

CABINET

17 December 2003

Attendance:

Councillors:

Campbell (Chairman) (P)

Beveridge (P)

Cook (P)

Evans (P)

Hiscock (P)

Learney (P)

Nelmes (P)

Wagner (P)

Others in Attendance and Speaking

Councillors Pearson and Quar and Mr A Rickman representing TACT.

Others in Attendance and not Speaking

Councillors Bennetts, Busher, Davies, Hollingbery and Mitchell.

831. **MEMBERSHIP OF CABINET COMMITTEES ETC**

RESOLVED:

That Councillors Bailey and Porter replace Councillor Bennetts and Knasel as deputies to the West of Waterlooville Forum and that Councillor Sutton also remain as a Deputy Member.

832. **LEADER AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Cook, the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Economy and Development stated that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister had announced on Friday how each local planning authority had performed in terms of dealing with planning applications over the last few years.

In 2003, Winchester had improved to 200 out of 362 authorities.

To set this in context, the City Council was now rated better than Hart (204), Eastleigh (254), Portsmouth (272) and Southampton (299).

In terms of historic cities, the City Council was better than Durham (213), Cheltenham (228), Brighton (230), City of Westminster (232), Salisbury (240), Bath (306), Oxford (318), Cambridge (327), and York (337).

Winchester was now officially recognised by the Government as an "improver" and was rated 69th most improved planning authority in England.

Between 2001 and 2003 the City Council improved its performance at every level of planning:

with major planning applications dealt with in 13 weeks, the City Council improved from 24% to 45%; with minor applications dealt with in 8 weeks, the City Council improved from 33% to 53%; and with all other applications dealt with in 8 weeks, the City Council improved from 70% to 82%.

In summary, these increases were approximately 21%; 20% and 12% respectively.

Thanks were expressed to all planning staff who had worked extremely hard to achieve this improvement. Extra resources through the Planning Delivery Grant had helped to target resources to where they were needed both in terms of staff and IT. The City Council looked forward to the announcement of the next round of planning delivery grant so that it could continue its improvements into 2004.

Councillor Beveridge, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Access, stated that he had attended a meeting of representatives of disabled people's groups, including disabled drivers, on 15 December 2003. The meeting had proved very useful and issues arising included the difficulty in parking for disabled drivers. There was demand for an increased number of on and off street parking bays and amendments to some existing parking bays, including those at the River Park Leisure Centre, to aid ease of parking. An additional point was the misuse of bays with general parking taking place in bays allocated for disabled persons.

A number of the points arising would be incorporated into the Council's guidance leaflet on car parking.

833. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held 3 December 2003 (less exempt item) be approved and adopted.

834. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions asked/statements made.

835. **REVENUE BUDGETS 2004/05**
(Report CAB740 refers)

Councillor Learney, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, reported that since the report was prepared, the Government had announced an extra £46,000 support grant for the City Council. This affected the figures contained in Paragraph 8.5 of the report, which should now read as follows: -

External Support 2004/2005 – £5,933,000, (difference £181,000 (3.1%));

External Support (cash) 2004/2005 – £5,933,000 (difference £445,000).

She continued that, even taking into consideration the £46,000 additional support, the Council's support grant was still significantly less than provided in the 2003/2004 financial year. As a result, a rise in Council Tax would be required to make up this difference, even before any other considerations were taken into account, including

inflation. The consequence for the Council was that a number of options needed to be considered in terms of savings and growth. In general, there would also be a review of spending to identify areas where reductions could be made.

She continued that an exception would be the establishment of a customer services unit, which would be funded directly from reserves. This was seen as being an "invest to save" scheme as the capital cost and initial additional revenue costs could be recovered in the future by savings.

The Chairman commented that even with an increase in Council Tax of 7%, from the preliminary growth items identified, there would still be a gap of £1.2 million to be funded. The resultant budgetary pressures needed to be further analysed and the budget and Council Tax would be determined at the February meeting of Cabinet, once the potential items for growth and savings could be further investigated. There was also the receipt of the Planning Delivery Grant, which needed to be taken into consideration in setting the revenue budget and details of this would not be available until January 2004.

Cabinet agreed to the Chairman's suggestion to defer consideration of the report for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

That consideration of the total revenue budgets and growth and savings proposals for 2004/2005 be deferred for consideration at the meeting of Cabinet to be held in February 2004.

836. CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND BUDGET 2003/04 TO 2008/09
(Report CAB741 refers)

In view of the deferral of the Revenue Budget for 2004/2005 to a future meeting of Cabinet, it was also agreed that this report also be deferred to that meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the report be deferred to the meeting of Cabinet to be held in February 2004.

837. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2004/05
(Report CAB772 refers)

Cabinet noted that discussions were continuing between the Leader, the Director of Finance and Hampshire County Council to progress a scheme for dealing with discounts for second homes. These negotiations were not reflected in the report set out, but would be submitted directly to Council at its meeting to be held on 7 January 2004 if any charges are necessary.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RECOMMENDED:

1. THAT THE CALCULATIONS CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT FOR THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2004/2005 BE APPROVED.

2. THAT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (CALCULATION OF TAX BASE) REGULATIONS 1992, THE AMOUNT CALCULATED BY WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 2004/2005 BE 44,795.81 PROPERTIES AT BAND D EQUIVALENT.

3. THAT THE AMOUNT CALCULATED AS THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR EACH PARISH WITHIN THE AREA OF WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL AND FOR WINCHESTER TOWN SHALL BE AS STATED IN APPENDIX C TO THIS REPORT.

838. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2004/05**

(Report HO21 refers)

Cabinet noted that at its meeting on 10 December 2003, the Housing Performance Improvement Committee had considered this item. Cabinet also had regard to the TACT comments as set out in Report HO24 below.

Arising out of consideration of this item, the Director of Health and Housing agreed that the Council's information leaflet on disabled adaptations should include reference to the Council Tax discounts that are available for properties having undertaken certain adaptations for the disabled. The discount was one band below the assessed level and was applicable to the occupier.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RECOMMENDED:

1. THAT THE RENT INCREASE FOR 2004/05 BE AGREED IN LINE WITH THE GOVERNMENT GUIDELINE, RESULTING IN AN AVERAGE INCREASE FOR CITY COUNCIL TENANTS OF 3.98%.

2. THAT THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET FOR 2004/05 AS DETAILED IN APPENDIX 1, BE AGREED, SUBJECT TO ANY FINAL MINOR AMENDMENTS REQUIRED FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ACTUAL ODPM SUBSIDY DETERMINATIONS IN LATE DECEMBER AND SUBJECT TO THE FINAL RENT AS DETAILED ABOVE (ANY MATERIAL CHANGE WILL BE REPORTED TO CABINET IN JANUARY 2004).

3. THAT EXISTING CHARGES IN RELATION TO GARAGE RENTS AND SERVICE CHARGES BE INCREASED BY 2.5%.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the matter not being called in by Principal Scrutiny Committee a supplementary estimate of £90,000 be made to the Disabled Adaptations budget for 2003/04, to be funded from HRA balances.

839. **TACT COMMENTS ON REPORTS HO20 AND HO21**

(Report HO24 refers)

Mr A Rickman, on behalf of TACT, commented on the effects of rent re-structuring and the financial implications for certain groups of tenants, particularly pensioners, who may perhaps receive a small industrial pension.

Councillor Hiscock, Portfolio Holder for Housing, and the Chairman stated their support for TACT on this issue and added their support to TACT's proposals to make representations to the Government.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

That the comments of TACT as set out in the reports and as made above, be noted.

840. **HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY**

(Report CAB750 refers)

Cabinet agreed to support the recommendations in principle as it was noted that a decision by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on grant funding would probably not be known until March 2004, which was after the budget setting process. However, due to the joint agency proposals of the scheme to be conducted in conjunction with East Hampshire District Council, Test Valley Borough Council and Hampshire County Council, the Director of Health and Housing was optimistic that grant assistance would be obtained.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the progress to set up a joint Home Improvement Agency for the Council and the arrangements for the submission of funding to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister through the Hampshire County Council's Supporting People programme be noted.

2. That the objective of operating a joint Home Improvement Agency as recommended in the Private Sector House Conditions Survey 2001, and following detailed consideration and support by the Members and Officers Stock Conditions Working Group be endorsed, but it be noted that progress will be subject to the success of a Revenue Budget growth bid as part of the 2004/05 Budget process.

3. That the Director of Health and Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, be authorised to agree the evaluation criteria for the service tender.

841. **WINCHESTER 4 BUSINESS**
(Report CAB775 refers)

The Director of Development Services confirmed that the proposals would apply to the whole district. At the suggestion of Members, Sparsholt College and Winchester and Eastleigh Healthcare NHS Trust were added to the Economic Partnership Board. It was also agreed that all the relevant Chambers of Commerce should be invited in addition to the North Hampshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That an Economic Partnership Board be set up (Winchester 4 Business).
2. That the membership be derived from the list contained in the report with the addition of Sparsholt College and Winchester and Eastleigh Healthcare NHS Trust and all relevant Chambers of Commerce.
3. That Winchester 4 Business be tasked with producing an Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan.
4. That Cabinet meet the Board twice annually.
5. That secretarial support be provided by the City Council.
6. That the establishment of an officer with day to day responsibility for liaising with the business community to act as an 'open for business/ one stop manager be supported.

842. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS**
(Report CAB767 refers)

Under Council Procedure Rule 35, the Chairman stated that Councillors Pearson and Quar had requested to speak under this item.

Councillor Quar spoke regarding the application at West Meon Woodland Walk, West Meon. In summary, she stated that this proposal had resulted from the Village Design Statement and there was local support for the provision of a circular woodland walk. There had been a significant time commitment from local volunteers to carry out the work and that grants had been received from the East Hampshire Area of Natural Beauty Project Group. The result was a much improved landscape.

Councillor Pearson stated in summary that he supported the proposals for the Forest of Bere – improvement to access at West Wood, to protect footpaths from erosion. He also supported the scheme at Swanmore Village Centre, where the proposals would bring about much needed landscape enhancements at a road junction at the gateway to the proposed South Downs National Park. The Parish Council supported

the scheme and the Council's contribution would be supplemented from money obtained from the Village Design Statement.

Arising out of consideration of this item, the Director of Development Services was asked to consider the financial involvement of Parish Councils in the future provision of Environmental Improvement Grants.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

That grant commitments be made as follows:

- (i) Forest of Bere, West Wood – up to £11,000 (one third) be committed to the project.
- (ii) St Catherine's Hill Restoration Project – to agree the principle of up to £9,333 to be committed to the project.
- (iii) West Meon Woodland Walk – up to £12,500 be committed to the project.
- (iv) Swanmore Village Centre – £12,500 be committed to the project in 2004/05

843. **GRANTS UNDER THE PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990**
(Report CAB768 refers)

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That an offer of up to £20,000 (approximately 6%) be made on eligible repairs at the Grade I listed Church of St Peter & St Paul in Hambledon.
- 2. That the grant pockets be varied to accommodate this offer and the increased demand for 'City Council Only' grants, with the proviso that the 'Building at Risk' pocket shall not be reduced unless it appears by mid February 2004 that not all of funding will be allocated.
- 3. That delegated offers since the Cabinet Meeting on 17 September 2003 be noted.

844. **RELEASE OF OPEN SPACE FUNDS FOR UPHAM PARISH COUNCIL**
(Report CAB769 refers)

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

That £15,717 be released from the Open Space Fund to Upham Parish Council for the provision of a new sports pavilion.

845. **APPROVED SUPPLIERS AND CONTRACTORS LIST**
(Report CAB774 refers)

Cabinet noted that the above report was withdrawn after the agenda for the meeting had been dispatched and would be considered at a later date.

846. **BASINGSTOKE REVISED DEPOSIT LOCAL PLAN REVIEW**
(Report CAB770 refers)

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council be thanked for the opportunity to comment on the Revised Deposit version of its Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan Review (1996-2016).

2. That Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council be advised that, in the light of the change RD2 002 contained in the Revised Deposit Plan, the City Council's representation on the First Deposit Plan, regarding the inclusion of clear standards for housing densities in cases of new development, has been overcome.

847. **REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES**
(Report CAB771 refers)

Cabinet noted that a further change was requested in addition to the vacancies on outside bodies outlined in the above report. Members were requested to endorse the following change of deputy representative on the Winchester Housing Needs Group: Councillor Coates to replace Councillor Oxley. This change was agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the following appointments be made (term of office in brackets):

- (i) The Lanterns Early Years Centre (4 years)
Councillor Davies
- (ii) Winchester Detached Youth Work Project (1 year)
Councillor Love.
- (iii) Winchester Housing Needs Group
Councillor Coates to replace Councillor Oxley as a deputy.

848. **MINUTES OF THE ICT INFORMAL MEMBER/OFFICER WORKING GROUP**
(Report CAB773 refers)

Cabinet considered the minutes of the ICT Informal Member/Officer Working Group held 24 November 2003 (less exempt item).

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the ICT Informal Member/Officer Working Group (less exempt item) held 24 November 2003 be noted.

849. **FUTURE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

There were no items to report.

850. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

RESOLVED:

That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business because it is likely that, if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

<u>Minute Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description of Exempt Information</u>
851	Exempt Minutes of the previous meeting - Content Management System) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the authority). (Para 7 Schedule 12A refers).
852	52 St Georges Street, Winchester)
	Exempt Minutes of the ICT Informal Member/Officer Working Group - Content Management System) Any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services. (Para 9 to Schedule 12A refers).
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851. **EXEMPT MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the previous meeting held 3 December 2003 be approved and adopted

852. **EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE ICT INFORMAL MEMBER/OFFICER WORKING GROUP**
(Report CAB773 refers)

Cabinet considered the exempt minutes of the ICT Informal Member/Officer Working Group held 24 November 2003.

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the ICT Informal Member/Officer Working Group held 24 November 2003 be noted.

The meeting commenced at 9.00am and concluded at 10.30am.

Chairman