

WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the: **CABINET**

Held on: **WEDNESDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2004**

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

Present:

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

Viles, Osborn, Brice, Cunliffe-Jones, March.

Also present: Michael Williams; Trowbridge Chamber of Commerce.

Officers: Chief Executive, Head of Finance, Legal and Democratic Services Manager,
Richard Rogers, Tim Darsley, Ian Gallin, Peter Woodcock
Geoff Pell, Louise Knox, Maria laws, Chris Nicholas

387 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Bowers.

388 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2004 will be approved by Cabinet Meeting on 24 November 2004.

389 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

390 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER

The Leader announced that Mr Morely, Minister for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs had written to the authority to praise it for reaching recycling targets and had commended the authority to his colleagues in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for its' performance.

Andrew Pate, Chief Executive, presented a presentation about the achievements of the authority in the last 6 months. The presentation included progress on all of the corporate objectives and the successful completion of the authority's IIP assessment.

391 **UPDATES BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

Councillor Clark reported that the Leisure and Recreational Needs Assessment had provided an interim report. Too many small play equipment areas had been highlighted as showing under use. Play areas maintained by the District Council were generally in good condition. Sports pitches were in poor condition in Trowbridge and Westbury due to heavy use. Consultation will be undertaken through the Citizen's Panel.

Councillor Wiltshire reported that the contract for grounds maintenance in the central area of the district had been extended by 12 months under the urgent decision process so that the existing contractor, English Landscapes, could perform the function for one further year.

Councillor Osborn noted that the Internal Overview Committee will be looking at procurement issues.

NON-KEY DECISIONS

392 **ADOPTION OF WEST WILTSHIRE AND WILTSHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGIES**

In the absence of Cllr Bower, Richard Rogers presented this report.

The council's CPA inspection at the start of the year, identified Community Leadership as being an area of weakness. Over the last 9 months, the authority has been working on the production of the District Community Strategy, adopted on Sep 27th by all partners on the newly formed District Local Strategic Partnership Board. Final detailed alterations are being completed in time for a published version to be ready for the end of the year. In addition, the appointment of George Bright, Principal of Wiltshire College as Chair of the Board will help ensure that it remains focussed and productive.

The Council's corporate plan has been produced alongside the District Strategy so as to ensure they are strongly linked and that any issues have been addressed. At the same time, great care has been taken to ensure that both documents compliment and work alongside the already existing County Community Strategy.

Cllr Mounde commented on the need to provide appropriate funding for the Strategies. Richard Rogers identified the link between the Strategy and the Corporate Plan. Ian Gallin noted that the Corporate Plan and the Medium Term Financial Plan were also clearly linked.

Cllr Osborn commented that it was important to ensure that the parties in the Local Strategic Partnership cooperated fully. The Leader noted that the Chairman of the LSP was likely to ensure that cooperation was delivered. Andrew Pate noted the success of fundraising by the local partnerships that existed already.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet recommends that Council adopts both the District and County Community Strategies and looks forward to playing an active role in the implementation of them.

393 **DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN**

In the absence of Cllr Bower, Ian Gallin, presented the Draft Corporate Plan.

The purpose of the report is for Cabinet to recommend to Council the adoption of the Corporate Plan for the next 5 years. The Corporate Plan presented to Cabinet for consideration was a final draft, covering the period of April 2005 to March 2010 be recommended to Council for adoption.

The Corporate Plan sets out:

- The Council's intentions, direction and focus for the next five years
- Our ambitions and provides a context for competing priorities
- Our contribution to the West Wiltshire Community Strategy

The Corporate Plan has been developed following extensive consultation.

RESOLVED:

That the Council be recommended to adopt the Corporate Plan

KEY DECISIONS

394 **REVIEW OF CAR PARKING FEES AND CHARGES**

Councillor Wiltshire introduced the report on car parking charges.

Car parking charges were last reviewed in 2000. Demand for car parking has increased, National policy reflected in the Local Transport Plan and the Transport Strategy has included reducing rush hour congestion by encouraging a change in travel mode, one element being increasing charges for long stay parking.

The pay and display charges proposed are comparable to the current charges for local authority car parks in towns in neighbouring districts. An increase at the level proposed provides an opportunity to provide an hour's free parking in a limited number of car parks and bring our charging hours into line with neighbouring authorities.

Geoff Pell said it was a long report which evidenced the work that had been undertaken. It was important that any changes did not disadvantage West Wiltshire towns when compared with other local towns. Some side effects may result from the new charges. Displacement from car parks to side roads can occur, but typically lasts no more than a few months. The detail in the report was commended for adoption with the following amendment:-

That the authority commences informal consultation on the basis of: a pay and display tariff of 40p one hour, 80p two hours, £1.60 four hours, £3.50 all day with either a free hour in selected car parks or all car parks being free until 10.00 a.m

Michael Williams, Chief Executive of the Wessex Chambers of Commerce spoke of the concerns to the proposals in the report. A national survey of car parking and charges was being undertaken because of the impact on the local traders. Increases should be reasonable and the wages were low and the retail base was fragile, as evidenced in trading in places such as Westbury and

Warminster. The money taken by the car park charges was less money going to the shops. The increase in long term parking charges was the cause of most concern. The rural nature of the District meant that many had little option but to use a car for transport.

Cllr Payne noted that the revenue from car parking formed an important part of the finances of the authority. There was a clear need to bring in shoppers to the towns in the District to protect vital local trade. The impact on workers, through the sale of season tickets, was also important and annual or six monthly season tickets would be likely to be more affordable. A figure lower than £600 was recommended. A two hour free period was preferred. It should be put out to a widespread and considered consultation so that there was a sensible response for councillors to consider when the consultation period was over.

Cllr Mounde agreed with the sentiments expressed by Michael Williams and Cllr Payne. An updated comparison with neighbouring authorities was requested for when the authority considered the consultation responses.

Cllr Cunliffe-Jones commented on the two hours free parking and noted that it did not allow much time to complete banking transactions.

Cllr March hoped for widespread consultation on what was an emotive subject. He agreed with the sentiments of Michael Williams, noting the potential vulnerability of the town centre trading across the District.

Cllr Brice wanted to know what might be the impact where town councils were paying to keep some car parks free. Mr Pell noted that Warminster and Westbury Town Councils would be able to continue such arrangements by replacing the income lost to the District Council.

Cllr Osborn noted the balance between the vitality of the town centres and the income generated. He also commented on sites which could be charged for, including vacant development sites.

Moved by Cllr Wiltshire. Seconded by Cllr Fortescue.

RESOLVED:

That:

Terms of order for Counsultation

- 1 the authority commences informal consultation on the basis of:
 - A pay and display tariff of 40p one hour, 80p two hours. £1.60 four hours, £3.50 all day with either a free hour in selected car parks or all car parks being free until 10.00 a.m.. Annual season tickets £600, with shorter whole month periods pro rata plus £5, existing residents tickets £300p.a.
 - Excess Charge Notices remaining at £60 reduced to £30 if paid within 14 days, but no provision be included for a £4 accidental overstay charge.
 - Charging hours amended to 08.00 to 18.00 Monday- Saturday.
 - For car parks with a maximum stay of four hours or less to prohibiting return on the same day.
 - For all car parks with a free or low charge period prohibiting purchase of a ticket including that period more than once on the same day.
 - Restricting parking to private or private/light goods vehicles with a maximum gross weight of 3,500 kg which fit wholly within a marked parking bay other than a bay marked out for

a coach, bus, or heavy goods vehicle. A coach, bus, or heavy goods vehicle may park in specifically designated space.

- Introducing charging in the car parks in Weymouth Street, Warminster, and Stallards, Trowbridge

Consultation

- 2 The authority consults on the preferred option for the order alongside the budget consultation for 2005/6. The results are to be submitted for consideration at the Cabinet meeting of 15 December.

Future Changes

3. From 2006/7 pay and display charges over 2 hours be index linked to twice inflation, rounded to the nearest 10p for each 2 hour period until a charge of £5 for all day parking is reached. Season tickets and existing residents tickets are index linked in the same way rounded to the nearest £1 with £10 added annually to existing residents tickets until they equate with season tickets.

Provision for further free parking

4. That agreements may be made with organisations that wish to extend free public short term parking in return for the anticipated pay and display income.

395 WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON CUSTOMER SERVICES PROGRAMME

Councillor While presented a report about the further development of proposals for partnership working amongst the Wiltshire and Swindon authorities aimed at improving levels of customer service following a report earlier this year. The Partnership has now requested that the constituent authorities each consider formally the proposed work programme and indicate the extent to which they wish to participate.

The Customer Relationship Management System had been out to tender, and now the level of take up for the system was being discussed by the partners. It would cost about £100,000 capital costs and revenue expenditure of about £30,000. The capital would buy the basic system, but would not involve contact points and call centres in the short term.

Tim Darsley commented that the consideration was of the whole programme, but that the authority would not commit to all items immediately. The costs would be shared through the partnership, and a more comprehensive and integrated product would be available to customers of all the authorities.

The Chief Executive noted that the funding decisions would need to be made during the forthcoming budget round. Cllr Mounde wondered if the authority was a junior partner in the project.

Cllr Brice supported the approach. Cllr Osborne was pleased to see a route to improved productivity.

RESOLVED: It is recommended that the Council respond to the Wiltshire and Swindon Partnership as set out in Section 5 of the report.

396 PROCEDURE FOR INFORMING LOCAL MEMBERS OF WARD ISSUES

Cllr While presented a report about the benefits of setting up a procedure for officers to keep members informed about things which may be happening in their Wards which they would otherwise not know about.

A draft procedure was considered by Internal Overview in October. This was based very closely on a similar procedure employed by the County Council. Internal Overview asked that the draft be amended to include a reciprocal arrangement with the County Council, ie. District Council Officers informing their counterparts at County Hall so that the appropriate County Councillors could be briefed, and County officers informing the District of any issues that may impact on our members. The amended draft was considered by the Cabinet.

Cllr Osborne thought the arrangement would be useful. Cllr March was pleased to see reciprocal arrangements with the County Council

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet formally adopts this procedure and guidelines be prepared to assist officers subject to receiving the advice of the Standards Committee.

397 CABINET FORWARD WORK PLAN

Cabinet received its Forward Work Plan for the period November 2004 to May 2005.

RESOLVED: That the Work Plan be adopted.

Date of Next Cabinet Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of Cabinet has been arranged for Wednesday 24th November 2004 to be held in the Council Chamber, at the Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge at 7.00pm.

(7.00pm to 8.45pm)

These minutes were prepared by Simon Best, Legal and Democratic Services Manager.

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commdev/word/cabinet/mins2004/031104