

## **POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a MEETING held at COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE on TUESDAY 19th SEPTEMBER, 2000.

**PRESENT:** Mr PF Chalke (Chairman), Mr RG Catton, Mr PR Davis, Mr GJM Downes, Mr JNB Irving, Mr RT Rogers, Mr PWL Sample, Mrs JBP Savage, Mrs JA Scott, Mrs JH Seager, Mrs CA Soden, Mr NSE Westbrook.

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126. **Membership** The Director of Corporate Services reported the membership of the meeting incorporating any changes since the previous meeting.

127. **Apologies** Apologies for absence were received from Mr PCB Coleman.

128. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

*Resolved: To confirm and sign the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2000.*

129. **Chairman's Announcements**

**Best Value: District Audit Assessment** The Chairman announced that the District Auditor had analysed the performance of all classes of Councils in preparing for Best Value, and in particular, in preparing their Performance Plans. Each Council had been assessed against seven criteria. The County Council had scored highly with every one of the seven criteria. Top marks were scored against three criteria – content of our Performance Plan, selection of Best Value Reviews, and consultation.

The Chairman said that this was a tremendous start, and looked forward to building on this in the future. He added that this was a tribute to the working of all those who had been involved and thanked them for their efforts.

130. **Urgent Items** The Chairman was of the opinion that the following matter which had arisen after the agenda had been prepared, was of major importance and required discussion before the next meeting of the Committee. The Chairman brought this matter forward on the agenda.

**The Fuel Shortage: An Interim Report** The Chief Executive presented a report describing the Council's response, in association with other agencies, to the fuel shortage.

The Chairman and other members commented that the County Council had responded positively and promptly to the emergency. Members thanked officers for all they had done.

*Resolved: To note the position.*

131. **Financial Plan 2003-2004** On considering a report by the County Treasurer,

Resolved:

- (1) *To note the information in the County Treasurer's report.*
- (2) *To note the recommendation of the Corporate Services Sub-Committee on the central funding of some costs charged to WDS and to consider this further as the budget cycle proceeds and further information becomes available about the future business plans of WDS.*
- (3) *To agree the proposals in the report for linking service and financial planning over more than one year, to build-on the Council's exemplary record in performance planning.*
- (4) *To note with concern the report to the Education Committee and the recommendation by the Social Services Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2000, on their projected over-spending 2000-01, see minute numbers 136(1) and (2) below.*
- (5) *To inform those committees that it is very unlikely that additional resources will be available to fund any over-spending in 2000-01, given the low level of the Council's balances.*
- (6) *To ask committees to consider, at their December meetings, budgets and performance plans on the basis of Appendix C to the report, so that the benefits for service standards of additional investment can be fully assessed.*
- (7) *To agree that the low increases proposed for 2001-02, particularly for the Environment and Transport and Social Services Committees, would probably lead to unacceptable service standards, when viewed against a council tax increase of less than 2%.*
- (8) *To note further that:*
  - *a council tax increase of just over 4% would provide additional spending for services of £2.5 million and that this should be a matter for consideration by the County Council next February; and,*
  - *in previous years the Revenue Support Grant settlement for Wiltshire had proved to be better than estimated and that this may allow some additional flexibility.*
- (9)
  - (i) *To note with concern that the proposed Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) adjustment for the transfer of funding for adult education to Learning and Skills Councils would disadvantage schools in authorities which are spending less than the national SSA for adult education and would prevent those authorities from increasing schools budgets by the amount of the increase in their education SSA.*
  - (ii) *To ask the LGA to raise these concerns with Ministers.*

132. **Local Government Act 2000: Standards Working Party** On considering a report by the Chief Executive,

Resolved:

- (1) *To establish a Standards Panel to advise the County Council about the various provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 relating to the conduct of Councillors and officers, so that preliminary work can be undertaken and advice drawn up, for the benefit particularly of the incoming Council in May 2001.*
- (2) *To appoint the following persons to serve on the Panel:*
  - *Mr NA Smith (Chairman) – Former County Secretary & Solicitor*
  - *Mr O Norgaard – Managing Director of Lyons Seafoods Ltd*
  - *Nominee of the Bishop of Salisbury*
- (3) *To ask the Panel to include within its immediate tasks the consideration of the report by the Ombudsman dated 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2000, and to provide advice for the County Council on that report at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2000.*

(Note: Mr PR Davis, Mr JNB Irving, Mr PWL Sample and Mr NSE Westbrook voted against this resolution and asked that their votes be recorded.)

133. **A Community Legal Service Partnership in Wiltshire** On considering a report by the Chief Executive,

Resolved: *To endorse the resolution of the Wiltshire Local Government Association, to support the formation of a Community Legal Service Partnership across Wiltshire.*

134. **The Local Government Pension Fund: Power to Admit Employees of Other Bodies** (Min.116(3)/00) At its last meeting the Committee agreed to admit the Orders of St John Trust Care Homes to the County Pension Fund and asked the County Treasurer to report back on extending this arrangement to all of the Trust's employees in the transferred homes.

The County Treasurer reported that he had heard from the Trust that it had its own pension scheme which would be available to new employees in the transferring homes.

Resolved: *To note the position.*

135. **Statement of Accounts 1999/2000** On considering a report by the County Treasurer,

Resolved: *To approve the Statement of Accounts for 1999-2000 for submission to the District Auditor.*

136. **Annual Treasury Report 1999/2000** On receiving a report by the County Treasurer,

Resolved:

- (1) *To note the report.*
- (2) *To compliment the County Treasurer for his prudent investment policy.*

137. **Budgetary Control Statement for July 2000** On receiving a report by the County Treasurer,

Resolved: *To note the report.*

138. (1) **Education Committee: Revenue Budget 2000/01** The following recommendation from the Education Committee of 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2000, and a report by the Chief Education Officer to have been considered at the postponed meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2000 was dealt with at minute number 131(4) above.

'To recommend the Policy & Resources Committee to consider rolling forward an amount up to £200,000 in respect of central services relating to schools into the 2001/02 financial year.'

- (2) **Social Services Committees**

- (i) Revenue Budget Review of 2000-01 The following recommendation from the Social Services Committee of 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2000, was dealt with at minute number 131(4) above.

'To note the potential overspend of £1.550m on the 2000-01 budget and the actions being taken to limit its size and to notify the Policy and Resources Committee of the position.'

- (ii) Mental Health Supplementary Credit Approval On considering the following recommendation from the Social Services Committee of 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2000, and a report by the Director of Social Services,

'To request the Policy & Resources Committee to approve a supplementary capital estimate of £125,000 to be financed by Supplementary Credit Approval to extend the Community Mental Health Team base in Wilton.'

Resolved: *To approve the recommendation of the Social Services Committee.*

139. **Emergency Sub-Committee**

Resolved: *To receive the minutes of the Sub-Committee meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2000.*

140. **Corporate Services Sub-Committee**

Resolved: *To receive the minutes of the Sub-Committee meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2000.*

(Note: The recommendation at Minute No.49 was dealt with under Minute No. 131(2) above.)

141. **Policy & Resources and Environment & Transport Joint Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

Resolved: *To receive the minutes of the Sub-Committee meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2000.*

142. **Electoral Pilot Schemes** It was reported that the Home Office had invited local authorities to submit applications to run electoral pilot schemes in 2001. The aim of the pilot schemes was to assess innovations aimed at increasing voter turnout.

The Management of Change Working Party on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2000, heard details of the pilot schemes for all postal voting in four wards in Swindon in May, 2000. The net cost of the experiment was £21,000 and the extra votes the pilot attracted cost over £8 each. The Working Party also heard that an investment in pilot schemes would be wasted if the date of the County Council elections in 2001 was the same as the Parliamentary election. The Working Party was not inclined to suggest that the County Council should seek to introduce pilot schemes in 2001.

Resolved: *To take no further action to introduce electoral pilot schemes in 2001.*

142. **People's Voice Questionnaire: November 2000** On considering a report by the Director of Corporate Services,

Resolved:

(1) *To note:*

(i) *the report.*

(ii) *that results of this important survey would be ready by January 2001.*

(iii) *that the results should feed into the Best Value process and be a valuable indication of how the County is progressing.*

(2) *To ask officers to speak with the Fire Authority regarding the shared use of the questionnaire.*

143. **Kennet Community Health Partnership** On report,

Resolved: *To agree the establishment of the Partnership along the lines proposed in the terms of reference and to appoint Mr D Lay and Mrs P Rugg to serve on the committee.*

#### 144. **Members' Allowances**

(1) **Community Safety** On report,

*Resolved: To approve that the members detailed below attend the county wide conference to be held on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2000 at the Corn Exchange, Devizes and to agree that attendance should be an approved duty for the purposes of attendance, travelling and subsistence allowances.*

*Mr RJ Baddeley  
Mrs C Crisp  
Mr CP Humphries  
Mrs VCS Landell Mills*

*Mrs. M. Taylor  
Mrs I Throp  
Mrs JBP Savage  
Mrs JM Wood*

(2) **Review of Scrutiny Arrangements** On report,

*Resolved: To agree that attendance by members at interviews held during September, October and November 2000 with Frances Taylor and Dr. Stephanie Snape from the University of Birmingham as part of the review of the County Council's scrutiny arrangements, be an approved duty for the purposes of attendance, travelling and subsistence allowances.*

(3) **CCN Seminar: Best Value** On report,

*Resolved: To nominate a member of each political group to attend this one day seminar on Best Value to be held on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2000 in London and approve that attendance at this seminar be an approved duty for the purpose of attendance , travel and subsistence allowances.*

(Duration of meeting: 10.30am – 11.40am)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Lee Gallagher, of the Committee Services Unit, direct line (01225) 713058.

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