

CABINET

21 May 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 Allgood and Davies

Others in attendance and not speaking:

Councillor Pearson

32. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions asked or statements made.

33. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT**

Cabinet noted that it was the final day in office before the retirement of the Chief Executive, David Cowan. The Chairman expressed her thanks for all his support and assistance to herself as Leader and to all Members throughout his 23 years with the Council. She particularly commented on his even-handed approach to all issues and wished him many happy years retirement. Mr Cowan reciprocated appropriately.

The Chairman also welcomed to the meeting the new Chief Executive, Simon Eden, who had started in post this week and had been working alongside Mr Cowan for the last few days.

34. **MINUTES**

Members noted that this item had not been notified for inclusion on the agenda within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept the item as a matter requiring urgent consideration due to the need to reconsider at the earliest opportunity one of the appointments made at the previous meeting.

It was reported that since the last meeting, Councillor Steel had indicated that he did not wish to be a representative on the Winchester Housing Group. It was therefore agreed that Councillor Beveridge be appointed instead.

Further to the comments made at the last meeting, the Chairman requested that the agenda include an item reminding Councillors that if they wished to speak at Cabinet about a particular item they should give notice to the Committee Administrator prior to the meeting. The Councillor would then normally be invited to speak at the commencement of the appropriate agenda item.

RESOLVED:

1. That, subject to the above, the minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2003 be approved and adopted.

2. That Councillor Beveridge be appointed as one of the two Council representatives on the Winchester Housing Group for the 2003/04 Municipal Year (the other representative is Councillor Rees).

35. **COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT**
(Report CAB660 refers)

During discussion of the draft Corporate Self-Assessment (contained as Appendix B to the report), Members made a number of comments as outlined below:

- The wording of the section on the local economy might require review following the allocation of a Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment, Economy and Development (page 7).
- The availability of the consultancy budget and internal audit support for Principal Scrutiny Committee should be noted under the "Modern Member Structure" section of the report (page 9).
- The table on page 11 should include a note about the commitment of Members, in addition to staff, under the "strengths" section.
- The possibility of including information about the introduction of new parking systems in more than one section of the report should be investigated (although it was noted that the limited space available might prevent this).

The Director of Health and Housing reported that the timetable for approval of the Housing Strategy should be updated to indicate that the document would not now be completed until late 2003/early 2004 (Appendix F to the report refers).

With regard to the limited space available within the Corporate Self-Assessment, the Chief Executive commented that any issues which had to be omitted could be highlighted when the Inspectors visited the Council.

A number of Members queried whether it would be possible to increase the rating of the Council from a three to a four in any of the self-assessment categories, having regard to the importance of producing an accurate self-assessment. It was agreed that officers consider this suggestion further and the Chief Executive be authorised to make any necessary changes to the report.

The Chairman expressed her thanks to the Chief Executive and his team for their work on preparing the report.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the progress made against the agreed timetable for the CPA process be noted and subject to the above amendments, the updated timetable be agreed.

2. That, subject to the comments outlined above, the draft self assessment attached as Appendix B to the report and the scores proposed therein be agreed in principle for submission to the IDeA as background to the peer review.

3. That authority be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Performance Management, to amend the self assessment to reflect points raised during discussion at this meeting or to improve the accuracy and readability of the document.

36. **BEST VALUE REVIEW OF DEMOCRACY**
(Report CAB651 refers)

The Chairman and the Portfolio Holder for Performance Management expressed their thanks to the Democracy Review Team for their work in producing a clear and comprehensive Report and Improvement Plan.

One Member requested that the wording of paragraph 3.5.11 (page 25 of the Review) be re-phrased as she did not necessarily believe it would be appropriate for Mayors to depart from their current "first come first served" method of accepting invitations. However the Chief Executive advised that some former Mayors had commented that a different approach might be desirable. Following further discussion, the following amendment was agreed (amendment shown in *italics*):

" To do this effectively it *might be* necessary for the Mayor to be somewhat selective in accepting invitations from the very many submitted."

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

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the above amendment, the Report and Improvement Plan of the Democracy Best Value Review be endorsed.

37. **MINUTES OF THE WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM**
(Report CAB655 refers)

Cabinet considered the minutes of the Winchester Town Forum meeting held 7 April 2003 and the recommendations contained therein.

Members discussed the request from the Forum to consider the establishment of a Youth Officer to act as a central contact for the numerous existing facilities for young people in the Winchester town area. In response to questions, the Director of Community Services advised that the County Council's statutory duties to provide certain facilities for young people involved a narrower focus than envisaged by the Forum. He continued that it might be possible within existing resources to compile a list of contacts for organisations providing activities for young people, such as local theatres, cinemas and dance groups. However, it would not be feasible to include

current event listings for each of these organisations. Members welcomed this suggestion and agreed that it should ideally be available on the Council's Website as this was considered to be the most accessible format for young people.

Following further discussion about youth issues, the Chief Executive suggested that officers be requested to undertake further investigation and report back to a future Cabinet on the best way forward. Members agreed with this suggestion.

With regard to the Forum's request that Cabinet consider improvements to the maintenance schedule for Winchester Town play areas, Members agreed that this matter be referred to the Community, Arts and Social Performance Improvement Committee to consider further and report back accordingly.

In response to questions about the proposal for a report on the programme of investment in the Council's play areas, the Director of Community Services confirmed that this report would be submitted to both the Town Forum and Cabinet in the near future. Members stressed the need for some urgency on this matter, in particular to ensure the introduction of fencing around play areas at the earliest opportunity.

With regard to the request for additional litterbins for the Cathedral Close, Members noted that it had also been suggested that the cost not be met from the Winchester Town Account. The Director of Health and Housing stated that it would be possible to meet the cost from the Environmental Health budget for this year only. In agreeing to the request, Members commented that the Cathedral should be made aware that Cabinet considered that further budget increases should not be necessary.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the minutes of the Winchester Town Forum meeting held 7 April 2003 be noted.
2. That the Director of Community Services consider further the issues arising from the request for the provision of co-ordinated information for young people and report back to a future Cabinet on the best way forward, having regard to the discussions outlined above.
3. That the Community, Arts and Social Performance Improvement Committee be requested to consider improvements to the maintenance schedules for the Winchester Town area play grounds and fields and report back to Cabinet in due course.
4. That the programme of investment in the Council's play areas be submitted to future meetings of the Town Forum and Cabinet for consideration as a matter of urgency.
5. That four additional heritage style litterbins be provided for the Cathedral Close.

6. That the litterbins purchase cost of £1,600, together with the annual cost of £1,500 for emptying the bins for 2003/04 only, be met from a carry forward of an underspend in the Environmental Health budget of £3,100 from 2002/03 to 2003/04 (the issue of where the annual cost would be met after this year would require consideration at a later date in the annual budget process).

38. **BUSINESS RATE PROPOSALS**
(Report CAB653 refers)

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

RESOLVED:

That the proposals as outlined in the Local Government Bill concerning business rates be noted, and the position be reviewed as part of the financial strategy later in the year, taking account of any comments made by the People and Work Best Value Review Team.

39. **CIPFA PRUDENTIAL CODE FOR CAPITAL FINANCE IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES**
(Report CAB320 refers)

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the principles of the Code be supported and regard be had to them through the budget process this year.

2. That the comments as outlined in Appendix B of the report be submitted to CIPFA.

40. **WINCHESTER EXCAVATIONS COMMITTEE - FUNDING**
(Report CAB649 refers)

The Chief Executive declared a Code of Conduct interest in this item because of his membership of the Excavations Committee as the City Council's representative.

The Chief Executive gave a short presentation on the work of the Winchester Excavations Committee over the years.

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

RESOLVED:

That the sum of £10,000 be carried forward from managed savings in the 2002/03 Community Services Department's budget to be made available to provide a grant to the Winchester Excavations Committee to support the completion of the current programme of publication of the "Winchester Studies".

41. **RELEASE OF OPEN SPACE FUNDS FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL OF DENMEAD**
(Report CAB646 refers)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Allgood (a Ward Member for Denmead) spoke in support of the Parish Council request for funds for the provision of a skatepark facility. He advised that the plans involved the use of noise resistant materials to minimise the impact on the local community.

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

RESOLVED:

That £43,947 be released from the Open Space Fund to the Parish Council of Denmead for the provision of a skatepark facility.

42. **MEMBER'S ALLOWANCES – APPEALS AND DISPUTES COMMITTEE**
(Report CAB657 refers)

In response to Members' questions, the City Secretary and Solicitor advised that the award of an additional Special Responsibility Allowance would be permissible within the current Scheme. He added that new regulations had recently stipulated that the whole Members' Allowances Scheme would need to be reviewed by September 2003.

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

RECOMMENDED:

THAT A BAND 6 SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE BE PAID TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE APPEALS AND DISPUTES COMMITTEE FOR THE 2003/04 MUNICIPAL YEAR.

43. **INTERNAL SERVICES SCOPING REPORT**
(Report CAB659 refers)

Members noted that the vacancy for a Member representative on the Group had not yet been filled. It was agreed that the making of this appointment be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Group Leaders.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the Internal Services Scoping Report be approved.
2. That the appointment of a replacement Member representative on the Best Value Group be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Group Leaders.

44. **FUTURE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

The Director of Development Services advised that the report on Council Policy on Telecom Masts would be deferred to allow consideration of the result of the Byron Avenue Public Inquiry which was due to resume on 2 July.

In addition, the Director of Community Services stated that the reports on the Guildhall Pricing Review and the Community Development Review were unlikely to be ready in time for the 11 and 30 June meetings respectively.

The City Secretary and Solicitor advised that because of recent changes in Government guidance, the Members' Allowances report would be deferred until September.

The Director of Finance reported that the Reception Areas Refurbishment report might be deferred until July.

RESOVED:

That the list of future items for consideration by Cabinet, set out on the agenda sheet and amended above, be noted.

45. **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>
46, 47, 48, 49 & 50	Upgrade to Revenues and Benefits System 1 & 2 Larrymore Cottages, Exton Coitbury House, Winchester) Information relating to the) financial or business affairs of) any particular person (other) than the authority). (Para 7) Schedule 12A refers).)) 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).

46. **UPGRADE TO REVENUES AND BENEFITS SYSTEM**
(Report CAB652 refers)

Cabinet considered the above report which outlined a proposal for an upgrade of the Revenues and Benefits systems (detail in exempt minute).

47. **1 AND 2 LARRYMORE COTTAGES, EXTON**
(Report CAB650 refers)

Cabinet considered the above report which outlined proposals for the future of the Cottages (detail in exempt minute).

48. **COITBURY HOUSE, FRIARSGATE, WINCHESTER**
(Report CAB654 refers)

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

RESOLVED:

That the decision made under Section 6 Item A.2 of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers, as detailed in the report, be noted.

The meeting commenced at 9.00am and concluded at 11.00am