

## COUNCIL

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### MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2010 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

#### Present:

Cllr Richard Beattie, Cllr Chuck Berry, Cllr John Brady, Cllr Richard Britton, Cllr Rosemary Brown, Cllr Allison Bucknell, Cllr Jane Burton, Cllr Trevor Carbin, Cllr Chris Caswill, Cllr Ernie Clark, Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Christopher Cochrane, Cllr Peter Colmer, Cllr Linda Conley, Cllr Mark Connolly, Cllr Christine Crisp (Vice-Chair), Cllr Michael Cuthbert-Murray, Cllr Brian Dalton, Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Tony Deane, Cllr Christopher Devine, Cllr Bill Douglas, Cllr Mary Douglas, Cllr Peggy Dow, Cllr Peter Doyle, Cllr Rod Eaton, Cllr Nick Fogg, Cllr Peter Fuller, Cllr Richard Gamble, Cllr Jose Green, Cllr Howard Greenman, Cllr Mark Griffiths, Cllr Mollie Groom, Cllr Lionel Grundy OBE, Cllr Brigadier Robert Hall (Chairman), Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr Malcolm Hewson, Cllr Alan Hill, Cllr Charles Howard, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Chris Humphries, Cllr Keith Humphries, Cllr Peter Hutton, Cllr George Jeans, Cllr David Jenkins, Cllr Julian Johnson, Cllr John Knight, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Alan Macrae, Cllr Howard Marshall, Cllr Laura Mayes, Cllr Ian McLennan, Cllr Jemima Milton, Cllr Francis Morland, Cllr Bill Moss, Cllr Christopher Newbury, Cllr John Noeken, Cllr Jeffrey Ody, Cllr Stephen Oldrieve, Cllr Helen Osborn, Cllr Jeff Osborn, Cllr Mark Packard, Cllr Sheila Parker, Cllr Graham Payne, Cllr Nina Phillips, Cllr Leo Randall, Cllr Fleur de Rhe-Philipe, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr Bill Roberts, Cllr Ricky Rogers, Cllr Judy Rooke, Cllr Jane Scott OBE, Cllr Jonathon Seed, Cllr John Smale, Cllr Carole Soden, Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cllr Dick Tonge, Cllr Bridget Wayman, Cllr Ian West, Cllr Fred Westmoreland, Cllr Stuart Wheeler, Cllr Roy While, Cllr Christopher Williams and Cllr Graham Wright

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#### 43. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from the following councillors:

John Thomson, Nigel Carter, Tony Trotman, Desna Allen, Simon Killane, Jerry Kunkler, Stephen Petty, Paul Sample, Philip Brown, Peter Davis, Russell Hawker, Tom James, Julie Swabey and Paul Darby.

#### 44. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 18 May 2010 were presented.

**Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 18 May 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

45. **Declarations of Interest**

The Chairman declared a personal interest in the discussion which arose from the minutes of the Wiltshire and Swindon Fire Authority concerning the future of the Cricklade Cadet Force by virtue of him being the Chairman of the Fire Authority (minute no. 54 refers).

Cllr Andrew Davis declared a personal interest in the consideration of the recommendation to make a Designated Public Places Order at Warminster by virtue of him also being a member of Warminster Town Council (minute no. 58 refers).

46. **Announcements by the Chairman**

(a) **Birthday honours**

On behalf of Council, the Chairman congratulated the Wiltshire recipients of Queen's Birthday Honours list which he read out.

(b) **Queen's Award for Voluntary Service**

The Chairman announced that five organisations in Wiltshire were nominated for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service namely, Swindon Down's Syndrome Group, Hope Nature centre, Wiltshire Search & Rescue, Berwick St. John Country Fayre and Lydiard Millicent Lunch Club.

The Chairman was pleased to announce that Swindon Down's Syndrome Group were successful in attaining the award and congratulated them on their achievement.

(c) **Queen's Award for Enterprise**

The Chairman announced that four businesses in Wiltshire had been recognised in the Queen's Award for Enterprise, two in the category for international trade and two for innovation.

Naim audio from Salisbury and Themis from Trowbridge had received awards in the international trade category.

Danlers Limited from Chippenham and Halyard Marine from Salisbury had received awards in the innovation category.

The Chairman congratulated them all on their success.

(d) 'Shaping the future – Being the Best'

The Chairman explained that the Council was launching its first Corporate Staff Awards, 'Shaping the future – Being the Best'. The purpose of the awards was to celebrate and recognise the excellent work being done by Wiltshire council employees.

The Chairman referred Councillors to a brochure which included a nomination form. The winners would be announced at a gala awards ceremony on Monday 27 September at Salisbury City Hall by the Leader and Chief Executive. Category winners would be automatically entered into a competition to find the overall outstanding employee of the year who would also be announced at the awards ceremony.

(e) New Liberal Democrat Group Leader

The Chairman acknowledged that Councillor Jon Hubbard was now Group leader of the Liberal Democrat group on the Council. The Chairman wished him well in his appointment and thanked the previous Liberal Democratic leader, Councillor Trevor Carbin for his work over the past year.

(f) Councillor Julian Johnson – New Forest National Park Authority

The Chairman congratulated Councillor Julian Johnson on his appointment as Chairman of the New Forest National Park Authority.

47. **Petitions - Update**

Council at its Annual Meeting in May 2010 adopted a new Petition Scheme, details of which had now been added to the Council's website. The report of the Head of Democratic Services was considered which updated Council on the Petition Scheme and gave details of the four petitions received since the Petition Scheme was introduced.

The Chairman confirmed that no petitions had been received for presentation at this meeting.

**Resolved:**

**That Council**

- (a) **note the report, the petitions received and the actions being taken as set out in the Appendix to the report presented and**

**(b) note the proposed piloting of the E-Petitions Scheme with effect from mid September 2010.**

48. **Public Participation**

No requests for public participation had been received for this meeting.

49. **Councillors' Questions**

The Chairman reported receipt of questions from Councillors Ernie Clark, Helen Osborn, Peter Colmer, Jeff Osborn, Jon Hubbard, Steve Oldrieve, Trevor Carbin and Chris Caswill.

Details of the questions and responses given were previously circulated and attached as Appendix A to these minutes.

Supplementary questions were made in some cases summarised as follows:

Cllr Helen Osborn – Special Education Need (SEN) provision – sought an assurance that sufficient resources would be made available to deal with SEN.

Cllr Grundy explained that SEN review was governed by legislation and confirmed that there was no question that requirements under SEN would not be continued.

Cllr Peter Colmer – consultation on the Wiltshire Community Plan – asked whether it would be more appropriate to undertake the consultation through community area partnerships rather than a ‘top down’ approach.

The Leader confirmed that the consultation exercise was to ensure the Plan reflected views of the community and that the consultation would include community area leaders.

Cllr Jeff Osborn – recommendations of audit carried out by KPMG – referred to the 50 recommendations from the audit out of which 18 had been highlighted as red.

Cllr Fleur de Rhe Philipe explained that the number of recommendations were to be expected due to the transitional period and confirmed that all recommended actions had been completed.

Cllr Jon Hubbard – collapse of property values – given that property values had collapsed and benefits from disposals would be negligible questioned whether savings would be made ahead of clear directives on the future of local government.

Cllr John Noeken agreed that the Council needed to constantly keep progress of the workplace transformation under review. Given that property prices were currently depressed, he confirmed that the Council was not in a hurry to dispose of its properties. This would be kept under review by the workplace transformation board which had last met on 9 July 2010.

Cllr Jon Hubbard – cost of producing ‘Your Wiltshire Magazine’ against effectiveness of it being used as a vehicle for consultation – questioned the benefits of the magazine and questioned whether the amount spent on producing it could be better spent on providing frontline services.

The Leader emphasised that front line services were not being cut. The production of the magazine was being kept under review and that the Council was working with its partners to make it a public sector magazine. Without the magazine, individual services would have to undertake their own separate consultation which would then collectively cost more. The magazine was never intended as a vehicle for public consultation or for publishing statutory notices. The magazine served the purposes of keeping members of the public informed and in providing an opportunity to challenge the Council with its feedback.

Cllr Steve Oldrieve – Adopted notice of motion on fair trade – asked how the motion was being incorporated into the Council’s procurement policy and toolkit and the contract regulations.

Cllr John Noeken confirmed that it would be reflected in guidance to the contract regulations.

Cllr Trevor Carbin – consultation on the future of waste collection: collection of food waste – questioned why an option of providing food waste collection had not been included in the consultation exercise.

Cllr Toby Sturgis explained that collection of food waste was expensive and that there was a lack of suppliers willing to collect this type of waste. He confirmed that the consultation referred to continuing to investigate this type of collection.

Cllr Caswill – Area Board grants – asked what the proportion of Area Board funding could be used to fund projects which fell outside the criteria of the Community Grants Scheme. He also questioned whether Councillors should promote their own preferences.

The Leader explained that when she attends her own Area Board, she does so as a member of that Area Board rather than as Leader of the Council unless she is specifically asked to respond as Leader. Decisions made were democratically made. She also confirmed that as a local member she would consult the local community and parish/town councils on schemes they wished to pursue.

Cllr Caswill – state of the roads – asked for confirmation that the current state of the roads was due to a lack of investment in highway repairs and asked whether the response given was an early indication that the road repairs budget was being ring fenced.

Cllr Tong referred to under investment on roads by previous administrations of the Council. He also explained that roads were inspected regularly to enable an assessment to be carried out each year. Repairs were carried out on a priority basis. He confirmed that all that could be done within budgetary constraints was being done.

## 50. **Executive Business**

### (a) Updates by Cabinet members

#### (i) Coalition Government

The Leader initiated a discussion on emerging proposals from the new Coalition Government. She explained that correspondence was being received with increasing regularity from various Government departments on new Government proposals and initiatives.

She referred to the emergency budget announced by the Government in June. This included a reduction in Area Based Grant of £2.7m. The Area Based Grant from the Department for Education had been reduced by 24%. Within the last 24 hours, the Council had been advised of a reduction of £1.24m in education grants for technology across the region for the provision of broadband. A reduction of £700k had also been advised for 14-19 capital grant. The free swimming grant had also been removed and it was hoped to keep free swimming in place over the summer period at least. It was noted that most if not all secondary schools in the Council's area would be expressing a wish to achieve academy status and this would have a tremendous impact on the Council as the Local Education Authority.

Cabinet was working closely with Chief Officers to try and minimise the impact of the reductions in funding. The Council would need to consider its budget as a whole in order to examine its priorities.

Local authorities were awaiting the outcome of the public spending review to be announced by the Government on 20 October 2010 in order to assess the impact on local government. This would also help to inform the Council's Business Plan. The spending review would also impact on other public sector services and the Leader stressed that this should be borne in mind when working with public sector partners. The Government had stated that whilst

there would be cuts, it would also be providing local authorities with the freedom to use their budgets according to their priorities.

The Leader referred to the abolition of the Regional Development Agency, the South West Regional Assembly and the privatisation of Job Centre Plus. She also referred to the abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy, potential implications of the Localism Bill and proposals for directly elected Police Commissioners.

It was noted that the Strategic Health Authority would be abolished by 2012. The Leader referred to the White Paper, Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS which set out the Government's long-term vision for the future of the NHS. This was likely to include the remits of Primary Care Trusts being redirected to local authorities, GP consortia managing commissioning services and a new health watchdog. The Health Scrutiny function would be replaced by a Health Board.

The Leader explained that a briefing session for all Councillors would be arranged following the August recess once there was more clarification on the future direction of local government.

The Leader responded to questions and Councillors thanked the Leader for the important and informative update.

(ii) Wiltshire Delivers Big Society

The Leader referred to the Government's announced intentions on the 'Big Society'. She explained that this was very much in keeping with the Council's approach and that working locally with people and communities had formed the backbone to becoming a unitary council and shaped how the Council operated. This included the vision set out in the Council's Corporate Plan, business planning for the future, service redesign and finding new ways to engage and involve its communities.

In recognition that this Council was doing far more to deliver Big Society than many other local authorities, the Council had been invited to speak at the Local Government Association Conference held the previous week. Copies of the handouts produced in house for conference delegates were tabled. Following the presentation at the Conference, the Council had received requests from the Cabinet Office and Department of Communities and Local Government to advise and help shape the policies and implementation of Big Society. The Council had also been invited to speak at other regional and national conferences.

(iii) Job Centre Plus Award 2010

Cllr Grundy, Cabinet member for Children's Services advised that the Council had previously secured funding under Job Centre Plus. This was a 3 year

programme working with businesses to help young people back into work. The Council had been awarded a Youth Employment Award for the South West for demonstrating a clear commitment and action to help young people back into work. It was hoped to be able to provide further employment opportunities to young people under the scheme.

(b) Area Boards

This was an opportunity for Councillors to ask questions of a general nature concerning Area Boards. No questions were raised.

51. **Overview and Scrutiny**

The Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committees were invited to update Council on major activities within their respective Select Committees.

Environment Select Committee

Cllr Mollie Groom updated Council on her Committee's consideration of the following matters:

- The Committee last met on 6 July and focused on the developments taking place in the Council concerning climate change. The Committee was fully supportive of the work being undertaken by the Climate Change Team and would be considering the draft strategy at its next meeting together with the work being undertaken towards carbon trading.

Health and Adult Social Care Select committee

Cllr Mike Hewitt updated Council on his Committee's consideration of the following matters:

- The Committee last met on 8 July and the next meeting would be held on 9 September.
- The potential changes arising from the Coalition Government's programme had important implications for the way in which Health and Adult Social Care Services would be provided to Wiltshire residents. At the last meeting, a Task group was established to consider the impact of these changes, although its timing and scope was heavily dependant on the contents of the NHS White paper which was due on 12 July.
- The Committee's forward work programme would need to be flexible in light of this, and some previously allocated items may have to slip.



However, at the July Committee it was agreed that Task Groups would be initiated to look at:

1. Coalition Government – Implications for NHS and Adult social care in delivering services for Wiltshire Residents.
2. Dementia (and possibly wider Adult Mental Health issues).
3. Closer engagement with local NHS Trusts to gain deeper insight for commenting on Quality Accounts, and CQC ad hoc reporting.

#### Overview and Scrutiny Organisation and Resources Select Committee

Cllr Jeff Osborn updated Council on his Committee's consideration of the following matters:

- The Committee last met on 27 May and would next meet on 15 July.
- The Committee would be considering the Department of Resources Departmental Delivery Plan which would outline the ambitions and objectives for the Department in support of the Corporate Plan.
- A number of work areas identified within the Plan had already been considered at either Committee or Task Group level or would form part of the forward work programme such as Workplace Transformation, SAP development, future ICT provision and member support.
- The Delivery Plan would tie up the various strands of work with the Department of Resources and would therefore be a useful reference document for the Committee. A further key document would be the Business Plan which was currently being developed.

#### Children's Services Select Committee

Cllr Carole Soden updated Council on the Committee's consideration of the following matters:

- The Children's Services Select Committee had met once since the last Council meeting in May.
- The Committee was monitoring closely the new Coalition Government's plans for education and children's services and these would undoubtedly form part of the Committee's forward work programme.
- On 22nd July, Children's Services Select Committee will receive the results of the public consultation into Special Educational Needs provision in Wiltshire, plus the recommendations to Cabinet for service development. Prior to this, beginning at 9.30am, officers will brief

Committee members on the background to this review to which other members of the Council were welcome to attend.

52. **Minutes of Cabinet and Committees**

The Chairman moved that Council receives and notes the minutes as listed in the separate Minutes Book and this was duly seconded by the Vice-Chairman.

Cabinet	24/05/10, 22/06/10
Children's Services Select Committee	08/06/10
Environment Select Committee	11/05/10
Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee	20/05/10
Organisation and Resources Select Committee	27/05/10
Officer Appointments Committee	11/06/10
Standards Committee	19/05/10
Staffing Policy Committee	19/05/10
Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee	13/05/10
Licensing Committee	26/05/10
Strategic Planning Committee	12/05/10
Audit Committee	30/06/10
Northern Area Planning Committee	19/05/10, 09/06/10, 30/06/10
Eastern Area Planning Committee	10/06/10, 01/07/10
Southern Area Planning Committee	13/05/10, 03/06/10, 24/06/10
Western Area Planning Committee	12/05/10, 02/06/10, 23/06/10

The Chairman drew Council's attention to recommendations to Council from the Staffing Policy Committee in respect of adoption of the Code of Conduct for Officers and from the Licensing Committee in respect of the licensing of Sex Establishment Policy.

**Resolved:**

**(a) That the above mentioned minutes be received and noted.**

**(b) That Council adopt the following recommendations:**

**(i) Recommendation of the Staffing Policy Committee dated 19 May 2010 (minute no. 19 refers):**

That Council approve the Code of Conduct for Officers as amended and to update the Council's Constitution accordingly.

**(ii) Recommendation of the Licensing Committee dated 26 May 2010 (minute no 7 refers):**

To adopt the amendment to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 Schedule 3 by Section 27 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009. This introduces a Licensing regime for "sexual entertainment venues" such as lap dancing.

The Chairman invited questions from Councillors on points of information or clarification on the above mentioned minutes and gave Chairmen of those meetings the opportunity to make any important announcements on the work of their respective meetings.

Cabinet – 22 June 2010 – Minute No. 110 – Housing PFI – Agreement to enter into contract

Cllr Ricky Rogers asked whether the PFI scheme had escaped the cuts in local government funding.

Cllr John Brady explained that the PFI Board had met on 12 July 2010. A further meeting would be held on 14 July in London. It was reassuring to know that at this stage, the scheme had the support of the Housing Minister but would need to be assessed by an independent board and that the Council had complied with all requirements. He was concerned that given the level of cuts being considered, the Government could choose to abandon the scheme. He would however, keep Councillors informed.

Licensing Training

Cllr Bill Moss, Chairman of the Licensing Committee reminded Councillors that licensing training for all Councillors had been arranged for 24 September 2010 from 9.30am to 12.30pm.

Strategic Planning Committee – 21 July 2010

Cllr Andrew Davis, Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee confirmed that the application at Land at Langley Park, Chippenham had been withdrawn. The meeting would still take place but at County Hall rather than at Monkton Park, Chippenham.

Northern Area Planning Committee – 19 May 2010 – Minute No. 54-  
Appeal Decision

Reference was made to the announcement made at the Northern Area Planning Committee regarding the Planning Inspector's decision on the

appeal lodged by the Council in respect of Sandpit Lane, Calne (08/2438). Cllr Francis Morland asked about the implications of the decision on planning policy. It was noted that the Council was currently assessing the implications.

53. **Wiltshire Police Authority**

The minutes of the Wiltshire Police Authority meeting held on 10 June 2010 and report of the Police Authority were received and noted. No questions on these documents had been received from Councillors.

54. **Wiltshire and Swindon Fire Authority**

The minutes of the Wiltshire and Swindon Fire Authority meeting held on 26 May 2010 were received and noted.

Cllr Peter Colmer sought an update on the future of the Cricklade Fire Cadets following the withdrawal of funding from the Wiltshire Fire Authority.

At this point, the Chairman declared a personal interest in this item as Chairman of the Wiltshire and Swindon Fire Authority.

The Chairman explained that unfortunately, the Fire Authority was also subject to public spending cuts, which is why it had had to examine all its expenditure. However, in view of the representations made, it had been agreed to continue the Cricklade Cadet Force until at least the end of August 2010. There was potential for the local Area Board to provide some funding and the Cadets were also considering funding initiatives.

55. **Standards Committee Annual Report 2009/10**

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs Isabel McCord, Chairman of Wiltshire Council's Standards Committee presented the Annual Report of the Standards Committee for the period 2009/10 for Council's information.

**Resolved**

**To note the Annual Report.**

MEETING ADJOURNED

At this point 1.15pm, the meeting adjourned for lunch and reconvened at 1.55pm

56. **Notice of Motion No. 11 - Opting out arrangements for Schools - From Councillors Jeff Osborn and Helen Osborn**

The Chairman reported receipt of the following notice of motion moved **by Cllr Jeff Osborn and seconded by Cllr Helen Osborn:**

*'This Council views with alarm moves to encourage Wiltshire primary and secondary schools to opt out of their formal relationship with this local education authority (LEA).*

*The outcome of such a move is likely to result in a "creaming off" of well performing schools, leaving the LEA with a greater proportion of underperforming schools. Also it is unclear as to whether these opted out schools will take full responsibility for Special Educational Needs pupils.*

*A further consequence will be that the LEA will lose its critical mass to provide the full range of viable support services.*

*Already in this current year Wiltshire Council's Children Services is to have its budget cut by £2.1 million. Added to this is the certainty that Wiltshire Council funds from central government will be cut by at least 25% over the next four years. This must severely impact on local – non opted out – educational provision.*

*Also it seems that much of the funding for these opted out schools – Academies and Free Schools – will come from the curtailing of the Building Schools for the Future programme. This, in turn, will mean that few, if any, remaining LEA schools will be rebuilt.*

*This Council therefore resolves to:*

*communicate the consequences of the opting out of Academies and Free Schools to the people of Wiltshire so that they can better understand what is going on'.*

***Cllr Jeff Osborn spoke to his motion. He explained his concern that the opting out arrangements could lead to an erosion of local authority education and a two tier education system with local authority schools being stigmatised as 'Council schools' and that this would also widen the achievement gap.***

The Chairman moved that the motion be debated and this was duly seconded by the Vice-Chairman and it was

**Resolved:**

**That notice of motion no.11 be debated.**

The Chairman called on Cllr Grundy to open the debate as the Cabinet member for Children's Services before inviting Group Leaders and then opening the debate to other Councillors.

Cllr Grundy did not support the motion. He explained that the Academy Bill was still progressing and it was too early to give a view on what the consequences would be.

A discussion ensued, during which arguments were made for and against the motion. After careful consideration, it was

**Resolved:**

**That motion no. 11 as detailed above be NOT adopted.**

57. **Notice of Motion No. 12 - Political Reform and Freedom Bill - From Councillors Jon Hubbard and Peter Colmer**

The Chairman reported receipt of the following notice of motion moved and *by Cllr Jon Hubbard and seconded by Cllr Peter Colmer:*

***'That:***

***Council notes:***

*The new Government's commitment for much needed political reform and the restoration of our civil liberties.*

***Council welcomes:***

*The proposal to bring in a proportionally elected second chamber ensuring that all Wiltshire residents have a full and proper say in who represents them;  
Proposals to regulate party funding increasing transparency to Wiltshire residents of how their political parties operate;  
The proposal to hold a referendum to give people a chance to vote to end First Past the Post elections for Local Authorities, such as Wiltshire Council, and the House of Commons;*

***Council also welcomes the introduction of the Freedom Bill, which will enhance the lives of Wiltshire residents by:***

*Scrapping the illiberal ID cards scheme;  
Bringing to an end to the fingerprinting of children in schools without their parent's consent;  
Introducing better regulation of CCTV cameras;  
Placing significant restrictions on the DNA database;  
and restoring the right to protest.*

*Council resolves to write to Wiltshire's MPs asking for their support in*

*Parliament when these bills are heard*

*To write to the Deputy Prime Minister giving this council's support to the proposed bills'.*

***Cllr Jon Hubbard spoke to his motion. He explained that quite dramatic changes on how democracy would be reflected and urged support for the Bill by supporting his motion.***

The Chairman moved that the motion be debated and this was duly seconded by the Vice-Chairman and it was

**Resolved:**

**That notice of motion no.12 be debated**

The Chairman called on the Leader to open the debate before inviting other Group Leaders and then opening the debate to other Councillors.

The Leader explained that whilst there was no doubt that this Council would wish to support much of what was currently in the Bill, it was too early to make a judgement. She also considered that national issues should be dealt with nationally and through lobbying of members of Parliament. For those reasons, she considered that the motion should not be supported at this time and that Council should await further information as the Bill progresses.

After careful consideration, it was

**Resolved:**

**That motion no. 12 as detailed above be NOT adopted.**

**58. Warminster Town Alcohol Consumption In Designated Public Places Order (DPPO)**

**Declaration of Interest**

Cllr Andrew Davis declared a personal interest in this item as a dual hatted member also on Warminster Town Council.

Cllr Keith Humphries, Cabinet member for Health and Wellbeing presented a report on a recommendation from the Warminster Area Board to make a Designated Public Place Order (DPPO) in respect of a prescribed area of Warminster as indicated on the plan presented.

He explained that a DPPO gave the Police the power to ask persons who were behaving or likely to behave in an alcohol induced anti-social manner within the area, to stop drinking and hand over any alcohol in their possession. Refusal is an offence, which may result in arrest and a fine.

On the basis of the Area Board report and the consultation findings, which had found in favour of the Order, Cllr Keith Humphries proposed that the DPPO be made. He also recommended that in future such determinations be delegated to the Licensing Committee.

### **Resolved**

- (a) That Wiltshire Council makes a Designated Public Place Order under S.13 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 in respect of the land described in the attached map in the town of Warminster.
- (b) That Council pursuant to S.7(3) of the Licensing Act 2003 resolves to delegate the power to make a Designated Public Places Order under S.13(2) of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001, to the Council's Licensing Committee, considering that the power to make such an Order sufficiently relates to matters already referred to that Committee under S.7(1) of the Licensing Act 2003.

### 59. **Membership of Committees**

*The Chairman gave Group Leaders an opportunity to make any necessary changes to committee membership in accordance with the allocation of seats to political groups previously approved by council.*

*Following requests made by Cllr Jon Hubbard (Liberal Democrat group) and Cllr Christopher Newbury (Independent group), it was*

### **Resolved**

**To approve the following changes to committee membership:**

#### Officer Appointments Committee

*To replace Cllr Trevor Carbin with Cllr Jon Hubbard with Cllr Peter Colmer as substitute.*

#### Health and Adult Social Care Committee

*To replace Cllr Peter Colmer with Cllr Judy Rooke.*

*To replace Cllr Jon Hubbard as substitute with Peter Colmer.*

#### Strategic Planning Committee

*To replace Cllr Steve Petty as substitute with Cllr Peter Colmer.*

#### Eastern Area Planning Committee

**That Cllr Francis Morland be appointed as substitute member.**

(Duration of meeting: 10.30am – 2.30pm)



The Officer who has produced these minutes is Yamina Rhouati, of Democratic & Members' Services, direct line 01225 718024, e-mail [yaminarhouati@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:yaminarhouati@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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Council

13 July 2010

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**COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS**

**QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLOR ERNIE CLARK**  
**HILPERTON DIVISION**

**TO COUNCILLOR JANE SCOTT**  
**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**Question 1**

I understand that the Council has a group providing services for ethnic minorities. Bearing in mind that Wiltshire has a tiny ethnic minority population, can you tell me how big this group is, what they cost and what they actually do.

**Response**

All areas within the Council are committed to, and are providing services for all our communities, including Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) communities.

In reference to 'groups' in the Council providing services for ethnic minorities, within Department of Children and Education (DCE), the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) deliver educational support to all teaching/school staff and pupils. EMAS support schools to provide equal access to life opportunities for pupils vulnerable to lower attainment levels, and works to deliver national language and literacy strategies to improve access to language learning and attainment of pupils from all ethnic minority groups, including for example Polish migrant workers. EMAS also provides a very successful mentoring service for children and young people who are under achieving and are from lower socio-economic and BME backgrounds. The mentors are drawn from Wiltshire Council employees and this programme supports attainment and achievement, and also contributes significantly to the linking of Wiltshire Council with its schools and communities.

EMAS have a staff team of 6.5 FTE advisory teachers including the head of service; 1 consultant for equality and diversity; 1 mentoring coordinator; 1 bilingual support teacher (largely funded by Honda); 10 bilingual assistants. The overall budget for EMAS (2010/11) is £613k, made up of £133k from Standards Fund; £437k from Direct Schools Grant; £31k from donations; £12k from other income such as from running courses, undertaking specific pieces of work that the service is commissioned to do by external parties. The service provides support to 4761 pupils and their families.

Also within DCE, the Traveller Education Service (TES) responds to the educational needs of Gypsy & Traveller children by supporting their inclusion in mainstream schooling, including outreach to families in order for pre-school children to access foundation stage curriculum. This service ensures that the outcomes of 'Every Child Matters' is the focus of its support, through implementing the government strategies on the Gypsy & Traveller educational achievements, (for example, the service provides training to teachers and governors so they are able to support Gypsy & Traveller children in education). The service also prepares young people 11yrs – 19yrs for working life, and to take up opportunities for further lifelong learning.

TES have a staff team of 2.4 FTE Teachers; 0.5 FTE Education Welfare Officer; and 2 teaching assistants covering the whole county, with an overall budget of £287k which is predominately derived from the Direct Schools Grant.

The TES service works with 326 pupils (to date), which includes pupils in early years and schools, pupils who received home education support, those who are out of school / disengaged, pupils from fairground and circuses who require on site teaching, and children who use the mobile library provisions for education.

Finally, at a corporate level, the Council has an equality and diversity team to support elected members/chief officers, and departments to work effectively so that we are able to meet our obligations under equality legislation, and promote all aspects of inclusion. The team works with partners to promote good community relations and participation in local democracy.

The team currently has 4 staff (2 x FTE and 2 x 0.75 FTE) and an overall budget of £177k (including staffing costs) within the Department of Community Services.

## **Question 2**

At the last full council meeting, questions were asked about the non-pensionable honoraria paid by Kennet District Council. In answer to my supplementary question you stated that WC was hoping to recover approx. £10k from two people. What progress has been made on these recoveries?

## **Response**

The Solicitor to the Council has written to the individuals concerned and is awaiting their response and proposals for repayment. Follow-up action will be taken as appropriate.

**TO COUNCILLOR FLEUR DE RHE PHILIPPE**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK**

**Question 1**

The KPMG audit report last year (for the old county council) had 10 recommendations (6 red) – what is the average number of total recommendations and red recommendations for councils similar in size to Wiltshire Council?

**Response**

It is not possible to compare other Council recommendations in that detail. Even if it were collated, the information may not be meaningful as the Audit Commission use a range of companies to carry out audit work as well as undertaking some itself. Therefore there may be presentational differences.

KPMG however have confirmed that it is not unusual for Councils to have audit report recommendations including red ones. At the Audit Committee on 30 June KPMG reported that all actions had been progressed satisfactorily.

**Question 2**

The KPMG report states that bank reconciliations were not performed for part of the year and not signed off. How could the Chief Financial Officer be sure that the revenue budget monitoring that was being reported to Cabinet (for the months the reconciliations were not performed) was accurate? Equally how could he be sure that reports sent to external bodies, such as VAT return, did not contain significant errors?

**Response**

Difficulties were encountered during the early days in respect of bank reconciliations. Resolution of these was treated as high priority, and the bank reconciliation is now fully operational.

During the early months when it was not working properly, compensatory adjustments were made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of budget monitoring reports and external reports such as VAT. The Chief Finance Officer was satisfied that the compensatory adjustments were robust. This robustness is confirmed in terms of the Council's outturn for 2009-10 and level of General Fund balance which has been maintained in line with the budget strategy.

**QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN OSBORN**  
**TROWBRIDGE LAMBROK DIVISION**

**TO COUNCILLOR LIONEL GRUNDY CABINET MEMBER FOR**  
**CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**Question**

What is the rationale for continuing with the Special Educational Needs Review in light of the considerable cuts in this year's educational budget plus the certainty of future cuts and the consequences of a significant number of Wiltshire schools opting out of the Local Educational Authority to acquire the status of Academies and Free Schools?

**Response**

The Local Authority has not yet received any direct communication from the DfE on the future of SEN provision and two Education Bills are awaited; one on Academies and the other on Accountabilities.

However, the DfE website on Academies has an extensive list of Frequently Asked Questions. It explains that when a school becomes an Academy the existing educational provision transfers with it. The Local Authority has to be part of the conversion process where a school has a Specialist Learning Centre or Resource Base. Academies can be named as schools of choice where a child has a statement for SEN. Schools which convert to Academies retain the admissions criteria they currently use for pupils.

Therefore, most of the issues consulted on during the SEN consultation are not affected by the move of schools to academies. The only area directly affected could be the size of the SEN inclusion service being retained. All other recommendations from the consultation are part of a normal review of SEN provision which is the statutory responsibility of the Local Authority.

**QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PETER COLMER**  
**CRICKLADE AND LATTON DIVISION**

**TO COUNCILLOR SCOTT**  
**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**Question**

What are the quantifiable benefits of the Wiltshire Assembly to the ratepayers of Wiltshire and what are the associated costs in administering the process?

**Response**

Leading the Wiltshire family of partnerships (the local strategic partnership (LSP)) for the county are the three lead partnerships:

- Wiltshire Assembly conference –a very wide membership that brings together Wiltshire areas and the voluntary, public and business sectors. The Assembly looks at issues across Wiltshire and sets challenges, outlined in the Wiltshire Community Plan (SCS).
- I as Leader of the Council, chair the Wiltshire Public Service Board (PSB). It brings together chairmen or equivalent of the main public sector organisations to put in place arrangements to deliver shared priorities.
- Wiltshire Coordinating Group (WCG), which is chaired by Andrew Kerr and brings together representatives of Thematic Delivery Partnerships (TDPs), WFCAP (community area partnerships) and the voluntary sector to coordinate strategy and bring together information for the Assembly.

‘One Wiltshire’ is the principle aspiration for Wiltshire Council’s in participating in partnership working. This means looking beyond the council’s own responsibilities and making productive links with the work of other public agencies, the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and private businesses. Margaret West, Chief Officer, Voluntary Action Kennet, said ‘The VCS welcome being involved in the Wiltshire Assembly as it is a gateway to enable the sector to join in at every partnership level and bring knowledge and experience of practically working with communities and making a difference locally. My view is that the VCS has been growing its voice and influence across Wiltshire partnerships, meaning the sector is making a real contribution to partnership working and is acknowledged as a true partner. From this position, the sector then can work with partners to address the challenges ahead’.

**Benefits of the Wiltshire family of partnerships**

- **Working to a shared agenda.** The Wiltshire vision is cascading through the partnerships and organisations, ensuring our aspirations apply to service delivery in every organisation with less risk of duplication and conflicting interests, and more value for money.

Without strong partnership arrangements, this would not be as effective.

- **Supporting local projects and initiatives.** The PSB coordinated the performance reward grant scheme for area boards which has so far allocated £376,604 to local initiatives. PRG of £1m was also allocated to Action for Wiltshire for initiatives to support Wiltshire people and businesses in the recession.
- **New relationships that the public want to see.** The partnerships are excellent networking and learning opportunities and open doors to new organisational links that have already started to make a difference to projects.
- **Making a difference.** Action for Wiltshire has been the most active Wiltshire Assembly project to date. Included in the project outcomes have been temporary job placements and work mentoring for young people, allocation of £288,000 to the Citizens' Advice Bureau to support them to handle extra calls, and a business support service.
- **Commitment and support.** The Assembly conference events are very popular with all member organisations – evident from evaluation feedback. These days provide a unique opportunity for specialists to stand back and take a broader view of Wiltshire, and what needs to happen to secure a successful future for the county.
- **Good governance.** Bringing all of the above together and reaping all the benefits requires good management and strong leadership. Wiltshire Council, as lead organisation and accountable body, provides this.

### **Partnership costs**

Annual administrative costs to the council for each of the three lead partnerships with estimated staff time, based on average salaries provided by HR, are:

**Wiltshire Assembly** - £17,500. This is an average costs based on the four meetings to date. There has been a reduction in the cost of the meetings since 2008 as a result of negotiation with venues and speakers. In line with this pattern, it is anticipated that costs for 2010/11 can be lower still. To date, all conferences have been funded from regional grants; therefore cost to the Wiltshire council tax payer has been minimal.

**Wiltshire Coordinating Group** - £4,437. This is based on nine meetings. The majority of this cost is staff time for arranging the meetings (£3987 and meeting venue costs are minimal. These costs do not include any time spent by officers preparing presentations or reports for the meetings.

**Wiltshire Public Service Board** - £1,957. This includes staff time (£1,673) to prepare for and support the PSB and additional venue costs (£958). Much of the ongoing costs have been funded by grant and therefore are at no additional cost to the Wiltshire council tax payer. These costs do not include any time spent by officers preparing presentations or reports for the meetings.



**Total annual administrative costs**                      **£23,894**

**Further information**

More detailed information about the work of the partnerships is available in the Wiltshire Assembly annual report 2009. This is available on the website at <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/wiltshire-assembly-annual-report.pdf>.

**QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JEFF OSBORN**  
**TROWBRIDGE GROVE DIVISION**

**TO COUNCILLOR FLEUR DE RHE PHILIPPE**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK**

**Question**

Could members please be informed as to the extra audit fee that KPMG will be charging this Council to complete their external audit for 2009/10 as a result of deficiencies in the Council data originally provided?"

**Response**

There have not been deficiencies in the Council data originally provided.

At the Audit Committee, KPMG explained that in the first year of SAP teething problems were encountered in the early stages. This is common with the implementation of all new financial systems. As a consequence, KPMG will need to do more substantive detailed transactional testing than would be normal with an established finance system. The additional checking will be low level. KPMG will utilise Council Finance staff wherever possible to collate the information. Therefore the additional costs will be relatively low. As reported to the Audit Committee KPMG are not yet in a position to quantify these costs.

**QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JON HUBBARD**  
**MELKSHAM SOUTH DIVISION**

**TO COUNCILLOR JOHN NOEKEN**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES**

**Question**

In the light of the yet unconfirmed changes to local government that the new government has hinted at with the proposed Localism Bill would it not be prudent to put the Workplace Transformation Project on hold until we know for certain what the role of local authorities such as Wiltshire Council will be?

Is there not a risk that we could waste millions of pounds of taxpayers money refurbishing and building new offices that will not be fit for purpose in just a few years time?

In this time of having to find savings and look at how we can best protect the taxpayers money, would we not be better off investing this money in protecting front-line services?

If you do insist on proceeding with the programme can you confirm what will be the total cost of moving County Hall staff to the George Ward school site in Melksham, including any loss of revenue caused by the delay in developing the site for residential use?

**Response**

Thank you for the question, which I welcome as it gives me the opportunity to restate what I said when originally taking the proposals to Cabinet - this programme is a true invest to save programme that generates savings which offer the opportunity to protect frontline savings. In fact, for the five year period 11/12 - 15/16 the Programme will deliver gross revenue savings of £24.99m, which after full capital repayment and interest charges equates to net revenue savings of £8.9 million. If the programme was paused, these savings which are already factored into the council's forward financial plan would need to be found from other sources, potentially including front line service reductions - the programme is in fact an excellent example of investing in frontline services and very much in line with the announcements made by government.

Councillors will all be aware that one of the areas highlighted within the Coalition Government's Emergency Budget that should be targeted in order to protect frontline services is property rationalisation and disposal - we are fortunate to be ahead of the curve in so far as we already have the WTP to deliver this

In addition to flexible better located buildings, the WTP delivers work anywhere telephony and ICT - tools that go to the heart of ensuring localisation of service delivery and ensuring that we have the flexibility to

respond to evolving models of public service delivery. A major aim of the refurbishment programme is to ensure that the accommodation provided is highly flexible and as far as possible is future proofed, where as it can be guaranteed that our current estate is not. The Coalition Government is clear that this is a time for Local Government to be bold, to do the right things in order to deliver long term value for money to local residents and take the hard decisions that this involves - standing still is simply not an option. I and my cabinet colleagues are committed to continue to do all we can to reduce costs - and this programme is an excellent example of this. Far from saving money, if the programme was paused now there would be significant additional revenue demands placed on the council's budgets - something that would be irresponsible at any time, but especially now when we are being asked to deliver increased savings.

All Councillors will understand the difference between capital and revenue budgets - the vast majority of the Workplace Transformation Programme is capital spend, money that cannot be transferred to front line service delivery which, in the main, is revenue funded. However, this capital investment in the programme will ensure that savings are generated that will help us protect and develop frontline service delivery over the coming years rather than continue to meet the high annual running costs of our estate (from revenue). There has been a review with Finance of the Workplace programme, endorsed by the recent Programme Board meeting; ensuring that these benefits are still deliverable. We will continue to reassess, based on any subsequent announcements by central government and any necessary change within this council.

The temporary use of George Ward does not represent a loss of revenue to the council, as the asset will remain in council ownership (and will remain part of our capital funding) and will be sold as originally planned at the end of the decant period - the sale will be delayed for up to two years, but as we currently have no prospective purchaser its temporary use by the council removes the need for vacant site security to be undertaken and as myself and Toby Sturgis have indicated previously to cabinet, this delay will hopefully allow for some recovery in demand for residential development land as the Coalition's economic policies begin to have an impact. We do not have a purchaser for the site at present. The total cost of decant across the programme will be in the order of £2.4 million, again, much of this sum which will be capitalised expenditure and of course is already fully funded for within the net savings I identified earlier.

**TO COUNCILLOR JANE SCOTT**  
**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**Question**

I refer you to the answer you gave to Cllr Trevor Carbin in February this year regarding the “Your Wiltshire Magazine”.

Could you please confirm if the sales of advertising to date are meeting the targets you previously stated?

Can you clarify if the advertising you seek is publicly funded or from the private sector?

In the previous question you were asked in February you were asked to give the projected cost of the production of the magazine. I cannot see this figure in your answer although you have indicated that your target advertising income would be £150,000. You also stated that the cost of the magazine will be offset against this advertising so I assume that the total cost for the year will be £150,000.

If this is the case can you confirm that future editions will cost only £15,000 each? If this is the case then why did the pilot editions cost over double this amount? Can you confirm that this cost includes distribution.

**Response**

**The net cost per magazine, per household is 11 pence including publication and distribution.**

Research from market research company Ipsos Mori clearly evidences that good communication and raising awareness of what councils deliver results in higher levels of public satisfaction and confidence in their local council and what it delivers.

Local intelligence evidences that people like to be made aware through direct marketing or mail to their household. Good communication is about targeting messages and information to different audiences and using the most appropriate and effective channel to do this.

One channel that the council uses is its residents’ magazine that is delivered via Royal Mail door to door to over 200,000 households. Currently this channel is the only method to reach all households. The implementation of broadband and digital inclusion across the county in the future will see the channels evolve using multi-media and as a result a reduction in published materials.

The first two magazines generated £1,950 in advertising income from the private sector.

We are currently investigating alternative ways to generate advertising income that will not be in competition with the local papers. Production and design of the magazine will be delivered in-house. Printing and distribution will be delivered by external companies.

In light of the economic climate we have reduced the number of magazines from ten to five per year and revised the advertising income to £5,000 per edition. The magazine has also been extended to promote public services and to streamline and target communications from Fire, Police, NHS, Probation, and Criminal Justice Board to local people.

The most recent edition of the magazine includes five pages of information from our partners generating an income of over £6,000.

Producing a magazine eliminates the need to publish separate service leaflets, booklets, flyers and other forms of communication. This is projected to save approx. £6,000 per edition.

Distribution cost of the magazine is around £18,500 an edition. The cost for printing is currently subject to a tender process. Previous editions print costs were approx. £20,000 per edition - total estimated gross cost - £37,000 per edition.

The combined income from partners, plus advertising, plus the saving from consolidating other communication materials into the magazine will reduce the cost to around £20,000 per edition. The net cost per household is likely to be around 11 pence per edition.

**FROM COUNCILLOR STEVE OLDRIEVE**  
**TROWBRIDGE PAXCROFT DIVISION**

**TO COUNCILLOR JOHN NOEKEN**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES**

**Question**

Council at its meeting on 1 December 2009 adopted a notice of motion I had put forward on Fair Trade.

Can the Cabinet member please update me on how the actions agreed as part of the adopted motion have since been implemented.

In particular, I would like an update on the following points:

- How the requirements of the motion have been reflected in the Council's procurement and commissioning policies including the Council's contract regulations, procurement guidance and the manager procurement toolkit and
- How the Council is promoting the concept and practice of fair trade across Wiltshire.

**Response**

With the Council's increasing financial pressures the Procurement and Commissioning functions have focussed much of its efforts towards the planning and delivery of £9m savings year on year over the next 3 year period. Despite these financial pressures the concept of sustainable procurement, including the use of fairly traded products remains an important part of the Council's procurement strategy. With limited resources available key actions have been achieved since the Council meeting on 1 December 2009. These include:-

- Adoption in March 2010 of a new Corporate Procurement Strategy. Setting out our aspirations and communicating these to staff, partners and service providers.
- Detailed specific guidance regarding the purchase and use of Fairly Traded products for staff involved in tendering is being drafted and will be published on the procurement portal. This will support staff making procurement decisions.
- Talking to local suppliers via Meet the Buyer events as sustainable procurement should also include our local SME businesses in Fair Trading opportunities.

- Hosting Fair Trade event at County Hall.
- Engagement with local and regional groups regarding sustainable procurement.
- Developing the Council's targets on Climate Change.
- Attending South West Fair Trade events (next one is in October 2010).
- Encouraging suppliers, where appropriate to source Fairly Traded products as part of their service delivery (Councillors using the Byways restaurant will now see Sodexo provide a range of products for customers to choose).

So, despite the pressures on our procurement teams to achieve demanding cost savings, good progress is being made towards implementing the actions agreed by Council in December 2009.



**QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR TREVOR CARBIN  
HOLT AND STAVERTON DIVISION**

**TO COUNCILLOR TOBY STURGIS  
CABINET MEMBER FOR WASTE, PROPERTY AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Question**

Wiltshire Council's so-called 'consultation' on the future of waste collection is based on a fortnightly residual waste collection.

However Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, has stated that: "Fortnightly collections are unpopular and unhygienic. It's the traditional weekly bin round that people want. The new Government will work with councils to freeze council tax and help them improve the frequency of rubbish and recycling collections. Let's use incentives and rewards to increase recycling, rather than cuts, fines and taxes. Families now pay a fortune in council tax - it's time they got a better deal."

How will WC respond to the Secretary of State's advice, and will it be taken into account during the current 'consultation'?

**Response**

**Why is the Council consulting on only one service option ?**

The Council has considered the views of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the results of earlier surveys before looking at a number of options for waste and recycling collections before making this proposal.

The Council came to a view that the proposal is the only option that could achieve all our aims, as follows:-

- provides the same service everywhere
- provides service improvements and better recycling opportunities to all
- meet targets set out in our Waste Strategy at an affordable cost.
- Avoid potentially huge EU fines

For these reasons the Council believes that many residents will support the proposal.

If the "No" vote is large, the Council can carry out further research using the "peoples voice" focus group of local residents to find out which aspect of the proposal is not supported.

**The New Government has said that it is in favour of Weekly waste collections. Why is the Council not proposing to carry these out?**

The council has timed its consultation on the proposal so that emerging government policy on waste can be assessed.

Any government announcements will be taken into account by the council when it decides on the proposal during the Autumn, following this consultation.

Recently, statements expressing a preference for weekly collections have been made by The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, without any guidance how to increase recycling, whilst maintaining weekly collection of residual waste.

For example, Mr Pickles' recent letter to the Audit Commission expressed anxiety that Councils might be given "perverse incentives" to cut the frequency of rubbish collections.

However, Mr Pickles also stated in the same letter that it was ultimately up to councils when they collected rubbish and recycling. This reflects his views about the importance of "localism". In a speech about this, Mr Pickles also encouraged local councils to be innovative, taking opportunities to improve services and reflecting the views of residents.

Mr Pickles also praised a recycling trial scheme in Windsor and Maidenhead, where residents are rewarded for recycling. Wiltshire Council's view of this is that the most effective and helpful way to encourage recycling is by offering more of the kerbside collection services that residents have asked for. Also, unlike any incentive scheme, the proposal does not involve weighing anybody's wheely bin or recycling box and keeping information about residents.

Caroline Spelman MP is Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, or DEFRA. Her responsibilities include waste management. In a recent speech, Mrs Spelman covered many subjects, including a commitment to "help councils deliver the quality and frequency of services their customers want whilst delivering our commitment to waste reduction."

The Council's view is that the proposal reflects these priorities, provided that it is supported by residents. If that support is forthcoming, a local solution has been found which delivers our aims at an affordable cost reducing landfill tax paid and the risk of EU fines which could be £150 per ton.

The Council is in discussion with a number of organizations to investigate the possibility of providing food waste treatment within the County.

**QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLOR CHRIS CASWILL**  
**CHIPPENHAM MONKTON DIVISION**

**TO COUNCILLOR JANE SCOTT**  
**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**Question 1**

1) Did she raise any objections to the Grant Guidance recently issued to Area Boards? 2) Is she aware that it provides for Boards to "use a proportion of their funding for projects which fall outside the criteria of the Community Grant Scheme"?

3) Why did she intervene at the Chippenham Area Board to try and prevent the Board from exercising this choice?

**Response**

I did not raise any objections to the Grant Guidance as it is up to individual Area Boards to decide how to manage their grants.

I intervened at the recent meeting of the Chippenham Area Board, because, as a member of that Board, I voiced my objection to a percentage of the grant being placed at the disposal of members to facilitate their particular priorities. The Chairman asked for a show of hands in support, or otherwise, of my views and there was a large majority in support.

It was also felt that, as this item was not on the agenda and there was no supporting information for the meeting to consider, it was sensible to defer a decision until the next meeting.

**Question 2**

Is she satisfied that all appropriate and necessary actions have been taken in respect of the payments made by Kennet District Council to staff of that Council in the transition to this unitary authority?

**Response**

Yes I am satisfied. There is ongoing action in relation to the recovery of two payments, totaling approximately £20,000.

**TO COUNCILLOR DICK TONGE**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**

**Question**

At the current rate of expenditure, how long would it have taken the Council to repair the potholes and larger scale road surface damage still visible all over the county?

**Response**

I would like to thank Mr Caswill for his question as it allows me to tell members of the tremendous work that has been carried out by Highways since the severe winter weather.

The winter had a seriously negative effect on the condition of the road network, but an enormous amount of repair work has already been completed and will continue for the rest of the year.

It is estimated that over 7,000 potholes have been filled so far this year, including those repaired by the Parish Stewards who have been patrolling the network to fix the worst potholes quickly. Over 500,000 square metres of carriageway have been resurfaced, with a further 35,000 square metres currently underway.

Because of the extensive damage a programme of smaller localised repairs is underway with over 5,000 square metres of repairs completed, 17,000 square metres in hand, and further sites being identified in the south and east of the county.

The Velocity Repairers are working on repairing minor roads and have already treated over 15,000 square metres of road surface.

Mr Caswill will know that there is no answer to his question. A road network the size of Wiltshire's needs constant attention. Expenditure is broadly linear but slows as winter approaches as attention is turned to gritting and keeping the roads safe. I would like to point out that the road surface damage and the appearance of a road surface is not the main criteria when choosing the schedule of works. The most important factors are skid resistance and where there are underlying structural issues.

The Council is making significant investment in bringing the road network up to standard, and we are seeing improvements across the county, but this is an on going process which will last all year.

**TO COUNCILLOR JOHN NOEKEN**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES**

**Question**

- 1) Does the Council still have standards for the time taken to respond to requests from (a) members of the public and (b) Wiltshire Councillors and what are they in each case?
- 2) What procedures are in place to ensure those standards are met?

**Response**

Members of the public

The standards for responding to members of the public are:

Telephone calls – Answered within 20 seconds.

Email & Letter – Full response within 10 working days. (Emails to be acknowledged within 24 hours)

The flow of calls made to Customer Services is monitored and resources are adjusted as and when there is a spike in activity. Monthly reports are produced, which amongst other things, provides details of average response times. Individual members of customer services staff review their performance statistics in monthly one to one sessions with their line manager.

For emails direct to the customer services email box, there is an automatic acknowledgement which confirms the standard for response time. A number of these emails are forwarded to other service areas for action and response and when this happens, a reminder is given of the response standards with a request that they copy customer services in on the reply. This allows customer services to monitor any emails that may have gone over the 10 days.

You will appreciate that not everything goes through customer services and that most of the email and correspondence traffic goes direct to the individual service areas. Each Service Manager is responsible for ensuring the response standards are met. I hope this answers your question on responding to members of the public, but if you have a particular concern in mind, please do take this up with me after the meeting.

Councillors

As far as responding to requests from Wiltshire Councillors is concerned, I would draw your attention to Appendix 2 of the Councillor/Officer Relations Protocol approved by Council and as contained in the Constitution.

This states that response to Councillor enquiries including emails and telephone calls *'will be acknowledged within two working days of receipt, giving details of an alternative contact if the officer concerned is absent from*

*the office' and that 'a substantive response will be provided within seven days of receipt. If that is not possible an explanation will be given as to the reason for the delay, what action is being taken, and when a response will be sent'.*

I appreciate that there are more and more pressures being placed on officers, but I would hope that these standards are being met. Councillors themselves will be the best judge of that and if you or any other Councillors have any concerns that this is not the case, please discuss this either with myself or John Quinton, Head of Democratic Services after the meeting and we will look into it.