

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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

PRESENT: Mr. P.F. Chalke (Chairman), Mr. P.G. Allnatt, Mrs. N.S. Bryant, Mrs. C. Crisp, Mr. P.R. Davis, Miss M.F. de Rhé-Philipe, Mr. R.T. Rogers, Mr. P.W.L. Sample, Mrs. J.H. Seager, Mrs. C.A. Soden, Mr. N.S.E. Westbrook and Mr. K.C. Wren.

Mr. P.C.B. Coleman and Mr. J.N.B. Irving were also present in accordance with Standing Order 26.

179. **Membership** The Director of Corporate Services reported the membership of the Committee, incorporating any changes since the last meeting.

180. **Minutes of Last Meeting**

Resolved: To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21st November, 2000.

181. **New Political Structures: Public Consultation** The Director of Corporate Services presented a report about the public consultation arrangements on the new political arrangements.

Resolved:

- (1) To authorise officers to plan consultation on the new political structures during February, March and April 2001.*
- (2) To consult at a level consistent with advice received from the DETR.*
- (3) To note that funding has yet to be identified for this additional work.*
- (4) To ask for a further report following advice from the DETR on the consultation arrangements and identifying the source of funding for this additional work.*
- (5) To record the Authority's disappointment that whilst the Government is forcing authorities to adopt new political management structures, no additional funding is being made available to implement them.*

182. **The County Council's Response to the Macpherson Report** The Committee received a report by Faysal Mikdadi, Chairman of the inter-departmental working group established to examine the issues and implications for the County Council of the Macpherson Report.

Resolved:

- (1) *To approve the statement of the County Council's commitment to Anti-Racist Practices attached as Appendix A to these Minutes.*
- (2) *To distribute the statement widely.*
- (3) *To note the action plan and timescale described in paragraph 3 of the report.*

183. **Budgetary Control Statement for October 2000** The Committee received the budgetary control statement for October 2000.

Resolved: *To note the report.*

184. **Budget 2000/01**

- (1) **Restoring Review Balances from Capital Resources** The Committee received a report by the County Treasurer on the action taken to replenish balances by curtailing or deferring uncommitted capital spending in the current year.

Resolved: *To note the action taken and to thank the County Treasurer for responding so promptly.*

- (2) **County Fund Balances** On considering a report by the County Treasurer,

Resolved: *To note the estimated balances at 31st March, 2001 and the action being taken to review balances.*

185. **Policy & Resources Revenue Budget 2001/02** The Committee received a joint report by the County Treasurer, Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Services.

Resolved:

- (1) *To note the levies on the County Council from outside bodies.*
- (2) *To approve a budget for 2001/02 of £25.233 million.*
- (3) *To approve the removal of the budget for the Child Care Voucher Scheme.*

186. **The Government's Invest to Save Budget: Submission of Bid from the Wiltshire and Swindon "Improved Access Project"** On considering a report by the County Treasurer,

Resolved:

- (1) *To note progress in submitting the two bids under the Invest to Save Budget.*
- (2) *To support a lobbying strategy on behalf of the two bids.*

187. **North Wiltshire Schools PFI: Land Acquisitions** It was reported, in accordance with Standing Orders, that the County Treasurer had approved an emergency supplementary capital estimate of £407,922 in 2000/01 for the purchase of two parcels of land for additional playing fields for the new schools at Wootton Bassett and Malmesbury.

Resolved: *To note the action taken by the County Treasurer.*

188. **Education Committee:**

- (1) **Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy and Action Plan: Progress Report** On considering recommendations from the meetings of the Education Committee on 3rd November and 15th December, 2000, and reports by the Chief Education Officer,

Resolved:

- (1) *To endorse the revised ICT Action Plan and timescale for the schools' e-mail project as agreed by the Education Committee on 15th December, 2000;*
- (2) *To note the revised budgetary implications.*

- (2) **The Wiltshire Library Plan 2000** On considering the following recommendation from the Education Committee and a report by the Chief Education Officer,

“To recommend that an additional £300,000 be added to the Library Service’s stockfund in 2001/2002 to meet the Community Services Sub-Committee’s highest priority and the National Library Standard.”

Resolved:

- (1) *To note the recommendation and to consider it further along with other budget issues early in the New Year.*
- (2) *To ask the Chief Education Officer to report to the Community Services Sub-Committee on the funding requirements of the Library Service’s stockfund.*
- (3) **Integrating Education & Libraries and Children & Families Services** The Committee received a joint report by the Chief Education Officer and Director of Social Services which had been considered by the Social Services and Education Committees on 14th and 15th December, 2000.

Resolved: To note the decision of the two Committees to support in principle the integration of the Children & Families Services with the Education & Libraries Service.

189. **Social Services Committee: Creation of Care Trusts** On considering a report by the Director of Social Services and the decisions of the Social Services Committee on 14th December, 2000.

Resolved: To note the decision of the Committee to support in principle the establishment of three Care Trusts in Wiltshire from April 2003.

190. **Corporate Services Sub-Committee**

Resolved: To receive the minutes of the Sub-Committee meetings held on 7th November and 7th December, 2000.

Wiltshire Direct Services: Options Appraisal On considering a recommendation arising from the meeting held on 7th December, 2000, a report by the Director of Corporate Services, a joint report containing exempt information and a letter dated the 18th December, 2000 from the TGWU,

Resolved:

- (1) To agree the conclusions set out in paragraphs 18.1 to 18.4 of the options appraisal.*
- (2) To commence the externalisation of WDS as quickly as possible, consistent with achieving Best Value.*
- (3) To recommend the County Council to establish a Steering Sub-Committee of the Policy & Resources Committee to oversee the externalisation of WDS with the following terms of reference:*

“To set objectives and agree the detailed timetable and mechanisms for engaging stakeholders.”

- (4) Subject to the County Council agreeing to set up such a Sub-Committee:*
 - (a) to agree that membership of the Steering Sub-Committee be 7 members as follows:-*

Conservative (4)

Liberal Democrat (2)

Labour (1)

Mr. R. Catton

To be advised

To be advised

Mrs. N. Bryant

Mr. P.F. Chalke

Mrs. J.A. Scott

- (b) to appoint Mr. Chalke as Chairman and Mrs. Bryant as Vice-Chairman respectively of the Sub-Committee.*

- (5) *To agree that, until the County Council meets to consider the recommendation in (3) above, the proposed Sub-Committee be established as a Working Party.*
- (6) *To require the Director of WDS to take further action to control financial performance and make appropriate changes to managerial roles and responsibilities.*
- (7) *To require further and regular reports on financial performance to be submitted.*
- (8) *To note the comments of the District Auditor appended to the Minutes of the Corporate Services Sub-Committee (7th December, 2000) on the options appraisal report and ensure that the actions taken are consistent with these comments.*
- (9) *To disestablish the Working Party on WDS.*

(Note: Mr. P.G. Allnatt, Mr. P.R. Davis, Mr. R.T. Rogers, Mr. P.W.L. Sample and Mr. N.S.E. Westbrook dissented from this resolution and asked that their dissenting votes be recorded.)

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

Resolved: *To receive the minutes of the Sub-Committee meetings held on 27th October, and 24th November, 2000.*

192. **Motion by Mr. P.G. Allnatt: North Wiltshire Schools PFI Project** On considering the following motion by Mr. P.G. Allnatt, which was referred to this Committee for consideration and report by the County Council on 21st November, 2000:-

- “(i) Council congratulates and thanks the officers and governing bodies for their efforts.
- (ii) Thanks the Leader of the Council for finally accepting that the process was a “curate’s egg” and has accepted Councillor Allnatt’s advice.
- (iii) Nevertheless calls for a review by the Policy & Resources and Environment & Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee into the whole process and, in particular, the causes of the delay in signing the contract from May to October, and any additional costs incurred as a result.”

Resolved: *In response to Mr. Allnatt’s motion to inform the County Council as follows:-*

- (1) *To congratulate and thank officers and governing bodies for their efforts.*
- (2) *To thank the Leader of the Council for his efforts in securing such a satisfactory outcome.*

- (3) *To record its thanks to the officers for their hard work in ensuring an outstanding project for Wiltshire.*

193. **Motion by Mr. P.G. Allnatt: Bacon** At County Council on 21st November, 2000, Mr. P.G. Allnatt moved the following motion which was referred to this Committee for consideration and report:-

“In view of the continuing plight in Wiltshire of the pig industry, the County Council confirms that it recognises the quality and value of local produce and recognises that local bacon is purchased for consumption in County Council premises where that represents value for money.”

On considering a report by the Director of Corporate Services,

Resolved: *In response to Mr Allnatt’s motion:-*

- (1) *To remind the County Council of the decision taken on 23rd November, 1999.*

“ To support the policy adopted by the schools meals service of buying local produce, especially meat . . . ”

- (2) *To note that within the constraints of Section 17 of the Local Government Act 1988 British bacon is purchased whenever possible.”*

- (3) *To ensure that the above views of the County Council are conveyed to all interested parties during future discussions about the externalisation of WDS.*

(Note:

- (1) Mrs. N.S. Bryant declared a pecuniary interest in this item. She left the room and took no part in the discussion.
- (2) Mr. J.N.B. Irving declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item as he kept pigs as pets. He did not consider his interest to be clear and substantial and remained in the room.)

194. **A Community Strategy for Wiltshire** On considering a report by the Director of Corporate Services,

Resolved:

- (1) *To adopt the proposals in paragraph 29 of the report as the principles to guide the County Council’s role and approach towards its duty to develop a community strategy.*

- (2) *To adopt paragraph 31 as the steps to be taken towards developing the community strategy.*

195. **National Care Standards Commission** The Director of Corporate Services presented a report informing the Committee of the arrangements to transfer the Registration & Inspection Unit to the National Care Standards Commission.

Resolved: To note the report.

196. **Environmental/Local Agenda 21 Statement** On considering a report by the Director of Environmental Services,

Resolved: To endorse the Environmental/Local Agenda 21 Statement attached to the report as the County Council's submission to the DETR.

197. **William "Doc" Couch Trust** The Committee received a joint report by the County Treasurer and the Solicitor to the County Council and the views of the Education and Social Services Committees.

Resolved:

- (1) *To advise the executors of the donor's estate of the County Council's gratitude in receiving such a generous endowment.*
- (2) *To make application to the Charity Commission for a Scheme to appoint the County Council as trustee of the William "Doc" Couch Trust.*
- (3) *To ask that a further report dealing with the arrangements for managing and administering the Trust is brought forward upon completion of the Scheme.*
- (4) *To ask that a report be brought to the Policy & Resources Committee and the Education Committee on future arrangements for the administration of County Council Trust Funds generally.*

198. **Exclusion of the Public**

Resolved: To agree that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in Number 199 because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 9 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act.

199. **Corporate ICT Contract from April 2001** On considering a confidential report by the County Treasurer,

Resolved: To confirm that the general delegated authority to Chief Officers to enter into contracts covers the contract for the Council's Corporate ICT support from 1st April, 2001.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 a.m. to 12.55 p.m.)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Stuart Smith, of the Committee Services Unit, direct line (01225) 713054.

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22/12