

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT (1)

Meeting: **Council**
Place: **Council Chamber - County Hall, Trowbridge BA14 8JN**
Date: **Tuesday 25 February 2014**
Time: **10.30 am**

The Agenda for the above meeting was published on Monday 17 February 2014. Additional documents and updates are now available and are attached to this Agenda Supplement.

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Yamina Rhouati of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 718024 or email Yamina.Rhouati@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications on direct lines (01225)713114/713115. This Agenda and all the documents referred to within it are available on the Council's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk

5 **Petitions** (*Pages 1 - 2*)

A petition with approximately 2,200 signatories will be presented by Mr Chris Baker entitled '*Stop the proposed cuts to youth services*'.

BUDGET 2014/15

7 **Wiltshire Council Financial Plan 2014/15** (*Pages 3 - 8*)

1) To advise Council of recent legislation which requires recorded votes being taken on the setting of the budget and council tax
(*Pages 3 - 4*)

2) Details of the Budget Process (*Pages 5 - 8*)

7d) **Financial Plan - Report by Michael Hudson, Associate Director - Finance and S.151 officer** (*Pages 9 - 26*)

1) Details of amendments likely to be moved by Cllr Jon Hubbard, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group (*Pages 9 - 10*)

- 2) Budget consultation Feedback – Budget consultation day on 10 February (*Pages 11 - 18*) and meeting between Group Leaders and Trade Unions/NNDR (Non-domestic Rate) payers on 6 February. (*Pages 19 - 26*)

7f) **Proposed Council Tax Resolution**

Correction at page 148 of the Summons – Paragraph C to read:

C) Exclude only those with savings of more than £10,000 from the scheme.

COUNCILLORS' MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

10 **Councillors' Questions** (*Pages 27 - 44*)

Details of questions received from Councillors Helen Osborn, Jon Hubbard, Chris Caswill and Simon Killane and written responses where available.

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 21 February 2014

Wiltshire Council

Council

25 February 2014

Petition

'Stop the proposed cuts to youth services'

A petition organised by Mr Glynn Root will be presented by Mr Chris Baker with approximately 2,200 signatories on the above matter.

The petition states as follows:

'Stop the proposed cuts to youth services. The cuts that you propose will simply be eaten up in the policing of young people with no facilities to direct their energy into something positive'.

'Wiltshire Council are planning to cut 24 youth services and up to 144 youth workers. These cuts include losing Bass Connection based at Grosvenor House in Salisbury. This service has provided the opportunity for thousands of young people to not only build on their music skills but provide invaluable support and mentoring not available elsewhere'.

This page is intentionally left blank

Wiltshire Council

Council

25 February 2014

**Recorded Voting – Decisions on Budget and Council Tax
The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment)
Regulations 2014**

This is to advise Council of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 which come into force on 25 February 2014. The Regulations require principal councils to hold recorded votes when determining levels of expenditure on services and the level of council tax to be levied for their area.

This in effect means that all councils must adopt the practice of recording in the minutes of the meeting how each member present voted on any decisions relating to the budget and council tax, not only on the substantive motions but also on any amendments voted on these items. The Government has introduced the Regulations it says, to enhance transparency and democratic accountability. Consequently, all votes on decisions concerning the budget and setting of council tax at the Council meeting on 25 February will be by way of recorded voting.

Paragraph 16.3 of Part 2 of the constitution, empowers the Monitoring Officer to amend the constitution to effect changes in the law. Under this provision, the Monitoring Officer will be making the following change to the constitution:

Part 4 – Council Procedure Rules

Recorded vote

136. With the exception of the following paragraph, if 10 Councillors (or a quarter of the members of a committee) present at the meeting demand it, the names for and against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting will be ~~taken down in writing and entered~~ recorded in the minutes. A demand for a recorded vote will override a demand for a ballot.

To add:

Recorded votes shall be taken on all decisions in respect of setting the authority's budget and determining the level of council tax to be levied. The names for and against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting on these matters will be recorded into the minutes.

Councillor Julian Johnson, Chairman of the Standards Committee has been advised of this requirement and the above changes being made to the constitution.

Robin Townsend, Associate Director – Corporate Function and Procurement
Ian Gibbons, Associate Director – Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL – 25 FEBRUARY 2014

BUDGET DEBATE PROCESS

1. Introduction by Chairman

- Remind councillors about circulated paperwork
- To clarify process to be followed

2. Councillor Jane Scott - Leader of the Council

- No time limit on speech

3. Councillor Dick Tonge - Cabinet Member for Finance

- To present and move the budget
- No time limit on speech

4. Councillor Simon Killane - Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

- To present the report of the Special meeting of the Committee on 5 February on the consideration of the Financial Plan
- To highlight particular areas of discussion
- No time limit on speech

5. Councillor Roy While – Chair of Financial Planning Task Group

- To report on the work of the Financial Planning Task Group
- No time limit on speech

6. Group Leaders – Response to Budget

- Group Leaders to respond to the recommendations of Cabinet and Councillor Tonge's motion
- No time limit on speeches

7. Group Leaders – Opportunity for amendments

- Group Leaders' opportunity to move amendments to the motion – each amendment needs to be seconded and the seconder may reserve their speech until later in the debate

- Debate on each amendment to budget – Group Leaders to be asked to speak first on any amendments followed by other councillors - each councillor to speak once only
- the mover of the original motion (Councillor Tonge) has the right of reply
- Vote on amendment – if agreed this amends the original or substantive motion (or incorporated in the motion by agreement) – if not it falls
- Recorded votes on any amendments
- Proceed to next amendment and repeat process

8. The Substantive Motion

(This could be the original motion or the motion as amended in 7 above)

- Debate on the substantive motion
- Councillors to speak only once
- Cllr Tonge has right of reply
- Substantive motion put to the vote
- Budget set
- All votes on budget will be by way of recorded vote

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL'S POLICY ON FEES, CHARGES AND CONCESSIONS

- Councillor Dick Tonge to move the recommendation that Council adopt the Policy on Fees, Charges and Concessions (pages 117 - 128) of the summons)
 - Motion seconded
 - Group Leaders to respond
 - other Councillors to respond
 - Consider and determine any amendments
 - Debate on the substantive motion
 - Councillors to speak only once
 - Cllr Tonge has right of reply
 - Proposal put to the vote
-

COUNCIL TAX

Subject to the Council approving the budget without changes to the net revenue budget of £333.063million:

- **motion** to approve the Council Tax resolution (pages 133 – 134 of the summons)
 - Motion seconded
 - Group Leaders to respond
 - other Councillors to respond
 - Consider and determine any amendments
 - Debate on the substantive motion
 - Councillors to speak only once
 - Mover of motion has right of reply
 - Proposal put to the vote – Recorded Vote
-

Item 8 – TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

- motion to approve the recommendations (page 169 of the summons)
- Motion seconded
- Group Leaders to respond
- other Councillors to respond
- Consider and determine any amendments
- Debate on the substantive motion
- Councillors to speak only once
- Mover of motion has right of reply
- Proposal put to the vote

This page is intentionally left blank

Wiltshire Council

Council

25 February 2014

Item 7 (d) – Wiltshire Council Financial Plan

Amendments to Budget

The following amendments are likely to be moved by Cllr Jon Hubbard, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group:

To increase the proposed budget for Integrated Youth by £250,000 to a figure of £3.232m funded through:

- i) Ceasing to produce printed agendas and minutes for elected members for all council meetings. For the avoidance of doubt this includes Full Council, all committees and task groups including joint committees where Wiltshire Council is the lead council.**

To facilitate the paperless working for elected members a tablet computer will be provided on request which will provide appropriate access to electronic versions of all relevant papers.

This will produce an annual saving of £100,000.

- ii) Reduce the Members Development Fund by £25,000.**

Whilst recognising that member development is important, this needs to be balanced against the delivery of front line services.

- iii) Undertake an audit of the cost effectiveness of the provision of premises from which Youth Work is currently delivered. Where appropriate negotiate a viable and local alternative that can be secured by the council to deliver at least the current hours required by the service.**

Work undertaken with officers has identified savings of at least £125,000 from this approach which can be realised in the 2014/15 financial year.

Financial Summary

Investments:

Integrated Youth	+£250,000
------------------	-----------

Savings:

Councillors' Papers	-£100,000
Councillor Development Fund	-£ 25,000
Youth Premises Audit	-£125,000

Statutory Officers' Comments

We are aware of the full details of the Liberal Democrat amendment as set out and consider the proposals are viable and deliverable, and do not impact adversely on the substantive motion as they would not change the net budget requirement, the level of Council Tax or reserves proposed.

Budget consultation feedback – 10 February 2014

Summary

Key Priorities

Session 1 – Older people	Session 2/4 – Young people	Session 3 - Business
Isolation of elderly/ neighbourhood friends	Youth centres/local youth service – day centres, facilities for all ages	Roads/potholes
Transport (community)	Elderly	Education/business liaison, educational pathways, prepare young people for work
Potential of campuses	Highways/street lighting	Planning process – speed up admin, lack of resource
Health and Social care in the community	Employment, support and training for the youth.	Area board activity economic focused – campuses - speed up

Session 1 – Older people

Feedback on Area boards

- Not 'thinking outside the box' enough
- Need to be more proactive
- Ineffective use of grants
- Cross community needs! Not young/olds etc (shed project in Melksham)
- Focused view on projects – practical outcomes
- Not user friendly – evening meetings – for the council!
- Needs a 'Big Sell' job – change look and way of working
- Engagement (informal) meetings
- How many people attend? And, why do they attend?

Three priorities (group 1):

1. Isolation of elderly
2. Potential of campus – don't let it become another council office
3. Transport – start at bottom – regular round town

Three priorities (group 2):

1. Community transport
2. Health and Social Care in the community – joined up thinking
3. Neighbourhood friends

Session 2 – Youth

Group 1 (Trowbridge, Westbury, Warminster)

- Facilities for all ages (Youth centre, older people, care)
- Real priorities – not just to make something look more glam!
- More money should be put to places where charities are run e.g. Revival's centre is quite small
- Street lighting
- Skate park needs to be made safer

Three priorities:

1. Facilities for all ages (Youth and elderly)
2. Street lighting – safer in the dark
3. Renovating existing facilities, like skate parks

Group 2 (Bradford on Avon)

- Services for young people: extended hours, less young on the streets, music, jobs, transport (for people in nearby isolated areas to get to a BoA centre), more youth workers (support individuals, exam stress, emotional stress and well being, counselling) sports facilities (free or cheaper).
- Young people don't want the campus! Young people want to keep the youth centres as they are.
- If we're a county where everyone matters, why focus on those perceived as vulnerable – what if we are secretly vulnerable? At home, mental illness, at school (school doesn't act) Why don't we care about everyone?
- Do we not deserve any attention?
- Most of our friends and family go! Where's the number in that?
- We are the vulnerable generation – rapists, paedophiles, violence, crime – a deeper truth.
- Families underneath poverty line
- Sustainable jobs for young people

Youth Centres:

- Safe environment
- Keep centres that are regularly used functioning
- BOA used all day and night all week
- Transport links to smaller and bigger centres

Jobs:

- Equally treated
- Equal opportunities for young people

- Available to young people
- Developing experience – investing in young people – new businesses
- Creating more apprentices – young people, council, variety – getting younger people involved.

Group 3 (Bradford on Avon and Salisbury)

Questions:

- Make them more open/noticeable
- Been told that it might be shut down
- Beginning – saying you have very little money, don't just target the youth centres!
- Saying you don't have money to keep the buildings open
- Visit us -you don't know what we do.

Spending money:

- New roads – updated
- Youth centres – workers
- Things suitable for wheelchairs
- Day centres – entertainment

Three priorities:

1. Highways
2. More and better houses
3. Day centres (youth clubs)

Group 4: (Purton)

- Better public facilities e.g. parks, bus services, funding, youth centres
- Why is there no funding available?

Group 5 (Royal Wootton Bassett)

- Housing and financial support - socialising opportunities
- Health care – integration with the elderly and young
- Youth clubs – employment for staff, building uphold, bringing emotional support, training and a friendly sense of belonging.
- 18 year olds leaving education in need of work/income for housing
- Making jobs available to a wider range of GCSE results
- If we have the largest amount of young people in our region, how come support is lacking due to the local cuts.
- Large population of youth, 8% is large then (BBC Wilts news)

Three priorities:

1. The elderly people
2. Local youth service
3. Employment and training for the younger generation

Group 6 (Trowbridge)

- Being able to socialise
- Attachments with Youth Leader
- Supports people with LD, SN - cutting these will have an impact on their lives!!
- The bridge project supports people – no support will equal no confidence and social awkwardness.

Three priorities:

1. Youth clubs – activities (building teamwork), the care of people with special needs, presentations, educational, fitness, learn, safety, support of young people, socialising with young people, help dealing with traumatic experiences (through youth centre).
2. Elderly people – centres, volunteers, caring, support, trips, the support of families, conditions (dementia).
3. Environment – roads, activity groups, community areas, fun days as a community.

Group 7 (Devizes)

Funding spent on:

- More mental health services for young people (i.e. counselling)
- Youth shelters
- Youth club at Hillworth Park open 7 days a week
- More career services

Three priorities:

1. Mental health services – counselling etc
2. Youth shelters in parks – providing activities
3. More advisory services – youth staff! Careers, problems, money, health, education

Other:

- Young people find it difficult to get counselling services and seek help from their youth workers. If they get cut where can young people go for help?
- Youth club is a safe place to go. If youth services get cut young people will end up on the streets or parks and feel unsafe. How can we prevent this?

- I am unemployed and knew nothing about career services until I spoke to my youth worker. If services get cut how can young people like me hear about career services?

Group 8 (Stourton, Mere, Tisbury, Chilmarte)

Youth Club

Support

- Health issues
- Problems with school (education)
- Careers
- Relationships
- Life skills
- You mad bro?
- Transport in and out of rural area
- Staffing and/or volunteers – buildings
- Qualification programmes
- Leisure activities for all ages
- Transport for all ages
- Social groups

Group 9 (Mere, Tisbury, Purton, Stourton)

- Keeping youth centre open as it is.
- Transport for people who don't live in local areas
- Mtcv on Tuesdays and Friday's
- Leisure credits help the community
- Opportunity to socialise with friends on Friday
- Parents pay for beavers, scouts, and brownies
- Youth workers give us help and what we need
- Our youth worker has the ability to help us with any home problems or violence and crime outside caused by young people who wouldn't have a youth centre. Who would we turn to? As the people who go to youth centre's now feel confident and trust the youth workers to help us as we have faith in them.
- The relationship we build with our youth workers are the reason we keep coming to the youth centre.
- Most of us go to Dorset schools, so inviting our friends is more difficult due to transport etc.

Group 10 (Cricklade)

1. Better equipment in the youth club;

- Longer hours
 - Xbox/ps3 – YP entertainment
 - Outside equipment
 - Better equipped skate park - a larger area with better ramps
2. Longer hours with the youth service
- With the same faces
 - Trained and volunteers (trained in issues with YP)

Session 3 - Businesses

Group 1 - priorities

1. Roads/potholes
2. North/South Highway
3. Planning department (admin, lack of resource)
4. Campuses –area board, speed up
5. Education/business liaison
6. My Wiltshire App – communication

Group 2 - priorities

1. Fund specialised career staff in secondary schools to promote alternative educational pathways
2. Disaster purchasing – locally
3. Business rates relief
4. Speed of planning process
5. Support existing (5 year) businesses
6. Area board activity economic focused

Group 3 - priorities

1. Broadband everywhere
2. Roads – A350, A36, Bradford on Avon bypass
3. Preparation of young people for work!
4. Competitive advantage for Wiltshire

Session 4 - General Public

No priorities feedback – but the notes below were written during the consultation.

Young people from Bradford on Avon:

- Where would we go for support!
- You never visit our youth centre

- What happened to our youth council?
- When it was just mainly the youths here, you were mostly against the youth and now the adults are here you make it sound different and don't have correct figures and facts so youth and others don't have their view.
- If youth centres are closed, they won't be here to help or anything – youth centres have helped people through so much and if they weren't there they wouldn't be here today.
- If we don't have a centre, where do you expect us to go? There would be more youth doing bad things.
- Why push for 100% of youths in a sector to be involved? Not 100% will EVER go (think about mental illness, anxiety)
- Public would be complaining if youth were hanging on streets
- You have only given us secondary evidence about everything, if you want us to take in what you are saying then we need proof.
- If youths won't attend youth centres (confidence problems) why do you think they would attend any other social activities?
- Surely 8% is better than 0%? Within that 8% some lives have been saved, so if you close that a lot of people wouldn't be here today.
- Doesn't this show our view is more populated than yours after tonight? Take our view into consideration.
- Why not refurbish instead of relocate/rebuild a campus
- Does 'everyone' not include the youth
- If I was suicidal and only felt comfortable to confide in a youth worker in a centre – where would I turn? I wouldn't go to school/home – I'd die!
- How do you define vulnerable? To us, it's as soon as we leave our houses. How do we know who is around the corner.
- At a youth centre parents know that their children are supervised, safe, warm and looked after. What if we were on the streets?

This page is intentionally left blank

NOTES OF MEETING

Meeting: Group Leaders Meeting with Trade Union Representatives
Place: Lacock Room, County Hall, Trowbridge
Date: Thursday, 6 February 2014

In attendance:

Councillors:

Councillor Jane Scott, Leader of the Council, Conservative Group Leader
Councillor Jon Hubbard, Liberal Democrat Group Leader
Councillor Ricky Rogers, Labour Group Leader
Councillor Russell Hawker (Independent Group representative)
Councillor John Thomson, Deputy Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for
Highways, Streetscene and Broadband
Councillor Dick Tonge, Cabinet member for Finance, Performance, Risk,
Procurement and Welfare Reform,

Union Representatives:

Mike Osment, UNISON
Alan Tomala, UNITE
Jennifer Allen, UNISON
Gavin Brooks, UNISON
Ian Scott, ATL

Officers:

Dr Carlton Brand, Corporate Director
Maggie Rae, Corporate Director
Michael Hudson, Associate Director - Finance
Barry Pirie, Associate Director - People and Business Services
Paul Loach, Head of Service - Human Resources Operations
Yamina Rhouati, Democratic Governance Manager

Apologies

David Nicholson, ASCL
Marion Gatrell, VOICE
Mike Harrison
John Hawkins

NOTES

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

The Leader welcomed all those present to the meeting who in turn introduced themselves.

2. **Notes of last meeting**

The notes of the last meeting held on 6 February 2013 were received and noted.

3. **Wiltshire Council's Financial Plan Update 2014/15**

The Leader explained the timeline for consideration and approval of the Budget. A special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had the previous day (5 February) considered the budget. Cabinet would be considering the Budget at its meeting on 11 February taking into account consultation responses, views from Scrutiny and this meeting. Cabinet would make its recommendations on the budget and council tax to the Budget Setting meeting of full Council when it meets on 25 February. The Leader referred to the Budget consultation event taking place on 10 February in the Atrium when it was hoped to engage with all sectors of the community, young and old as well as the business community. The outcome from People's Voice would also be taken into account.

The Leader asked Cllr Dick Tonge and Michael Hudson to give an overview of the budget, following which, questions would be invited.

Cllr Tonge explained that the Council was on course to have a balanced 2013/14 budget of £340 million. Cllr Tonge guided the meeting through the proposed Financial Plan and Budget book for 2014/15. The proposed budget stood at £333.063 million. It was noted that setting the budget was becoming an increasingly challenging process in the face of continued reductions in Government funding set against increased demands for services particularly in the areas of children and adult care services.

Cllr Tonge identified areas where additional monies would be spent to meet demand namely the maintenance of roads, older people and adult social care and affordable housing.

The proposed budget included savings from services of £25.540 million. Every effort had been made to optimise efficiency savings internally to deliver the Council's Business Plan, minimise the impact on the public and maintain a zero increase in council tax.

Michael Hudson explained the key points of the proposed budget emphasising that the Financial Plan was geared around delivering the key

actions from the Business Plan.

A question was raised on the collection fund where it was noted that the Council had collected slightly more than had previously been predicted. Dr Carlton Brand did point out that the Action for Wiltshire Board had noted that household debt was becoming more of a problem and this could manifest itself in collection levels next year.

Union representatives queried the entry in the budget which showed savings on integrated youth services which also included staff savings in this area. The Unions asked whether this was pre-empting the results of the consultation currently taking place on the future provision of youth services.

The Leader explained that following discussions with young people, it was clear that the youth service being provided was not what they wanted, with only 8% take up of the service. A review was needed in order to provide a modern fit for purpose and cost effective service and this was reflected in the proposed budget. The Council had no choice in the face of Government cuts but to make savings and the aim would be to provide an improved service that would increase take up of the service being offered.

The Leader reminded the meeting that Wiltshire was one of only a few authorities now that had retained such a service. The eventual model would be influenced by the results of the consultation currently taking place with stakeholders, staff and young people. An assurance was sought that given the budget entry for this service, that the eventual decision was not a foregone conclusion. It was noted that changes required to the budget in this area as a result of the consultation and final decision by Cabinet would be dealt with through budget monitoring process. Any reductions in savings in this area would need to be found elsewhere.

A query was raised on the budget entry for unforeseen events and risk assessments in the context of the reserves held which would normally be used for contingency purposes. Michael Hudson gave examples of unforeseen events which could not always be accommodated for in the budget eg the current flooding crisis. It was prudent to budget for these kinds of eventualities whilst keeping a reasonable reserve.

Michael Hudson explained that as Section 151 officer he had a legal obligation to ensure reserves were adequate. It was noted that the reserves held by this Council were the second lowest in the country and equated to less than 1% of the Council's budget. One of the observations from the recent Local Government Peer Review was on our low level of reserves. Cllr Jon Hubbard accepted that there were arguments for and against the levels of reserves.

Gavin Brooks sought clarification on why the Council was budgeting based on risk assessments undertaken and then in his opinion, over budgeting on reserves. He drew a correlation between the recent job losses and holding monies in reserve in addition to budgeting for unforeseen circumstances.

Michael Hudson emphasised that the Council had to budget appropriately and hold adequate funds in reserves. The levels of reserves was not a political decision as it had to be signed off by the S.151 Officer.

On being asked by Gavin Brooks, it was confirmed that the savings on transport were not related to any review of reimbursement of staff mileage. It was noted however, that different approaches would apply to different services.

Reference was made to the budget entry for the 1% staff salary increase as part of the national pay negotiations. The Unions commented that some authorities had agreed to introduce the living wage. The Unions wondered if any analysis had been undertaken on how many would be affected if such a measure was introduced here. They noted that it would have significant implications on schools budgets. It was further noted that this matter was currently the subject of consideration by the Staffing Policy Committee.

The unions queried potential staffing implications in certain areas of the Council. It was noted that these were in respect of realignment of staffing costs and any future restructuring plans.

A query was raised on the public health budgets where it appeared to the Unions that they were not under great pressure and wondered whether the budgets for this area were being fully used.

Maggie Rae explained that the Council had rightfully agreed to put public health at the heart of everything it did. Monies and grants received were being directed at early intervention measures to improve the health of the County's population. There was also a focus on specific areas such as improving our response to sexual exploitation, sexual health, drug awareness. Government funding of public health initiatives were outcome based with the focus on delivering public health services.

A query was raised on savings and efficiencies in the waste service. Dr Carlton Brand referred to previous Cabinet decisions to optimise collection rounds and that there would be further consultation on the future provision of waste services. This was part of the transformation and harmonising processes.

A query was raised on the savings being proposed in the governing arrangements on Area Boards. Maggie Rae explained that this was part of the current review of the operation of Area Boards and streamlining how they were supported.

Dr Carlton Brand sought the Unions' views on how they saw their future given the considerable constraints and pressures. The Unions considered that the Council should review all vacancies before filling them to avoid or at least minimise future redundancies whilst ensuring staff workloads were manageable.

Gavin Brooks considered that the managing of cuts would only serve to attract future reductions in Government funding. The Leader commented that the prudent decisions made by the Council over the past few years, such as becoming a unitary authority, rationalising our property portfolio and reducing the number of hubs and introduction of campuses had yielded significant savings. The financial situation of the Council would have been much worse without these decisions having been made and would have undoubtedly impacted on the range of service provision and would have probably led to the discontinuation of children's centres and youth services. The Unions accepted that the unitary approach in particular had made considerable savings.

Councillors thanked Union representatives for their well considered contributions to this meeting. The Leader commented that it had been one of the most engaging meetings of this type she had attended where Union representatives constructively challenged members on the proposed budget.

(Duration of meeting: 2.30pm – 3.45pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Yamina Rhouati, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718024 or e-mail yamina.rhouati@wiltshire.gov.uk
Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115

This page is intentionally left blank

Wiltshire Council

Council

25 February 2014

Wiltshire Council Financial Plan – Budget Consultation

To advise Council that the Non-Domestic Ratepayers (Consultation) Regulations 1989 places a duty on Councils to consult people who are subject to non-domestic rates on property in the county (or bodies representing those people) for the period beginning 1st April 2014.

Accordingly, a meeting was arranged between non-domestic ratepayers, Group Leaders, Deputy Leader, Cabinet member for Finance and senior officers of this Council to explain the Council's proposed budget and answer questions. The meeting was convened for 6 February 2014. Public notices were advertised in newspapers circulating across the County giving details of the meeting, the opportunity to request information and inviting attendance.

However, no non-domestic ratepayers or their representatives attended for this meeting.

This page is intentionally left blank

Wiltshire Council

Council

25 February 2014

Item 10 - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Helen Osborn, Trowbridge Lambrok Division

To Councillor Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Question 1

Can I please be informed whether Wiltshire Council lobbied central government and Wiltshire MPs regarding the reinstatement of the Aiming High funding?

The loss of this funding will seriously affect the long term future of such highly valued, volunteer centres for children with learning difficulties and disabilities, as Stepping Stones in Trowbridge, and others across the county.

If we did lobby, what was the response?

Given that the amount involved is relatively paltry, why did the Council make the cut rather than finding the money from elsewhere?

Both the coalition government and this Council has failed these children.

Response

Under the **Aiming High for Disabled Children** programme, **£280m was allocated to Local Authorities in England between 2008-11** to significantly increase the range and number of short breaks they provide to disabled children and their families.

In Wiltshire, a dual approach was taken in distributing this funding. Parents and children were/are given a payment to access their own short breaks, whilst a number of schemes, including the opportunity centres, were funded an additional amount to enhance their provision for disabled children. In the case of the opportunity centres this was over and above their core funding from Wiltshire Council. These local and specific Aiming High grants were always intended to be short term, encouraging local schemes to become self sustaining. This short-term additional money was specifically identified within the service level agreements with each opportunity centre as coming from this grant and the organisations all understood that this additional money was time limited. Wiltshire Council staff have been working closely with these charitable organisations to support them in becoming sustainable.

Since 2011, Local Authorities have not received Aiming High Funding, yet Wiltshire has continued to fund short breaks for disabled children to the tune of £1 million a

year, with over a thousand disabled children benefiting each year. Far from failing children this Council has maintained a significant level of investment.

Since 2011 money has been available to local authorities through the **Early Intervention Grant** (EIG). The EIG covers a wide range of early intervention services for children and young people, including those with disabilities. The EIG is **non-ring-fenced** and has now been absorbed in to the overall revenue grant received by the Council. This grant is reducing year on year.

The funding to opportunity centres has had to be reduced, as planned, to reflect the reduction in Central Government funding. The opportunity centres are still in receipt of core funding from Wiltshire Council, however, the £10,000 that was allocated from the Aiming High grant is no longer available.

Over the last three years the opportunity centres have received £889,320 from Wiltshire Council as core funding and this core funding is continuing.

Wiltshire Council recognises the excellent work carried out by these charities in providing a service to Wiltshire disabled children and this is reflected in the core funding noted above.

To help these charities remain sustainable Wiltshire Council has assisted them in accessing the Free Entitlement funding for 3 and 4 year olds and more recently helping them to ensure they meet the criteria to be able to access childcare funding for disadvantaged two year olds. The funding allocated to the opportunity centres for those children taking up the free entitlement to childcare is set at a higher rate than for other providers to recognise the additional needs of these children. The Council has good relationships with the centres and will continue to work with them. Each centre will receive core funding of £74,100 this year as agreed through the service level agreement.

Wiltshire Council

Council

25 February 2014

Item 10 - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Jon Hubbard, Melksham South Division

**To Councillor Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning,
Development Management, Strategic Housing, Property, Waste**

Question 2

It was recently reported in the London Evening Standard that Southwark Council has banned new betting shops, payday loans firms and pawnbrokers from opening in its borough. Businesses in Southwark will not be allowed to change the type of business operating on a site without a fresh application to the council. Southwark is believed to be the first local authority to tighten planning rules in this way. Councillors are said to be "concerned with the proliferation" of such businesses. The council hopes to create more "mixed" high streets to help people avoid "debt traps".

Could the cabinet member please inform me if they believe such a policy could, and should, be enforced in Wiltshire and if so what steps they will take to bring this about?

Response

A verbal response will be provided at the meeting.

This page is intentionally left blank

Wiltshire Council

Council

25 February 2014

Item 10 - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Jon Hubbard, Melksham South Division

To Councillor Fleur de Rhé-Philippe, Cabinet Member for Economy, Skills and Transport

Question 3

Numerous councils across the county, including Durham, Nottingham and Swansea, have blocked access to PayDay loan companies from council computers.

Could the cabinet member tell me if they intend to implement such a restriction on computers belonging to Wiltshire Council and if not, why?

Response

A verbal response will be provided at the meeting.

This page is intentionally left blank

Wiltshire Council

Council

25 February 2014

Item 10 - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Jon Hubbard, Melksham South Division

**To Councillor Jonathon Seed, Cabinet Member for Communities, Campuses,
Area Boards, Leisure, Libraries and Flooding**

Question 4

Here in Melksham we are getting very excited about the new Community Campus which we should see starting to be developed in the coming months.

Residents in other communities are also excited to hear when they will also see similar developments taking place, especially in the light of an increased number of proposals from the council which will see services delivered through the Campus model.

Could the cabinet member provide a timetable for the remaining campus development programme across the county, and give details of how each of the remaining campus developments will be funded?

Response

A verbal response will be given at the meeting.

This page is intentionally left blank

Wiltshire Council

Council

25 February 2014

Item 10 - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Jon Hubbard, Melksham South Division

To Councillor Jane Scott OBE, Leader of the Council

Question 5

The majority of the contact telephone numbers for Wiltshire Council are now based on either local geographic numbers or 0300 numbers. This is good and I applaud that the majority of contact points for Wiltshire residents can be made a minimal or no cost.

However there are a few services still relying on expensive 0845 numbers. I was particularly concerned that the out-of-hours number for vulnerable adults is still an 0845 number.

Could the cabinet member tell me how many chargeable 08xx numbers the council still maintains, what services they are for and if there are plans to replace them with local or 0300 numbers?

Response

I have recently asked officers to review our out of ours telephony and as part of this, to ensure we replace as many of the few remaining 0845 numbers with 0300 numbers as possible.

I confirm that, as you mentioned, the only number regularly used at this time is the Emergency Duty Service which is an 0845 number for use out of normal working hours. This number has been in place for several years and is used for out of hours contact.

When Customers call our main number out of hours they may be diverted to 0845 numbers, however as their call is the diverted call, they will only be charged at the local call rate. .

At this moment in time there are no plans to allocate 0300 numbers to any further services however this will be reviewed in the future. Requests for these changes generally come from the specific service areas, often following a systems thinking review.

I have attached a breakdown of the 0845 & 0870 numbers used for customer enquiries for your information.

Number	Deliver to	Alternative delivery number	Service Provider	Contact	Comments
0845 275 0123	01306 747 767	BT	Parking Payments Line		Ported from Freedom Sep 2010. Should probably be delivered to <somewhere else> - SPM. Talk to Karen Perrett
0845 601 0487	01249 706 265	BT	NWDC Concessionary Travel		Not much used - legacy number. Still on Kingston Langley village website. Kill off?
0845 602 4149	01225 718 772	BT	Property Services		Making changes re OOH/Keyline summer 2013
0845 607 0888	01249 454 630	BT	Emergency Duty Service		Moved to Fox Talbot House Chippenham Aug 2011 from Hopton Devizes 732 338
08456 52 52 55		Switchcall	Connect2Wiltshire	Dave Gillett	Costing c. £200/month. Press 1 for this etc. See http://www.bookaride.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=119&Itemid=54

Item 10 - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To Councillor Keith Humphries, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Protection Services, Adult Care and Housing (excluding Strategic Housing)

Question 6

Recently the West Yorkshire public analyst reported that almost 40% of 900 food samples they tested were not what they were advertised, or were mislabeled in some way. He is quoted as saying:

“We are routinely finding problems with more than a third of samples, which is disturbing at a time when the budget for food standards inspection and analysis is being cut.”

He is also quoted as suggesting that budget cuts increase the risk that mislabeled or fake food will be left unidentified by council-run labs.

- a. What was this Council's budget for food testing and analysis in each of the last two years and what will it be for 2014-15 if the budget proposed today is approved?
- b. What are the Wiltshire percentages equivalent to those reported in West Yorkshire?

Response

- a. The budget for food standards testing and analysis in 2012- 2013 and 2013 – 2014 was approximately £30,000 and £26,000 respectively.

In the financial year 2014 – 2015 the budget will remain unchanged at £26,000. The team are also currently bidding for funding from the Food Standards Agency in conjunction with the South West Trading Standards Partnership to carry out additional food sampling.

- b. The West Yorkshire public analyst was reporting on 900 food samples taken across a number of local authorities. The number of food samples in Wiltshire

will therefore be lower. In 2012/13, 225 food samples were taken by officers in the Public Protection Service, of which 34% were reported as unsatisfactory.

The Food and Safety Team have taken 93 food samples at present in this financial year and have received 29 unsatisfactory results; however they are still awaiting reports on over half of the samples submitted.

Question 7

How many trading standards and / or environmental health staff and /or public protection officers with qualifications in food standards and inspection have left the Council's employment in this Financial Year and in each of Financial Years 2012-13 and 2011-12?

Response

There are currently 8 Trading Standards Officers and Public Protection Officers within the Public Protection Service who are qualified to carry out food standards sampling and inspections.

In addition, there are a further 10 Environmental Health Officers and Public Protection Officers who hold the appropriate qualifications as required under the Food Law Code of Practice. They require a period of structured practical update training before undertaking food standards inspections and this is programmed to take place in the next few months.

In 2012- 2013 there were 12 Trading Standards Officers/Public Protection Officers qualified to carry out food standards inspections and in 2011 – 12 there were a total of 14 officers qualified to undertake the role.

Item 10 - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To Councillor Jane Scott OBE, Leader of the Council

Question 8

Where in the Cabinet does responsibility lie for the shortcomings of the Council's draft Core Strategy, and particularly for the disastrous failure to achieve any planning guidance for housing allocations for the Chippenham area?

Response

The Wiltshire Core Strategy Pre- Submission Document was approved by Council on 26th June 2012 and the Spatial Strategy for Chippenham Community Area CP10 is just one of the sixty nine core policies. The delegation for consequential actions are set out in the third part of the minute.

The question pre-empts the outcome of the Examination process which we are still within. The Inspector is yet to publish his findings on the plan. The Inspector has requested that the council reconsider the Chippenham options through a discreet policy document. This is an acceptable part of the public enquiry process. Should the Inspector wish to apply that modification, then the Core Strategy itself will need to be amended to reflect this. The National Planning Policy Framework provides the guidance for policy development.

Question 9

Why was there so little Cabinet member, Corporate director, or Service director participation in the hearing of evidence about Chippenham housing allocations at the Core Strategy Enquiry in Public?

Response

An Examination in public is a very technical and complex procedure and we have highly experienced officers to undertake presenting the evidence on behalf of the Council. There was support both from the Service Director and legal advisors throughout the sessions, and the Cabinet member and Corporate Director were kept fully informed. At the pre-hearing meeting, the Inspector requested that member involvement was directed through the Officer team.

Question 10

When I asked a question at Council about your Administration's preparations for the enquiry into the draft Core Strategy, I was assured that the Council had taken advice about its draft plan and was assured that it was robust. Who provided that advice and why was it so inaccurate?

Response

The draft core strategy was sent to Leading Counsel (a QC) to check for soundness before going to Council and the advice received was that it was considered sound. The QC had been advising the Council throughout. As with any hearing the Inspector has to come to his own application of the facts. In this case the Inspector has placed different weight on some of the evidence presented and put weight on the new National Policy framework and is indicating that he is considering a different conclusion to the Council. That does not mean that the original advice or the Council's original position was wrong.

It is of note that the Inspector has not determined that the underlying Core strategy is unsound but has merely asked for Council's comments in respect of proposed modifications to ensure soundness. In fact the Inspector said in his 10th procedural letter: -

"... the matters summarised below are those upon which I am most interested to hear how the Council may wish to proceed. Such matters are not exhaustive of those that will be addressed in my final report albeit many aspects of the plan appear **justified, positively prepared, consistent with national policy and likely to be effective in their implementation.**"

Question 11

Who is overseeing the preparation of the Council's responses to the Inspector's requirements for changes to the draft Core Strategy?

Response

The Core Strategy is still within the Examination period, and is currently the Inspector's process during his consideration of evidence. The Associate Director of Economic Development and Planning is overseeing liaising with the Inspector in conjunction with the Cabinet Member and other professional officers. Cabinet approved the approach being taken on the 21st January.

Item 10 - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Simon Killane, Malmesbury Division

To Councillor Jane Scott OBE, Leader of the Council

Question 12

Let's now use the electronic voting system to give the people of Wiltshire direct access to the full voting profile of each Councillor and save time on traditional recorded voting!

I would like to ask Cllr Jane Scott's opinion on my suggestion that the new electronic voting system is used for all voting requirements from now on, including this budget meeting, and that the old system of hands in the air or the "Ayes/Nays" method of voting is consigned to the history books. I would also like to know when the people of Wiltshire to be able to access the complete electronic voting history for each Wiltshire Councillor just as can be done for [MP's in Parliament](#).

Question 13

Let's now use the new electronic video recording system give the people of Wiltshire direct sound and visual access to all our Full Council meetings!

I would like to ask Cllr Jane Scott to update me on the progress of the implementation of the video recording and streaming technology. The people of Wiltshire must now have the opportunity to listen to and see the debates first hand and to make up their own minds about the proposals, amendments, decisions and debates that are a regular part of these meetings.

Response to Questions 12 and 13

Following discussions at the Group Leaders meeting on 19 February it is proposed that a cross party working group (to include group leaders) is set up to consider the introduction of video recording, streaming technology and the use of the electronic voting system for Full Council meetings. This would include ensuring that relevant safeguards are in place to protect the interests of the council

It is suggested that the working group will consult cabinet and any changes proposed to the constitution would be reported to Full council through the Standards Committee.

Question 14

Let's resolve to address the issues that deter the people of Wiltshire from participating in Wiltshire Council as elected representatives!

I would like to ask Cllr Jane Scott, Leader of Wiltshire Council, to express a view on the following:

That Scrutiny Management must be actioned with setting up a Task Group to quantify the diversity of age, gender, race and ethnicity of the elected membership of the council, that the outcomes from this study are used to determine the root causes responsible of any diversity imbalance and that proposals are made for consideration by full council to address any imbalance.

Response

It is not for me, as leader, to determine the issues that Overview and Scrutiny should consider. However I recognise that this is clearly an important issue but one that requires addressing at a national level and would suggest that councillors who are concerned about this should take it up through the appropriate channels.

Item 10 - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To Councillor Jane Scott OBE, Leader of the Council

Question 15

Councillors' Questions provides an important and indeed unique opportunity for non-Executive Councillors to question individual Cabinet members in public about their areas of responsibility and decisions they have taken. As such it is one of very few channels for democratic accountability of a powerful executive with significant levels of delegated powers.

1. Do you accept this analysis, and would you agree that is therefore a matter of public concern that Councillors' Questions has first been moved to the end of Council agendas, and now further eroded by the growing practice of Cabinet members not providing written responses, except to say for the public record that "A verbal response will be given at the meeting"?
2. Whilst this latter practice is formally sanctioned by the Council Constitution, do you agree that it does not appear to be in the spirit of transparency and accountability to which you have often committed yourself and your Administration in public meetings?
3. I understand you are now planning to meet with Group Leaders to discuss Councillors' Questions, which is a welcome next step. Will you give an undertaking to report the outcomes of that discussion to the next Council meeting, and to allow for debate there on this issue?

Response

Councillors Questions was discussed at the Group Leaders meeting on 19 February and it is proposed that the subject is referred to the constitutional working group to consider and clarify.

In the interim, Group Leaders concluded that Council Questions should remain at the end of proper business and that members would strive to provide a written response, however, verbal responses would be given where relevant.

Group Leaders also felt that councillors should be encouraged to submit their questions, where relevant, to other formal council meetings such as Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny and Community Area Boards and not leave them for Full

Council. There is also of course the normal Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder route for Councillors to raise questions at any time.