

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a MEETING held at COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE on 31st OCTOBER, 2000.

PRESENT: Mr. P.F. Chalke (Chairman), Mr. R.G. Catton, Mr. P.C.B. Coleman, Mrs. C. Crisp, Mr. P.R. Davis, Mr. J.N.B. Irving, Mr. J.P. Johnson, Mr. P.W.L. Sample, Mrs. J.A. Scott, Mrs. J.H. Seager, Mrs. C.A. Soden and Mr. N.S.E. Westbrook.

Mr. P.G. Allnatt and Mrs. V.C.S. Landell Mills also attended the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 26.

150. **Membership Changes** The Director of Corporate Services reported the membership of the Committee, incorporating any changes since the previous meeting.

151. **Apologies** Apologies for absence were received from Mr RT Rogers.

152. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Resolved: To confirm and sign the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 17th October, 2000.

153. **Chairman's Announcements**

- (1) **PFI Project: Contract Signing** The Chairman said he was delighted to confirm that the PFI contract and certificates were signed last Friday, 27th October. This marked the end of some difficult and protracted negotiations. Nevertheless, the contract which had been signed represented excellent value for Wiltshire.

The Chairman said he believed this to be the biggest schools PFI in England and would bring the County something which it could not have imagined three or five years ago – three new secondary schools, for children in Malmesbury, Wootton Bassett and Chippenham, maintained to high standards for thirty years.

The Chairman thanked the Governing Bodies of the three schools involved and individual staff for their patience, commitment and work in bringing this project to a satisfactory conclusion.

- (2) **Severe Weather Conditions** The Chairman informed the Committee that the County's Emergency Planning Team had been working with the emergency services to minimise the effect of the current severe weather.

Bradford on Avon had been badly affected, and overnight a rest centre had been maintained for approximately 55 people who were unable to spend the night at home. 37 schools were closed on Monday, but almost all were open today.

The Chairman expressed the Committee's sympathy for those affected in the County, and thanked Council staff who contributed to the emergency response.

- (3) Wharfside International Heritage Centre The Chairman announced that the managing board of the Wharfside International Heritage Centre had held its first meeting and he had been greatly encouraged by the support of all partners.

154. **Best Value Performance Plan March 2000: Update on Progress** On considering a report by the Chief Executive,

Resolved:

- (1) *To note the information contained in the report.*
- (2) *To request information in the future on the Market Towns bid for Regional Development Agency funding.*
- (3) *To agree that information on the County Council's Best Value Performance Plan should be provided in July (for the previous year) and January (for the first six months and an estimate of the likely position at the year end).*

155. **The Government's Invest to Save Budget: Outcome of the Sift of Expressions of Interest** On considering a report by the Director of Corporate Services,

Resolved:

- (1) *To welcome the news that two Wiltshire bids are through to the formal bidding stage.*
- (2) *To agree to release a press release and to brief the relevant elected members*
- (3) *To agree that project team members should give priority in their work programmes to completing the formal bids by 17th November, 2000.*
- (4) *To build the match funding requirements into the budget for 2001/2 and beyond.*
- (5) *To agree that the lessons from the project about joint bidding for external funding be put into a paper for this Committee at a later date.*

156. **Modernising Local Government Finance: A Green Paper** The County Treasurer presented a report inviting the Committee to comment on the Green Paper outlining the Government's proposals on the future funding of local government.

Resolved: *To ask the County Treasurer and Chief Executive, after consultation with the Group Leaders, to prepare a response to the Government's Green Paper, based on the views expressed at the meeting.*

157. **Schools Rollovers and Deficit Budgets** On considering a report by the County Treasurer,

Resolved:

- (1) *To note the arrangements for dealing with schools in deficit and the potential effect on the County Council's overall reserves.*

- (2) *To ask the Education Committee to consider the position.*

158. Budget Monitoring:

- (1) **Revenue Budget Monitoring Statement: August 2000** On considering a report by the County Treasurer,

Resolved:

- (1) *To note the projected spending for 2000/01, based on August figures.*
- (2) *approve the transfer of cumulative savings to March 2001 on the leased car scheme to balances.*
- (3) *To approve the action being taken to achieve savings on the capital programme for 2000-01.*

- (2) **Budgetary Control Statement: September 2000** On considering a report by the County Treasurer,

Resolved: *To note the report.*

- 159. Interim Treasury Report – 2000/01 (Period 2)** On considering a report by the County Treasurer,

Resolved: *To note the report.*

- 160. Magistrates' Courts Committee (MCC) (Min.No.115/00)** The County Treasurer reported that under his delegated powers, he had approved a supplementary capital estimate of £6,070 for the County Council's share of the Magistrates' Courts Committee capital expenditure on computers and related equipment.

Resolved: *To note the action of the County Treasurer.*

- 161. Debt Monitoring** On considering a report by the County Treasurer,

Resolved: *To note:*

- (1) *the monitoring arrangements and debt recovery performance of the corporate income system;*
- (2) *the information from WDS;*
- (3) *the write-offs in the six months to 30th September, 2000 of £34,850.*

- 162. Corporate Services Sub-Committee**

Resolved: *To receive the minutes (summary) of the meeting held on 10th October, 2000.*

163. **Investment Sub-Committee**

Resolved: *To receive the minutes (summary) of the meeting held on 23rd October, 2000.*

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

Resolved:

- (1) To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 20th September, 2000.*
- (2) To agree the recommendations of the Sub-Committee set out at Minute No.26 in connection with Capital Programme Slippage, 1999/2000.*
- (3) To agree in principle the recommendations of the Sub-Committee set out at Minute No.31 in connection with Resources for Scrutiny but to defer final consideration until the receipt of the INLOGOV report into the County Council's scrutiny arrangements.*

165. **Meeting Best Value Performance Indicator 1 – To Adopt a Local Agenda 21 Plan by 31st December, 2000** On considering a report by the Director of Environmental Services,

Resolved:

- (1) To note the contents of the report.*
- (2) To acknowledge the importance of Local Agenda 21 in the development of community strategies.*
- (3) To support the directions proposed in the report to progress Local Agenda 21.*

166. **E-Local Government in Wiltshire** The Committee received a report by the Chief Executive and the recommendations of the Policy & Resources and Environment & Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the continuing development on internal ICT systems and the Focus Project on e-mail and internet access.*
- (2) To support and facilitate existing and planned developments.*
- (3) To agree that officers continue discussions with Somerset County Council and the South West Counties Joint E-Strategy Project but to delay decisions about committing resources until the outcome of the Invest to Save bids are known in December 2000.*
- (4) To explore in more detail the suggested structure model for e-government development.*

- (5) *To appoint Mr. D. Lay to work with an officer group to develop these proposals further.*
- (6) *To ask that information point initiatives in the County are added to the list of current developments included in the report.*
- (7) *To fully investigate partnership working arrangements with other local authorities (e.g. Liverpool City Council and the Isle of Wight Council) and public sector organisations about developing E-Government Strategy.*

167. Wiltshire Market Towns Project: Funding from Regional Development Agency
On considering a report by the Director of Corporate Services,

Resolved:

- (1) *To note the progress on the Wiltshire Market Towns Project in 2000/1 and that a decision was still awaited on whether the pilot town would be Devizes or Melksham.*
- (2) *To support the preparation of market town projects between October 2000 and January 2001, in co-operating with our partners, for implementation in 2001/2.*
- (3) *To support the County Council's commitment to match funding in 2001/2 to help draw in significant external funding from the Regional Development Agency.*
- (4) *To encourage a continuing dialogue with the RDA as their funding streams expand.*

168. The Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund: Consultation Paper On considering a report by the Director of Corporate Services,

Resolved:

- (1) *To express disappointment that the Government's consultation proposals would not allow Wiltshire residents to benefit from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.*
- (2) *To regret that the Renewal Fund is a further Government specific grant that should properly be included in a block grant and the RSG settlement.*

169. Proposed New Scheme of Members' Allowances: Chairman of the Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority

Resolved: *To agree that the post of Chairman of the Joint Fire Authority should be the subject of a Special Responsibility Allowance provided that:-*

- (a) *The cost of the allowance is met by whichever authority (Wiltshire or Swindon) holds the Chairmanship; and*

- (b) *The allowance is set at a level equivalent to that paid by either authority to the Chairmen of their respective Scrutiny Committees.*

170. **Wiltshire Pension Fund Administration** On considering a report by the County Treasurer and the views of the Investment Sub-Committee,

Resolved: *To agree:*

- (1) *The Investment Sub-Committee is re-named the Wiltshire Pension Fund Sub-Committee.*
- (2) *The membership of the Wiltshire Pension Fund Sub-Committee be five County Councillors, two Swindon Borough Councillors and one District Councillor, with two non-voting employee representatives.*
- (3) *The existing delegation to the Policy & Resources Committee, number 12.18, be amended to read: "To exercise the functions of the County Council **as an employing body** under the Local Government Superannuation Acts and Regulations and to deal with all matters thereto."*
- (4) *The Wiltshire Pension Fund Sub-Committee be delegated with the authority: "To exercise the functions of the County Council as administering authority under the Local Government Superannuation Acts and Regulations and to deal with all matters relating thereto."*
- (5) *NPI be appointed as a provider of a group Additional Voluntary Contribution scheme of contributors to the Wiltshire Pension Fund, and that the County Treasurer be authorised to sign the necessary Application Form on behalf of the County Council.*

171. **Local Government Improvement Project**

Resolved: *To participate in the Local Government Improvement Programme in 2001 at a cost of £22,500.*

172. **Appointment of Secretary and Treasurer to the Probation Committee**

Resolved: *To agree to Mr. D. Chalker and Mr. P. Smith acting as Treasurer and Secretary respectively to the Probation Committee for a period of one year in the first instance from 1st April, 2001.*

(Note: Mr Chalker also acts as Treasurer to the Magistrates' Courts Committee and the Police Authority.)

(Duration of meeting: 10.30am – 12.55 p.m.)

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

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