Kingsbury Square Hostel be obtained; and**
- (d) the information on items (b) and (c) be brought back to Cabinet for consideration in due course.**

Date of Next Cabinet Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of Cabinet has been arranged for Wednesday 27 October 2004 to be held in the Council Chamber, at the Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge at 7.00pm.

(7.05pm to 9.02pm)

These minutes were prepared by Melanie Stimpson, Member Support Officer
Telephone direct line 01225 770322 or email mstimpson@westwiltshire.gov.uk