

City Area Committee

Planning & Licensing

Minutes

15 January 2004 6.00 pm
Alamein Suite,
City Hall
Salisbury

**These minutes should be kept for use by District Councillors
at the next Council meeting**

Present

Chairman: Councillor Ms S C Mallory

Elected Vice Chairman for the meeting: Councillor Mrs E A Chettleburgh

Councillors: K Cardy, J M Collier, D A Culver, B E Dalton, S R Fear, S J Howarth,
D J McCarthy, M Osment, P W L Sample, I R Tomes, Miss M A Tomlinson, J Walsh and Mrs S A
Warrander

Apologies: Councillors Mrs P Brown, P M Clegg, Mrs I M Evans and J R L Nettle and P Paisey.

MINUTES NOT REQUIRING COUNCIL APPROVAL

110. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None.

111. PUBLIC STATEMENT / QUESTION TIME

There were no statements by or questions from members of the public.

112. COUNCILLOR STATEMENT / QUESTION TIME

There were no statements by or questions from Councillors.

113. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared

114. MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2003 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

115. UPDATE ON COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT:

The Committee received a verbal update from the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor J Collier.

The main points made during this presentation by Councillor Collier were as follows:

The tour of the district that took place on 8th January 2004 and was a great success considering the weather. The City area was given a good exposure to the team and the visits to the FOYER project, the Park and Ride site and the refurbished council houses were extremely well received.

The briefing with the CPA team on the 9th January was as challenging as expected and the team has submitted a list of further information that it would like from the Council ahead of the weeklong inspection beginning on the 19th. It was noted that the work of officers has been extremely professional in gearing up for the inspection and everyone has combined efforts to ensure that Salisbury District Council is presented in its best possible light to the CPA team.

There followed a short question and answer session in which Members of the Committee raised the following points:

- Members of the Committee were disappointed that the proposed tour of the District did not incorporate visits to the western area. Members felt that it was important for the Inspectors to see the whole district, particularly the more rural parts and the AONB in order to fully understand the variety of issues facing the Council although they did appreciate the time constraints operating on the day.
- Councillor Fear wanted to alleviate any concerns that members may have following the fire at the FOYER project a few weeks earlier. He stressed that it was very small cooking fire and was extinguished quickly.

116. APPLICATION S/03/2446 – FULL APPLICATION - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND ERECTION OF 7 HOUSES AND THREE FLATS WITH ASSOCIATED PARKING AND ALTERATION OF EXISTING ACCESS AT 8 COLDHARBOUR LANE SALISBURY FOR FIELDFARE PROPERTIES LTD

The Chairman advised that significantly amended plans had been received from the applicant

RESOLVED – that the above application be **Deferred** to allow the officers time to consider the implications of the recently received amended plans, to consult on them and then report back to the committee once completed.

117. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S SOUTH WILTSHIRE AREA GRANTS SCHEME (SWAG)

The Committee considered the previously circulated report of the Portfolio Holder for Community & Housing together with the report considered at the Full Council meeting held on 8 December 2003. A short presentation was given by Councillor Cole-Morgan in which the following points were raised:

- That the £30,000 that is to be taken from the SWAG budget to fund a funding advisor was necessary for several reasons. The first of these is that many community groups are using the SWAG scheme as their first, and only, port of call for financial help. Therefore the current SWAG scheme is creating a dependency culture. The funding advisor could locate outside funding schemes and point many community groups in the direction of not only extra funds but also ways of developing their groups in line with codes of best practice. A separate post

of a funding advisor would mean that the Council could develop a strategic approach to giving advice on external funding streams which at the moment is lacking.

- Over 50% of the SWAG grants are not given in line with Salisbury District Council's core principles. Having 2 members from each area committee on the District wide review panel would ensure consistency in the approval of SWAG grants. The Government has issued codes of good practice when working with the voluntary sector which are likely to become legal requirements in the near future. If this is approved it would better enable those requirements to be met.
- Having a central panel will mean that officers only have to attend 3 meetings a year and not 12 thus saving officer time and administration costs.
- A central pot should be established of at least £10,000 for applications which have a district wide significance. At present the City Area Committee is dealing with many grants that have an importance for the whole district and this will alleviate the pressure on its budget.
- Granting more grants of smaller amounts would generate greater goodwill and therefore a ceiling of £2,500 for capital grants and £1,500 for projects and events should be implemented.

A discussion followed during which the following points were raised:

The recommendation to create a post for a funding advisor at the cost of £30,000 to be taken from the SWAG budget of £93,360 was considered first. The following points were raised:

- Some Councillors feel that Salisbury District Council should take responsibility for creating this post as it will help smaller charitable and voluntary groups who do not have the knowledge and expertise to locate and compete for external funds. This is an important service as there is much money which could be drawn into the district by someone who has the knowledge and the skills to do so. This person could also create a coherent funding policy which is lacking at present and is necessary for winning large external funds.
- The idea of funding the post from the SWAG budget is controversial as the funding advisor will take some time to begin to draw in the external funds, perhaps up to 18 months. This will mean that the SWAG applicants in the first year of the appointment will have £30,000 removed from the available funds for them without the returns that will be seen in later years.
- Some Councillors feel that it is more appropriate that this person be based at the Council for Voluntary Service rather than Salisbury District Council. However, others believe that as the Salisbury District Council will be funding the post they should have ownership.
- The problem of recruiting people of the appropriate level of expertise given the salaries offered in Salisbury was noted but it is felt that as the last few appointments have achieved the required standard there is no reason to think this will not be possible to achieve. It was stated that if a person of a high enough calibre were not forthcoming then no appointment would be made. This post will be for a two year pilot during which time the success of the funding advisor will be monitored both by the amount of extra money drawn in but also by the number of grant applications being received.
- It is felt by some Councillors that the funding advisor should not be under the auspices of SWAG as the grants are not intended to be large sums of money but small amounts intended to give community groups the kick start they need. It was added that there is a feeling that the Council was going down the "corporate" route and that this may lead to groups who request only small amounts being passed over in favour of bigger, more

visible projects. Councillors want an assurance that smaller groups will be encouraged and supported as much as bigger projects.

RESOLVED –

1. That in principle the City Area Committee supports the recommendation for the appointment of a funding advisor for SDC on a 2 year pilot basis.
2. That other sources of funding the post within the Council's budget be investigated before the discussion at Full Council
3. That the reasons for the recommendation of option 3 in the report be made clear in time for the debate at full council
4. That the funding advisor remit be expected to include support for smaller groups

The recommendation that a Central SWAG Review Panel be established comprising of 2 elected member representatives from each of the area committees and that this panel make recommendations to each of the area committees for final approval was considered next. The following points were raised:

- There is a concern amongst Councillors that the autonomy and individuality of the area committees is being undermined. It is felt that the elected members from each area are perfectly capable of identifying the needs of their particular community, especially as the sums of money being spent are relatively small. This aspect is one of the major strengths of the current system.
- There is a concern that the workload of the 8 members on the panel will go up considerably compared to the present system. It was acknowledged that the recommendations will mainly save officer time as the number of meetings will be cut from 12 to 3 a year. This will greatly reduce the costs of administering the system.
- At present only the City Area Committee spend the majority of its money in accordance with Council policy. As there will be only two members representing the committee that do spend the money in this way, the amount of money spent in accordance with Council policy might actually decrease.

RESOLVED - To support the proposal that a Central SWAG Review Panel is established comprising of 2 elected member representatives from each of the area committees. This panel will make recommendations to each of the area committees for final approval.

The recommendation that £10,000 of the existing SWAG budget (£93, 360) be allocated to applications that benefit residents from across the district of Salisbury and South Wiltshire was considered next. This new grant, to be called the Cultural Grant for South Wiltshire, is to be allocated in three tranches per year with the option of closing it after the money allocated in any year has been spent. It is also recommended that the members of the SWAG Review Panel consider applications to the Cultural Grant for South Wiltshire and make recommendations for funding allocations to the Full Council for approval. The following points were raised:

- It was noted that this should reduce the burden on the City Area Committee who are currently funding the majority of these applications.
- There are concerns about what would happen to any money that was unspent at the end of the third tranche. The idea of simply pouring this back into the SWAG budget for the last tranche appeared impracticable especially from a timing perspective and it is acknowledged that much greater thought would be needed to be given to this proposal if it was to work as intended.

- The Principal Community Development Officer present asked that any suggestions on how to administer grants that do not easily fit in any of the criteria be submitted to her.

RESOLVED – to support the proposal that:

1. That £10,000 of the existing SWAG budget (£93, 360) be allocated to applications that benefit residents from across the district of Salisbury and South Wiltshire. This new grant, to be called the Cultural Grant for South Wiltshire, is to be allocated in three tranches per year with the option of closing it after the money allocated in any year has been spent.
2. That the members of the SWAG Review Panel consider applications to the Cultural Grant for South Wiltshire making recommendations for funding allocations to the Full Council for approval.
3. That the portfolio holder reconsider the procedure for administering the central grant before the debate at Full Council.

The last proposal to be considered was that the SWAG awards be reduced from the current ceiling limit of £5,000 to a max of £2,500 for capital items and £1,000 for projects and events (with the exception of the village hall capital program see 3.8. of the report). The following points were raised:

- It was felt that the panel should be left with the flexibility of the current figures.

RESOLVED – the proposal to introduce the above limit is not supported and that they should remain unchanged.

It was also noted by the Committee that some form of monitoring of SWAG and cultural grants must be put in place and reported to Councillors.

The meeting closed at 20.15 hrs