

**CABINET****7 March 2007****Attendance:**

Councillor Beckett – *Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economy and Tourism* (Chairman) (P)

Councillor Allgood – *Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources* (P)

Councillor Coates – *Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities* (P)

Councillor Hollingbery – *Portfolio Holder for Performance and Communications* (P)

Councillor Pearson – *Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Safety* (P)

Councillor Stallard - *Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Sport* (P)

Councillor Wood – *Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport* (P)

**Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:**

Councillors Beveridge, Evans and Higgins

**Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:**

Councillors de Peyer and Hiscock

Mr A Rickman (TACT)

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**1. MINUTES**

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Evans expressed concern that the Car Park Charges Option 9 was not circulated prior to the Cabinet meeting. Consequently there was no opportunity for it to be scrutinised before a decision was made (Report CAB1410 Addendum refers).

The Chairman noted these concerns and confirmed that Cabinet would always aim to ensure relevant information was made available to all Members prior to the meeting. However, in the particular case highlighted above, this had not been possible. The City Secretary and Solicitor advised that, as an amendment to a previously published report agreed in open session, the correct procedure had been followed in making the decision.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the previous meeting (less exempt items), held on 13 February 2007, be approved and adopted.

2. **LEADER AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Beckett reported that he had attended the press launch for the Year of Sculpture 2007 event. Councillor Stallard continued that the event included a number of large scale exhibitions in Winchester, including one from the renowned artist Damien Hurst. Further details were available on the Council's Website. She expressed her thanks to all the officers involved in organising the events.

Councillor Beckett advised that a "Future of Winchester" debate would take place on 13 March 2007 at the Theatre Royal, involving a "Question Time" type format, chaired by Mark Oaten MP. Tickets were free and were available in advance from the Theatre Royal.

3. **HOUSING SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS IMPROVEMENTS**

(Report CAB1402 refers)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Higgins queried whether the works at Itchen Abbas and Martyr Worthy would be adopted by Southern Water when completed. He also asked what proportion of the work costs would be recharged to householders.

In response, the Director of Development explained that it was hoped that the works would be adopted by Southern Water under a Section 104 agreement. However, adoption was generally a complicated and lengthy process. Councillor Coates clarified that maintenance works, but not improvement works, could be recharged to leaseholders.

The Chairman noted that TACT had been consulted on the proposals and their comments were included in paragraph 8 of the Report.

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

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Development, in consultation with the Director of Communities, be authorised to progress the works outlined in the Report.

4. **CAR PARKS CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

(Report CAB1409 refers)

Cabinet noted that a revised version of Appendix 1 had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting, which contained slight amendments to the proposed Capital Programme, although no alterations to the overall budget figures. The Chairman agreed to accept the amended Appendix onto the agenda, as an item requiring urgent consideration, to enable a decision on the programme to be made.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Higgins requested clarification about how the proposed programme would be funded. He also queried why works were planned for St Peters Car Park when its future was uncertain. Councillor Wood confirmed the programme would be funded from capital reserves. The repairs to St Peters Car Park were necessary at this stage because of health and safety concerns if they were not carried out.

In response to a question about why Denmead car park improvements had been delayed until 2008/09, the Director of Development advised that the order of work was proposed following an inspection programme of all car parks, with the most urgent placed first. However, inspections would continue and emergency repairs undertaken if necessary.

The Director also confirmed that the proposed improvements to the upper car park area at Perins School, New Alresford were proposed in order that it could be used for overflow car parking for the general public. Negotiations on terms for the use of the site were continuing.

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Programme for 2007/08 as outlined in the amended Appendix to the Report be approved and that the indicative programme for 2008/09 be noted as a basis for planning and preparing future works.

2. That the Director of Development be given delegated authority to make minor adjustments to the programme, in order to meet maintenance and operational needs of the District's car parks throughout the year as required, in consultation with Director of Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport.

3. That a report on this programme be submitted on an annual basis, setting out progress and recommending future priorities.

5. **PROJECT INTEGRA REVISED CONSTITUTION AND ANNUAL ACTION PLAN**  
(Report CAB1425 refers)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Higgins queried whether it was realistic to expect the Council to meet its target of 40 per cent recycling and composting rate by 2008/09. In addition, he asked whether additional recycling collections, such as kerbside glass collection, were being investigated.

Councillor Pearson advised that the results of the recent Alternative Weekly Collection trials indicated that a rate of 40 per cent was achievable. He confirmed that the feasibility of kerbside collection of glass would be investigated in the future, in addition to other possible recycling collections, such as kitchen waste.

Cabinet congratulated the Portfolio Holder and officers for their work on Project Integra.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the Project Integra Hampshire Revised Constitution, as set out in Appendix 1 of the Report, be approved.

2. That the Project Integra Annual Business Plan (ABP) for 2007 - 2012, as set out in Appendix 2 of the Report, be approved.

3. That Winchester City Council's Partner Implementation Plan, as detailed in Appendix 3 of the Report, be approved.

6. **WINCHESTER DISTRICT BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN**  
(Report CAB1426 refers)

Cabinet noted that the Report's recommendations should be amended to allow delegation to the Director of Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Safety (and not the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport).

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Evans expressed support for the principles of the Plan. However, she expressed some concern that the proposed financing and details were not clearly stipulated in the document. She suggested that Cabinet receive an annual monitoring report on progress against the Plan.

In response, Councillor Pearson advised that the agreed 2007/08 budget did include some expenditure on biodiversity issues. However, he acknowledged that some contents of the Plan, such as the appointment of a Biodiversity Officer, were not budgeted for at this stage. However, they were included as aspirations for the future. He confirmed he would monitor progress against the Plan as the relevant Portfolio Holder.

The Chief Executive reported the Plan was a partnership document and the Natural Environment Forum for the District was taking a lead in its development and monitoring against progress.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the Biodiversity Action Plan set out in Appendix 1 of the Report be adopted, with minor editing in the final document delegated to the Director of Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Safety

2. That the Draft Corporate Biodiversity Action Table set out in Appendix 2 of the Report be agreed in principle.

3. That a revised Corporate Biodiversity Action Table be agreed by the Director of Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Safety, following internal consultation as and when additional resources become available.

7. **PLANNING GRANTS 2007/08**  
(Report CAB1429 refers)

Councillor Allgood declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as a member of the South Downs Joint Committee and continued to participate fully in the meeting.

The Director of Development reported that the Report should be corrected to recommend an Environmental Improvement Grant to the Forestry Commission (on behalf of Soberton Parish Council), and not Wickham Parish Council as stated. He apologised for any confusion caused by this error.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillors Evans and Beveridge spoke regarding this item.

Councillor Evans supported the grant for environmental improvements in Soberton.

Councillor Beveridge supported the proposed grant for restoration of St Faiths Meadow. He suggested that an information board giving details of the proposed work be displayed at the site, to explain to the public what would be done and why it was necessary.

Cabinet supported this suggestion and also that a similar display board might be appropriate for the proposed Itchen Navigation Project works.

In response to questions about the process of grant allocation, the Director of Development explained that many of the projects had already received agreement in principle.

One Member suggested that the award of planning grants could be delegated to the Portfolio Holder in the future. The City Secretary and Solicitor agreed to consider this suggestion further as part of the annual review of the Constitution.

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Cabinet approves that the following planning grants be made in 2007/08:

a) Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre - £7,730

- b) South Downs Joint Committee (formerly East Hampshire AONB) - £10,820
- c) Hampshire Wildlife Trust (restoration of St. Faiths Meadow) - £7,000
- d) Hampshire Wildlife Trust (wardening of Winnall Moors and St. Faith's) -£10,500
- e) British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (for local environment projects) £5,500
- f) Itchen Navigation Project £10,000 (£10,000 per annum for five years, this being year two of a total contribution of £50,000)

2. That Cabinet approves the following Environmental Improvement Grants:

- a) £2,780 - The Forestry Commission (on behalf of Soberton Parish Council)
- b) £1,750 - The Winchester & District Allotment Holders Society

8. **LAND CHARGES AND CEMETERIES – FEES AND CHARGES 2007/08**

(Report CAB1427 refers)

In response to questions, the City Secretary and Solicitor explained that the Government regulations on the setting of Land Charges fees had changed. As a consequence, it was no longer permissible for local authorities to operate with a surplus on their land charges account. In addition, it was difficult to predict what the impact of the introduction of Home Information Packs would be on the number of local authority searches requested directly from the Council. This was because the new packs might result in a move towards searches being carried out by personal search agents, which would have a consequential reduction in fees paid to the Council.

One Member queried whether the Council could establish its own search agent service to compete in the new market. However, the City Secretary and Solicitor advised that this was not envisaged by the Government and the Council was not in a position to be able to do this.

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

RESOLVED:

- 1. That a fee of £39 be set for the local land charge search fee (LLC1) for 2007/08.
- 2. That a fee of £118 be set for a combined LLC1/Con29 search fee for 2007/08.

3. That the other miscellaneous fees set out in Appendix 1 of the Report be approved.

4. That the City Secretary and Solicitor, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, be authorised to determine the amount of discount to be offered against normal fee levels where a search has been submitted in respect of the same property during the preceding four months.

5. That cemetery charges be increased with effect from 1 April 2007 by an average of 10%, as set out in Appendix 2 of the Report, and that the City Secretary and Solicitor be authorised to amend other cemetery charges to achieve the same overall percentage increase.

9. **THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES BILL**  
(Report CAB1431 refers)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Beveridge expressed the support of the Liberal Democrat political group for the Bill. However, he believed that the recent Cabinet decision to introduce free half hour on-street parking in Winchester was contrary to ideas of promoting sustainability. In addition, it was contrary to Council proposals as set out in the Air Quality Action Plan, as he believed it would encourage car journeys into the centre of Winchester. It would also not be good for Winchester traders in general, as it did not encourage longer stays in the town.

The Chairman welcomed the support for the Bill. With regard to the wider points made, he stated that Cabinet decisions were made having regard to the requirement to balance all Council policies, including promoting economic prosperity. He disputed that the introduction of free half-hour car parking would have a detrimental effect on other adopted Council policies.

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

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet endorse the principles of the Bill, and make their support known to the Department of Communities & Local Government, the Local Government Association and the local Member of Parliament. Individual party Groups may also want to encourage their own representatives at the LGA to support the Bill's proposals.

10. **SEGENSWORTH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)**  
(Report CAB1430 refers)

Councillor Allgood declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as the County Councillor for part of Segensworth and continued to participate fully in the meeting.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Evans supported the proposed BID, and in particular plans to improve transport in the area and environmental improvements (as detailed in paragraph 3 of the Report).

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

**RECOMMENDED:**

**THAT THE AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION, IN RELATION TO BID FUNCTIONS, AS SET OUT IN APPENDIX 2 OF THE REPORT BE APPROVED.**

RESOLVED:

1. That the Segensworth Business Improvement District be supported in principle.

2. That the Director of Finance be authorised to undertake any functions and make any decisions on behalf of the billing authority in relation to the Segensworth BID up to the stage of instructing the ballot holder (the Council's Returning Officer) to hold a ballot.

3. That the costs of the ballot and of administering the Segensworth BID levy scheme, as outlined in Paragraph 6 of the report, be met by the Council rather than being recharged to the BID.

4. That the Director of Finance be authorised to agree any arrangements with Fareham Borough Council in relation to the administration of the Segensworth BID levy, should it be approved in the ballot.

11. **MINUTES OF THE SOCIAL ISSUES SCRUTINY PANEL HELD 30 JANUARY 2007**

(as contained in the Council Minute Book, 28 February 2008, pages 618 to 621)

Cabinet noted the Panel's concerns relating to the provision of Affordable Housing, in addition to the requirement for a more accurate assessment of the number of rough sleepers in Winchester.

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

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Social Issues Scrutiny Panel held 30 January 2007 be received and the recommendations contained therein be noted.

12. **MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL HELD 31 JANUARY 2007**

(as contained in the Council Minute Book, 28 February 2007, pages 622 to 625)

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

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Resources Scrutiny Panel held 31 January 2007 be received and the recommendations contained therein be noted.

13. **MINUTES OF THE CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE HELD 7 FEBRUARY 2007**

(Report CAB1428 refers)

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

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Cabinet (Local Development Framework) Committee held 7 February 2007 (as attached as Appendix A to the Minutes) be received.

14. **FUTURE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Evans queried whether the matters raised in the petition to Council on 28 February 2007 concerning proposals for a new primary school in Whiteley, would be referred to the next Cabinet on 28 March 2007. She stated that it was important that the petitioners received a response on this issue before the end of the Municipal Year.

The Chairman advised that the timing of this Report had not yet been decided, but it was likely that it would either be submitted to Cabinet on 28 March 2007 or 11 April 2007.

RESOLVED:

That the future items for consideration, as set out in the Forward Plan for March 2007, be noted.

15. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

RESOLVED:

1. That in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

2. 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>
##	Exempt minutes of the previous meeting	) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). (Para 3 Schedule 12A refers)

16. **EXEMPT MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held 13 February 2007 be approved and adopted.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 11.25am

Chairman