

## **WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES**

Minutes of the: **CABINET**

Held on: **WEDNESDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2005**

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

Present:

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

Also present: Cllrs Brice, Conley, Hames, Knight, Lewis, Oldrieve, Osborn, Repton,

Officers: Chief Executive, Corporate Director (PW), Head of Finance (IJ), Head of Human Resources (SL), Technical and Professional Services Manager (CW), Communications Officer (LK), Performance and Scrutiny Support Officer (ML), Member Support Team Leader (YR)

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#### **423. APOLOGIES**

No apologies for absence were received.

#### **424. MINUTES**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 12 January 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

#### **425. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members and officers were reminded to declare any interests.

In respect of minute no.428 (c) - Treasury Management Policy, it was explained that the Investment Counterparty (Lending) List as detailed in Appendix C of the report presented had been updated for the 2005/06 Treasury Management Strategy. Members were specifically advised to review the list in order to determine whether any investments they may hold may restrict their ability to speak or vote on this matter. The Corporate Director (PW) gave further guidance on the levels of investment which would require either a personal or prejudicial interest to be declared and referred to the advice contained in the Code of Conduct.

The following interests were declared:

Cllr Bower – personal interest as shareholder in HSBC and Barclays banks.

Cllr Mounde – personal interest

Cllr Clark – personal interest as shareholder in banks: Abbey National plc; Alliance & Leicester; Halifax plc; Barclays plc; Royal Bank of Scotland and Building Societies: Nationwide; Britannia; Yorkshire; Portman and Skipton.

#### **426. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER**

No announcements were made.

#### **427. UPDATES FROM PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

Cllr Fortescue – Housing Portfolio Holder

##### **Secondment opportunity for Kate Beckinsale**

Kate, the Housing Register and Support Team Leader had been chosen to lead a project setting up the Wiltshire Young Persons Accommodation Standard. This was a joint project between the 4 Wiltshire district councils and the county council. The project would ensure that by 2008 every 16/17 year old housed by a Wiltshire council had reasonable home, life skills training and the support to make them a successful householder. It would be a four month secondment and her work would be covered by Adele Lodwig, the Housing Needs Policy and Research Officer. It was noted that this section was not affected by the current recruitment problems in the Housing Department.

##### **Bed and Breakfast update**

No bed and breakfast placements had been made for the last 3 months.

##### **Preparation for Choice Based Lettings**

The Housing Needs team had worked hard on the conversion to the new IT system for Choice Based Lettings. Information was being updated following a mailing to all those on the current register. This was causing a delay on some of the other work the team dealt with.

##### **Visit to Guinness Trust**

As a guest of the Guinness Trust, Cllr Fortescue had in January, attended a walk about at Longfield, Trowbridge and saw some of the impressive work that was going on to strengthen that community, The Guinness Trust was a key housing partner with around 600 homes in the District. She also visited a sheltered scheme in Yerbury Street. She was also shown the new houses that had been built in Leigh Park and Codford, both of which were attractive schemes.

##### **New Affordable Homes**

Section 106 agreements have now been agreed in principle on 7 major sites across the district to deliver 30% affordable housing without the need for any public subsidy. Between 80 and 83% of the affordable housing will be to rent on site, whilst the developers will also be making a significant contribution towards 17 to 20% shared equity. The shared equity will be made available so people in housing need can choose their own homes and the Council will be able to assist by purchasing up to 30% of the equity with them. It was hoped that this would be a particularly attractive option for both key workers and those in housing association homes who now wanted to buy their own home. Cllr Fortescue commented that it was sad to note that some of these gains could be lost as a result of de-allocation of sites under the draft structure plan.

Cllr Clarke – Leisure, Community Issues and Rural Affairs Portfolio Holder

## Update on arts development

### **Wiltshire Youth Arts Partnership**

The Council had secured £20,000 from the Arts Council and £10,000 from Teenage Pregnancy Fund for projects including the continuation and development of the dance sessions across the County which included the dance group who meet at Westbury Youth Centre and opportunities for young people in the District to be part of a County Youth Dance Company. The Community Safety Partnerships, had also funded some of the youth arts projects. He referred to projects working with Court Mills Youth Centre in Trowbridge and music technology taster sessions in Westbury. New projects were being planned to include crafts and theatre projects. The Council was in the process of developing a 3 year business plan for the partnership to maximise potential sources of funding

### **Participatory Arts Workshop Scheme (PAWS)**

This was a programme of subsidised arts workshops that provided all local groups in the District the opportunity to participate in arts activity and work with professional artists on a concentrated project. The project aimed to ensure that arts activity was locally based, accessible & affordable to groups. The scheme was jointly co-ordinated between the 4 districts of Wiltshire. By the end of 2004/5, approx. 68 participatory sessions will have taken place with over 1,000 people taking part. A wide range of groups had taken part including after school clubs, youth clubs, drug and alcohol groups and disability groups. The programme for the new season April to September was currently being planned.

### **Rural Arts Wiltshire (RAW)**

16 events were being held in West Wiltshire villages from September 2004 to May 2005. We hosted the national rural touring forum in 2004. It was hoped to increase the level of participatory activity, introduce a summer season of events and develop film and the visual arts into the scheme in 2005 and 2006, but this was dependent on obtaining funding.

### **Community Arts Training (CAT)**

Following a pilot course, Cllr Clark was developing with the other districts, a series of courses with the aim of training Wiltshire based groups and artists to enable them to set up and run community/participatory arts projects. The first course in April would be specifically aimed at non-arts groups. The Council was seeking some additional funding from the Arts Council to deliver a further 2 courses in autumn 2005 and winter/spring 2006

### **Big Ideas Mini Operas (BIMO) project**

A countywide rural music project, working with a range of partners from arts organisations (including Wiltshire Music Centre), festivals and local authorities – the work would happen in 4 villages in Wiltshire; for this District, it meant the Codford/Heytesbury area. Local communities would develop their own stories and theatre creating “mini operas”. This Council held the budget for this project and had received funding from 2 major funders for this project, namely - £31,109 from the Leader Plus (Sustain the Plain) programme and £11,134 from the Arts Council.

### **Working with the Arts Council and other Wiltshire authorities**

The Council had a partnership agreement with the Arts Council and we have been working with them (and other Wiltshire local authorities) over the last few months on a number of initiatives, including the theatre plan for Wiltshire, the arts and education

research and the Wiltshire Forward Plan (looking at the current and possible future investment in the arts in Wiltshire). This Council's contribution was £2,682 for both 2004/5 and 2005/6 into this partnership – the total amount in the partnership agreement budget from others is over £95,000.

Note: a copy of the full updates would be circulated to Members via the Members' Information Sheet.

With the permission of the Leader, Cllr Oldrieve raised the following issues:

### **Land at Green Lane, Southwood Road, Trowbridge**

Cllr Oldrieve sought Cabinet's support over the transfer of land to this Council to be maintained as public open space. Cllr Oldrieve was advised to discuss the matter with the Portfolio Holder who would decide on the most appropriate action and whether it necessitated a report to a future meeting of Cabinet.

### **Planning Application – Hilperton Relief Road**

Cllr Oldrieve referred to the decision of the special meeting of the Planning Committee dated 28 February 2005 to defer consideration of the application. The Leader advised that he did not consider it appropriate to debate this matter at this meeting and that Cllr Oldrieve should take the matter up with the Portfolio Holder.

## **428. BUDGET REPORTS 2005/06**

### **Open Forum Speakers:**

Mrs Sandra Barlett – lack of budget provision for resurfacing tennis courts at Culver Close recreation ground, Bradford on Avon

Mrs June Flemming – Hope Nature Centre, Southwick (Minute No.431 refers)

### **a) Budget Report**

Councillor While as Finance and Performance Portfolio holder presented the budget reports for 2005/06. He referred to visits made by the Leader to Town Councils and Area Seminars to explain the Council's financial position.

Cabinet had at its meeting on 12 January 2005 agreed the overall budget for each service, the projected General Fund revenue budget, individual capital projects and capital programme with appropriate recommendations to Council on 23 February 2005 and obtaining the views of the Internal Overview Committee.

The report now presented detailed the changes to the 2005/06 revenue budget and capital programme following confirmation of the local government finance settlement, the Trowbridge Museum budget and other minor adjustments, details of which were presented. It was noted that the Internal Overview Committee at its meeting on 2 February 2005, in considering the detailed draft service and resource plans for each portfolio, had noted the information provided and responses made.

Councillor While referred specifically to the Health Promotion service. Due to the Council's financial constraints, made more difficult by the Government's continued

withholding of grant, the Council would not be in a position to continue to provide the service. The Council did however, appreciate the value of the service to those who used it and was therefore actively seeking to secure its continuation by other key partners. Discussions were being held with the Wiltshire Primary Care Trust and DC Leisure to see if they would be able to provide the service. It was noted that positive discussions had been held earlier that day with these key partners.

**RESOLVED:**

**That Cabinet**

- i) agree the overall budget for each service and the projected General Fund revenue budget of £12.382m for 2005/2006**
- ii) recommend a council tax level band d of £127.88 an increase of 4.5% to Full Council on 23 February 2005.**
- iii) agree each capital project and the capital programme of £2.6m for 2005/2006 as shown in Appendix 2 of the report presented.**
- iv) That a letter be sent to Minister of State for Local and Regional Government, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister making representations about the Government's continued withholding of revenue support grant to the Council and being urged to continue to make savings. This was having a detrimental effect on being able to provide and continue to provide the services the Council wished to provide to its residents.**

Statement of Reasons for Key decisions	Requirement of Constitution
Options considered and rejected	Councillors had opportunities to consider alternatives at various budget meetings
Date of implementation	15 February 2005

**b) Capital Strategy**

Councillor While explained that It had previously been a requirement of the ODPM to produce a Capital Strategy. Whilst this was no longer the case, it was considered good practice to still produce such a strategy.

The strategy sets out how bids are assessed against the Corporate Priorities and principles of "Getting the Job Done". The District Auditor had requested that the Council set a minimum level for expenditure to be capitalised and this had been included.

In forecasting the possible future level of capital resources and spending, he had identified that the Council would need to borrow under the prudential code. Discussions will be held with our treasury management advisers regarding the timing of the actual borrowing.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Cabinet agrees the Capital Strategy and recommends it to Council.**

### **c) Treasury Management Policy**

Councillor While sought approval of the annual Treasury Management Policy for 2005/06 which had been prepared in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice with a view to recommending it to Council on 23 February 2005 as part of the budget setting process.

The Strategy Statement set out the strategy to be pursued in the coming financial year and includes the Prudential Indicators and Annual Investment Strategy.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**That Cabinet agree the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2005/06 and recommends adoption to Council on 23 February 2005.**

### **d) Human Resource Implications of Budget Decisions**

The Head of Human Resources presented a report which addressed the human resources implications of taking forward the decisions made by Cabinet at its last meeting on 12 January 2005. The report dealt specifically with the human resources implications of:

- the closure of the Tourist Information Centres from 1 October 2005. It was noted that discussions were ongoing with the Town Councils on whether they would be able to take over the services for their respective towns. In particular, discussions with Trowbridge Town Council were progressing well.
- Health Promotion – Minute no. 428 (a) above refers.
- Management Structure – the communications section would be amalgamated with the Performance and Scrutiny section. This re-organisation would result in the early retirement of a service manager, details of which were available under a separate agenda item due to the confidential details relating to an individual employee. Members were assured that this would not affect the staffing of the West Wilts Show.

It was stressed that everything was being done to secure the continuation of these services and to avoid redundancies. The Head of Human Resources confirmed that all appropriate human resources policies would be complied with, that consultations had taken place with the unions and affected staff and that the matter would be considered by the Local Joint Consultative Committee on 14 February 2005.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- i) **That Cabinet notes the position concerning the potential redundancy of the Tourist Information Centre and Health Promotion staff in the event that alternative provision of the services through transfer were not successful.**
- ii) **That the Cabinet approves the recommendations concerning early retirement set out in appendix 1 of the report presented.**

#### **e) Financial monitoring**

Councillor While presented a report which detailed the financial position for the period ending 31 December 2004.

##### **Capital**

Following a review of the capital programme, a net saving of £194,000 on this year's programme had been identified. In addition slippage of £1,104,000 into next year will also occur. The majority of this slippage related to grants for affordable housing, where the Council has committed funding towards schemes but the actual payment of the grant was dependant upon the housing associations building contract.

##### **Investment Income**

Investment income would be above the original estimate because of the reduction in cash required for the capital programme in 2004/05.

##### **Works Services**

The projected outturn was breakeven.

##### **General Fund**

The projected out-turn as at end December 2004 was forecasting a small underspend at the year end.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**That the report be noted.**

#### **429. REVIEW OF CAR PARKING CHARGES - DRAFT CAR PARK ORDER**

Cabinet had previously considered this matter at its meetings in November and December 2004. At the December meeting, it had been resolved subject to minor amendments, to formally publish the draft Car Parking Order and consider any final responses at this meeting.

The minor amendments were in respect of a reduction to £150 for residents permit and for Bradford on Avon to move to one hour free parking in selected car parks rather than all parks (free to 10am) were introduced into the draft Car Parking Order and this was published in the Wiltshire Times and London Gazette. Responses were sought by 8 February and issued to the 5 Town Councils.

Councillor Wiltshire presented a report which updated Members on the latest position. Only Westbury Town Council had responded - confirming its willingness to purchase a free hour in the High Street Car Park and requesting that the 2 hour maximum stay limit in the Westfield House Car Park be removed and long stay permitted. There was no adverse financial impact if Cabinet supported the latter.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That Cabinet approve the removal of the 2 hour maximum limit in Westfield House Car Park, Bradford on Avon.**
- (b) That the final Car Parking Order be advertised in time for implementation on 1 April 2005.**

Statement of Reasons for Key decisions	The final order is consistent with the authority's objectives and takes account of consultation responses.
Options considered and rejected	Those addressed at previous Cabinet meetings. Insistence on a 2 hour maximum stay at Westfield House Car Park.
Date of implementation	1 April 2005.

**430. RECYCLING PROGRESS AND PROPOSALS**

Councillor Wiltshire presented a report which updated Members on the progress being made with recycling and outlined proposals for future improvement and plans to extend the recycling scheme.

It was reported that currently, most properties in the five towns had black boxes for dry recyclables which were emptied every two weeks by Hills. Those properties in towns which did not have black boxes should have these over the next few weeks.

Green bins had been provided to properties in Melksham and Trowbridge where alternate weekly collections were made. Approximately 70% of people who had a black box, and 70% of people who had a green bin, were using them. Roughly 27% of domestic refuse from Melksham and Trowbridge was going into the green bins. Another 18% of domestic refuse is going into the black boxes and being recycled. Councillor Wiltshire reported that he was confident the Council would easily achieve its recycling targets with a projected 16% compared to a target of 14% by the end of the year.

Reference was made to the recent problem of excess cardboard in green bins. Cllr Bower asked if officers could explore the possibility of extending recycling into rural areas with the assistance of villages who were prepared to own their recycling sites.

In order to work towards meeting the recycling target of 21% for 2005/06, it was suggested green bins be provided to all properties in the three remaining towns – Bradford on Avon, Westbury and Warminster. The County Council had agreed to provide the capital funding for this. There should be no on-going revenue costs as Cleanaway are contracted to provide this service. There will be revenue costs in the first year to cover administration, customer care and communication and this had been allowed for in the draft budget.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Council provide green bins and move to alternate weekly collections for households in Bradford on Avon, Westbury and Warminster as soon as practical,**



**subject to the County Council providing the funding for the cost and distribution of the green bins.**

Statement of Reasons for Key decisions	To extend recycling to meet Government and Corporate Plan targets.
Options considered and rejected	No extension and greater extension of recycling.
Date of implementation	16 February 2005.

**431. HOPE NATURE CENTRE, SOUTHWICK – PART I**

**Open Forum Speakers: Mrs June Flemming  
Mrs Grace Hill, Mayor of Trowbridge Town Council**

Councillor Clark presented a report for Cabinet's consideration on the latest position on the Hope Nature Centre (HNC) project and sought Cabinet's decision on whether or not it was appropriate to reinstate the conditional offer of a lease of land.

Earlier in the meeting, Mrs June Fleming from the HNC had made an open forum presentation urging Cabinet to grant the lease.

The Council's offer of land at Southwick for the HNC project was withdrawn last September because after more than 2 years, the conditions set in January 2002 had not been met. The Council had also commissioned a Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment (LRNA) and wanted maximum flexibility when considering the future of Southwick Country Park.

The withdrawal of the offer focussed HNC's attention and although Cabinet resolved at its October 2004 meeting not to dispose of any open space land until the strategy arising from the LRNA was approved, HNC made representations to the Council to press the value and viability of their project.

Confidential financial information provided by HNC was also presented under a separate agenda item.

HNC's funders have indicated a willingness to reserve allocated funding until the end of this financial year and may reserve this for longer if an end date was provided. The LRNA should be complete by early April/May but policies arising from it were unlikely to be approved until later in the year.

Details of conditions which could be attached if Cabinet was minded to give it's approval were presented. However, Members considered that disposal of this land could not be approved in isolation from consideration of the outline proposals for Southwick Country Park which would arise from the LRNA. Therefore, notwithstanding the merits of the project, Cabinet was minded to defer consideration for this reason until May 2005 when all other options for the future of Southwick Country Park would be considered. An assurance was given that the report which would come back for Cabinet would include details of the bond required to cover reinstatement of the site and access road to green field status should the enterprise fail within a specified period.

## **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That having considered the report presented, the question of whether or not to reinstate the conditional offer of a lease of land at Southwick be deferred. This was to enable Cabinet to consider the matter at the same time as considering the options for the future of Southwick Country Park.
- (b) That the Chief Executive be requested to write to the Hope Nature Centre funders to advise them the of the timetable for considering the lease and to encourage the funders to remain engaged whilst the Council continued to actively consider this issue.

Statement of Reasons for Key decisions	The question of granting a lease for a term of 25 years constitutes a disposal.
Options considered and rejected	To grant a conditional lease
Date of implementation	Not appropriate – matter deferred

### **NON-KEY DECISIONS**

#### **432. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EXTERNAL OVERVIEW COMMITTEE – ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Hames, Chairman of the External Overview Committee presented that Committee's recommendations from it's meeting on 19 January 2005 concerning anti-social behaviour. He explained the background in how External Overview Committee had arrived at those recommendations.

#### **Recommendations:**

- (a) The Committee welcomes the appointment of the Community Safety Officer and Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Officer and notes the progress already being made by them.
- (b) Cabinet be asked to promote their work by ensuring that these officers have the necessary resources to enable them to work effectively throughout the authority.
- (c) All services be asked to ensure that they make an input to the Community Safety Strategy. Cabinet in developing this Strategy ensures that all relevant good practice is gained from other councils and partnerships.
- (d) That the Community Safety Officer working with Member Support ensure that all Members have access to examples of best practice in resolving anti-social behaviour issues in order to support Members in their ward work.

As part of this initiative, all Members to have an understanding of the Council's policy under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

- (e) That the Housing Portfolio Holder be asked to provide to all Members advice on lines of communication between the Council and all registered social housing landlords operating in the District on how the deal with anti-social behaviour issues.
- (f) That the Council supports and resources the development of the database recording incidences of anti-social behaviour to focus attention on 'hot spots' and facilitate targeted actions by appropriate Council services and partners.
- (g) To monitor the relationship between licensing decisions and anti-social behaviour issues on an ongoing basis.
- (h) To work together with the statutory and voluntary sectors who have dealings with youth related issues in order to identify preventative measures to tackle anti-social behaviour. To work together with our partners in order to achieve a better understanding of the causes of these issues.

Councillor Hames took the opportunity to remind Members about the Seminar Meeting of Council arranged for 15 February 2005 which would be examining the way the Council carried out it's overview and scrutiny role. The meeting would be asked if it wished to make any recommendations to improve this role to the Working Group on the Constitution.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the above recommendations of the External Overview Committee be adopted in principle, subject to the Community Safety Officer in consultation with partners examining the resource implications and practicalities of implementing them particularly recommendation (f). That the recommendations be implemented if there are no significant issues which need to be addressed, but that a report be presented to Cabinet in respect of any issues which do need to be addressed.**

**433. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE TROWBRIDGE AREA SEMINAR –  
SUPPORT FOR A PROJECT OFFICER**

Councillor Clark presented a recommendation from the Trowbridge Area Seminar from it's meeting on 17 January 2005 which asked Cabinet to consider supporting a Project Officer post for Trowbridge Community Area Future.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That Cabinet delegate responsibility for deciding the allocation of funds to Community Area Partnerships to the Portfolio Holder for policy co-ordination in consultation with the West Wiltshire Local Strategic Partnership.**
- (b) That Cabinet support in principle the use of the Local Public Service Agreement of funding for the support of Community Area Partnerships.**

**434. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME: SETTING UP OF POLICY PROJECT GROUPS**

Councillor Mounde presented a report which sought approval to establish 4 Policy Project Groups (PPGs) to progress the first Local Development Documents (LDDs) under the new planning system as requested by Council at its meeting on 5 January 2005.

The remit of the 4 Policy Project Groups would be to:

- (1) Finalise the Local Development Scheme, for submission to GOSW;
- (2) Progress a Statement of Community Involvement;
- (3) Progress a Residential Design Guide;
- (4) Progress a Trowbridge Town Centre Conservation Area Character Assessment.

Further PPGs would need to be set up in the future as other LDDs are produced.

Councillor Mounde explained that he would be contacting group leaders regarding membership of the PPG's.

**RESOLVED:**

**That 4 Policy Project Groups be established in accordance with the objectives, timetables and membership arrangements set out in Appendix 1 of the report presented.**

**435. PERFORMANCE MONITORING AS AT 21 DECEMBER 2004**

The Performance and Scrutiny Officer circulated papers to show amended performance figures following the receipt of information for 4 of the indicators which had been outstanding.

Councillor While presented a report on performance monitoring for the period as at 31 December 2004 which highlighted areas where performance was not expected to reach the targets set and the measures being taken to address this.

He explained that whilst the Council was meeting more local indicators, further improvement was required to meet the national indicators. This situation was being closely monitored by the Corporate Management Team and would be the subject of reports to Internal Overview Committee and Cabinet to consider reducing the number of targets being reported on in the future. It was noted that this matter had also been reported to the Internal Overview Committee on 2 February 2005.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) **That the report and the Council's overall position regarding the performance indicators and targets be noted.**
- (b) **That it be noted that a report outlining national performance indicator trends would be provided at a future meeting.**

**436. MONITORING REPORT ON HISTORIC BUILDINGS AT RISK**

Councillor Mounde presented a report as requested by Cabinet and it was recommended that in future such reports be presented to the Internal Overview Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the report be noted that in future, such reports be presented to the Internal Overview Committee.**

**437. FORWARD WORK PLAN**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Cabinet Forward Workplan as presented be approved.**

**Note: The following items were no longer required.**

**EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**HOPE NATURE CENTRE, SOUTHWICK – PART II**

**EARLY RETIREMENT**

The recommendations in this report were approved when considering the report on the Human Resources Implications of Budget Decisions – minute no. 428 (d) refers.

**Date of Next Cabinet Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of Cabinet would be held on Wednesday 9 March 2005 to be held in the Council Chamber, at the Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge at 7.00pm.

(7.05pm - 9.25pm)

These minutes were prepared by Yamina Rhouati, who can be contacted on 01225 770322 or email [yrhouati@westwiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:yrhouati@westwiltshire.gov.uk)