

# Cabinet

## Minutes of meeting held on 18 July 2007

The Cabinet met at County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester on 18 July 2007.

### Present:

Angus Campbell (Chairman)

Hilary Cox (Vice-Chairman)

Geoffrey Brierley, Toni Coombs, David Crowhurst and Alan Havelock.

John Peake attended under Standing Order 54(1).

Robin Legg attended by invitation for minutes 378.1 to 378.5.

Officers: David Jenkins (Chief Executive), Elaine Taylor (Director for Corporate Resources), Miles Butler (Director for Environment), Steve Pitt (Director for Adult and Community Services), Stephen Prewett (Director for Children's Services), Paul Kent (Chief Financial Officer), Sheila Brown (Principal Democratic Services Officer) and Melissa Wheeler (Communications Officer).

For certain items as appropriate: Deb Appleby (Head of Policy and Performance), Matthew Beaumont (Local Area Agreement Manager), Steve Cheeseman (Business and Facilities Manager), Michael Ford (Corporate Performance Manager), Andy Frost (Strategic Manager – Drug Action and Community Safety Team), Mike Harries (Head of Property Management), Chris Morgan (Programme Manager, Customer Connect Programme), Chris Scally (External Funding and Development Manager), and Peter Scarlett (Valuation and Estates Manager).

(Publication Date: 27 July 2007.)

(Notes: (1) In accordance with Rule 16(b) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules the decisions set out in these minutes will come into force and may then be implemented on the expiry of five working days after the publication date.

(2) **RECOMMENDED** in this type denotes that the approval of the County Council is required.)

### Minutes

323. The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2007 were confirmed and signed.

### Code of Conduct

324.1 Angus Campbell declared a personal interest in minutes 360 and 361 by reason of his membership of the South West Regional Assembly including the Regional Spatial Planning and Transport Group.

324.2 Alan Havelock declared a personal and prejudicial interest in minutes 373 and 374 by reason of his membership of the Dorset Fire Authority. He left the room during the discussion of this item.

324.3 Geoffrey Brierley declared a personal and prejudicial interest in minutes 373 and 374 by reason of his membership of the Dorset Fire Authority. He left the room during the discussion of this item.

324.4 Hilary Cox declared a personal interest in minutes 348 and 349 by reason of her husband's Board membership of the 'Baldric' company.

**Recommendations from Committees**Roads and Rights of Way Committee – 4 July 2007**Resolved**

325. That the following recommendations be adopted:-

- |                    |                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Recommendation 123 | - One Way Road – Horsecliffe Lane, Swanage                                                                                                   |
| Recommendation 126 | - Experimental 24 Hour Seasonal Closure – Shore Road (South), Swanage                                                                        |
| Recommendation 129 | - Saturday Market, Wareham Quay – Review of Trial Period of Operation                                                                        |
| Recommendation 132 | - Proposed Mandatory On-Road Cycle Lanes – Dorchester Road, Weymouth                                                                         |
| Recommendation 138 | - Disabled Parking Bay – Hill View, Maiden Newton                                                                                            |
| Recommendation 141 | - Proposed 30 and 40 mph Speed Limits – C95, Bothenwood and Pig Oak                                                                          |
| Recommendation 165 | - Applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders - Statement of Priorities (subject to the views of the Performance Overview Committee) |
| Recommendation 168 | - Defra Consultation Document on the Right to Apply for Public Path Orders and the Associated Rights of Appeal                               |

Fisherman's Bank, Christchurch

326. The Director for Corporate Resources explained that recommendation 171 of the meeting of the Roads and Rights of Way Committee meeting held on 4 July 2007 was, in fact, a resolved item but had been minuted as a recommendation by mistake. This would be corrected in the record.

Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles – Hope Square, Weymouth

327. Arising from Roads and Rights of Way Committee recommendation 135/2007, the Cabinet member for Strategic Planning and Transport drew attention to a letter to Cabinet members from two representatives of the taxi/private hire industry in Weymouth and Portland. Members had also received a letter from the County Council member for Portland Harbour in support of the request by the hire car operators for the matter to be reconsidered.

**Resolved**

328. That, on the basis that the hire car operators had been unaware that the matter would be considered at the Committee meeting on 4 July, and in order that they may have the opportunity of making representations to the Committee, the matter be referred back to the Roads and Rights of Way Committee for reconsideration.

(It was noted that there were no arrangements for public speaking at meetings of the Roads and Rights of Way Committee and that any representations would be written ones, to be reported to members.)

### **Key Decisions included in the Forward Plan**

#### **Local Area Agreement – Review of 2006/07 Performance**

329.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive on the performance of the Local Area Agreement. The report reflected the outturn against target for the year to 31 March 2007. The areas of strongest performance and the priorities for improvement in 2007-08 were also identified.

329.2 In response to a question about whether action plans were in place in respect of all targets, officers explained that this was the case in respect of the 13 reward element targets but not necessarily in respect of all of the others. However, work was in progress to achieve this in liaison with partners and theme groups.

329.3 Concern was expressed about the significant reduction in community safety grant for the current year. The Chief Executive explained that the County Councils Network and the Local Government Association had made representations to the Home Office about the reduction and especially about the short notice given. It had been emphasised that councils could not successfully proceed with local area agreements if unanticipated reductions in funding meant that targets became unrealistic.

#### **Noted**

#### **Corporate Performance**

##### **(a) Monitoring Report: Final Quarter 2006-07**

330.1 The Cabinet considered the Corporate Performance Monitoring Report for the final quarter of 2006-07. A draft of the report had been presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee in advance of the statutory deadline to publish a Best Value performance plan by the last working day in June. A small number of changes had been made subsequently in completing this final version.

330.2 Members' attention was drawn to the best and poorest areas of performance.

330.3 Asked whether the report could be produced in future in a more 'user-friendly' format, officers explained that the information should be easier to access once the new electronic performance management system was implemented.

#### **Noted**

##### **(b) The Corporate (Best Value) Performance Plan 2007-08**

331.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive which provided details of Best Value performance indicators for 2006-07 and targets to 2009/10. These had been published on 29 June, in accordance with the statutory deadline.

331.2 The Chief Executive drew members' attention to the concerns expressed by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee when considering this report at their meeting on 26 June. The concerns centred on aspects of target setting, especially in relation to Adult Services, and the timing of the report being submitted for scrutiny. The Committee had asked that the Performance Overview Committee consider their concerns at their next meeting.

331.3 The Chief Executive explained that consideration was being given to how the relevant information could be presented earlier in the year in future, but bearing in mind the

conflicting timescales in relation to the availability of information on progress against targets and the deadline for submission of the report to the Audit Commission. Members were also reminded of the need to balance ambition against realistic expectations when setting targets.

331.4 Members felt that it would be helpful if information could be appended to the report setting out the Authority's performance against that of other councils. It was agreed that this would be possible but that, because information on other councils' performance was not available for some months after the submission of the report to the Audit Commission, it should be appended to the previous year's report.

**Resolved**

332. That the BVPI results and targets be added as an appendix to the Corporate Plan 'Our role in Dorset'.

**Reason for Decision**

333. To ensure that 'Our role in Dorset' is also a compliant Best Value Performance Plan.

**Corporate Sustainability Action Plan 2007/8**

334.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director for Environment which presented the fourth Corporate Sustainability Action Plan and outlined key observations from the restructure and annual review of actions within the plan.

334.2 Members noted the good progress being made. They asked that, in future reports, in areas where no or little progress had been made, more explanation should be included as to the reasons for this.

334.3 The Chief Executive informed members of the view of the Chairman of the Audit Commission of the great importance of an authority's management of natural resources. This would be a major strand in the 'use of resources' section of the corporate assessment for the following year.

**Resolved**

335. That the County Council's progress in mainstreaming sustainability across all services be noted and the Corporate Sustainability Action Plan 2007/8 be endorsed.

**Reason for Decision**

336. The County Council's Corporate Plan 2006-09 identifies the implementation of the Corporate Sustainability Action Plan as a priority action to help meet the corporate aim of building a council fit for the future.

**Poole Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation**

337.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director for Environment which sought endorsement to the officer response to the consultation by the Borough of Poole on its core strategy preferred options. The officer response had already been sent because of tight deadlines, following consultation with the Cabinet member for Environment.

337.2 Members were advised that the main issues of concern were that:-

- housing and economic growth should be balanced within the Borough of Poole;
- employment land provision was significantly higher than in the Structure Plan;

- there was too much reliance on Local Transport Plan 2 and not enough forward thinking to address transportation in the Borough of Poole and its wider connections.

### **Resolved**

338. That the response to the Poole Core Strategy consultation, as set out in the appendix to the Director's report, be endorsed.

### **Reason for Decision**

339. The Poole Core Strategy could impact on the County Council's corporate objectives to safeguard Dorset's unique environment and improve Dorset's infrastructure and strengthen Dorset's economy.

## **Recommendations from Committees**

### **Community Overview Committee – 4 June 2007**

### **Resolved**

340. That the following recommendations be adopted:-

Recommendation 12 - Dorset Adult Education Service Draft Development Plan 2007/2010

Recommendation 16 - Dorset Carers' Strategy and Policy

### **Performance Overview Committee – 18 June 2007**

### **Resolved**

341. That the following recommendation be adopted:-

Recommendation 7 - Budget Out-turn Report

### **Audit and Scrutiny Committee – 26 June 2007**

### **Resolved**

342. That the following recommendation be adopted:-

Recommendation 138 - Corporate (Best Value) Performance Plan 2007-08

## **Other Business**

## **Recommendations from Committees**

### **Community Overview Committee – 4 June 2007**

### **Resolved**

343. That the following recommendations be adopted:-

Recommendation 31 - Connexions Transition Plan

Recommendation 37 - The Formation of a Joint Transition Planning Team,

Recommendation 40 - Dorset Rights of Way Improvement Plan

### **Learning Disability – Campus Reprovision Project**

344.1 Arising from Community Overview Committee recommendation 19/2007, members considered the financial implications of the recommendation which, if adopted, would have an effect on the medium term financial strategy for future years until April 2010. While members agreed that it was important to be able to assure partners of the County

Council's commitment, it would be wrong to commit funding for future years which may not be available.

344.2 The Chief Financial Officer explained that the proposed additional funding of £80,000 per annum, until April 2010, would enable the County Council to work jointly with the Dorset Healthcare Trust in order to minimise the financial impact on the County Council of re-providing accommodation and related services to people with a learning disability. Rather than pre-empting the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the creation of the joint team would inform the process and, hopefully, reduce the likely future financial commitment.

**Resolved**

345. That the Cabinet agree to allocate funding of £80,000 in each of the next two financial years, to enable a team to undertake the work necessary to re-provide services for Dorset people currently living in Dorset Healthcare Trust accommodation, as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the Director's report. Any part year costs in the current financial year would be met by the Council's contingency and any future costs reviewed as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

**Performance Overview Committee – 18 June 2007**

**Resolved**

346. That the following recommendation be adopted:-

Recommendation 17                      - Directorate Plan Monitoring Reports 2007/08

**Audit and Scrutiny Committee – 26 June 2007**

**Resolved**

347.1 That the following recommendation be adopted:-

Recommendation 123                      - Voluntary and Community Sector Corporate Grant Making

347.2 The Chief Executive highlighted the fact that, while the Council's corporate plan included various objectives to increase the capacity of voluntary organisations, there was no clear consensus as to how that should be delivered. He suggested that an informal Cabinet/County Management Team meeting should include a session on how to achieve a shared direction in this respect, with the Voluntary Sector Link Officer attending. Members welcomed this suggestion.

**Dorset Rural Pathfinder**

348.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director for Environment on the outcomes of the Rural Pathfinder initiative, and sought agreement to the use of the remaining South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) grant.

348.2 Members were reminded that the concept and potential benefits of a regeneration company had been tested through the initiative, for which SWRDA support of £100,000 had been secured to fund feasibility and legal work attached to developing a delivery vehicle for Dorset. A company had been established under the Liveability programme managed by North Dorset District Council, and it was proposed to use the remaining grant to support the operation of that company for a two year trial period of action research.

**Resolved**

349. That the progress and outcomes of the Rural Pathfinder initiative be noted and that the use of the remaining £85,000 SWRDA grant to support the first two years of operation of the regeneration company for Dorset be agreed.

**Reason for Decision**

350. Development of the Rural Pathfinder initiative will progress the corporate aims of improving Dorset's infrastructure and strengthening Dorset's economy and safeguarding Dorset's unique environment.

**Statement of Intent Relating to Working Practices for the Great Dorset Steam Fair**

351.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director for Environment which sought approval of the proposed Statement of Intent. The document set out the respective responsibilities of the Steam Fair organisers, North Dorset District Council, the County Council, and Dorset Police.

351.2 In response to concern, members were advised that details of responsibility for damage to property within the Steam Fair site would be included within a formal lease agreement between the Steam Fair organiser and the landowner.

**Resolved**

352. That the proposed Statement of Intent relating to working practices for the Great Dorset Steam Fair be approved.

**Reason for Decision**

353. To support the corporate aim of improving Dorset's infrastructure and strengthening Dorset's economy and the corporate priority of increasing the economic viability of market towns and rural areas. Also to support the aim of building a council fit for the future and the priority of diversity and equality to treat everyone fairly and value diversity.

**Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Multi Area Agreement**

354. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director for Environment which set out progress on the development of a multi area agreement (MAA) for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole. The report outlined emerging thinking on the content and governance arrangements for the MAA. More detailed information was contained in the appendix to the report.

**Resolved**

355. That the general suggested direction of the content and governance arrangements for the developing multi area agreement for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole, as set out in the report and its appendix, be approved.

**Reason for Decision**

356. The multi area agreement will help to deliver a number of the Council's priorities, particularly to improve Dorset's infrastructure and strengthen Dorset's economy.

**Poole Harbour Steering Group Memorandum of Agreement**

357. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director for Environment which sought agreement to the signing of an updated memorandum of agreement between members of the Poole Harbour Steering Group, relating to the Poole Harbour Aquatic Management Plan. The original memorandum of agreement had been signed in September 2002 and was being updated following the publication of updated management plans.

**Resolved**

358. That the County Council's continued participation in the Poole Harbour Steering Group be supported, and the signing of the updated Memorandum of Agreement be endorsed.

**Reason for Decision**

359. The County Council has a long established relationship with the Steering Group. It has supported development of the Poole Harbour Aquatic Management Plan financially, and through the Dorset Coast Forum, and involvement with the Steering Group will allow direct influence on implementation of the management actions arising from this plan, which supports the Council's aim of safeguarding Dorset's unique environment.

**Weymouth and Portland Olympic Transport Package**

360. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director for Environment which provided details of the objectives and content of the Olympic Transport package and sought approval of the arrangements for member involvement in the progression of the procurement of the package.

**Resolved**

361.1 That the objectives and content of the package, as set out in paragraphs 2.6 to 2.8 of the report be noted.

361.2 That the creation of an Olympic Transport Package Board to oversee the progression of the procurement of the Olympic Transport Package Project to Contract Award be approved.

361.3 That the membership and terms of reference for the Board, including local member involvement, as set out in paragraphs 2.16 to 2.18 of the Director's report, be agreed.

361.4 That the Director for Environment be authorised to make decisions, after consultation with the Cabinet member for Strategic Planning and Transportation, on those procurement issues listed in paragraph 2.19 of the report.

361.5 That the intention to consider an invitation to 4Ps to undertake a Gateway Review of the project in due course be noted.

**Reason for Decisions**

362. To secure best value in the procurement process, supporting the corporate aim of improving Dorset's infrastructure and strengthening Dorset's economy.

**Thomas Hardy Leisure Centre**

363.1 The Cabinet considered a joint report by the Director for Children's Services and the Chief Financial Officer which sought approval of funding from the County Council's capital programme towards the establishment of a rebuilt Thomas Hardy Leisure Centre on the school campus, in the light of West Dorset District Council's decision to allocate £4-£5 M to the project.

363.2 The Chief Financial Officer drew members' attention to a correction required in paragraph 3.2 of the report, to replace the words 'public purse' with the words 'County Council'.

363.3 Members paid tribute to the work of Derek Highton, the Council's Youth and Community Service Manager, in achieving this outcome. The Cabinet member for Children's



Services informed members that Derek had recently been appointed to the post of Head of Youth and Community Services at Nottinghamshire County Council. The Chairman wished Derek well in his new post and thanked him for his contribution to the Council.

363.4 Members commended all those involved in the negotiations which they considered an excellent example of partners working together for the public good. The new arrangements would significantly reduce the County Council's long-term commitment in respect of the present leisure centre.

363.5 The Cabinet member for Corporate Resources asked whether the County Council's contribution to the scheme was capped, or whether it might increase, should the cost of the scheme be under-estimated.

363.6 The Chief Financial Officer explained that, while detailed costings were not yet available, the estimate was considered to be reasonable. If the eventual cost was more than estimated, any increase would be shared between the two councils on a ratio of 75% West Dorset District Council, 25% Dorset County Council.

#### **Resolved**

364. That funding of £1.5M from the capital programme towards the establishment of a rebuilt Thomas Hardy Leisure Centre on the Thomas Hardy School campus be approved.

#### **Reason for Decision**

365.1 Should agreement not be reached over a capital funding package for a new leisure centre on the Thomas Hardy School site, it is likely that West Dorset District Council would seek to withdraw from the current agreement for the joint provision of leisure activities at the Thomas Hardy School. In the event of the District Council's successful withdrawal, responsibility for the existing centre would revert to the County Council, with the District Council transferring its revenue and capital support for leisure to a new facility on the Poundbury development in 2009/10. Under such circumstances, all long term costs and risk for the Centre would become the responsibility of the County Council.

365.2 The Asset Management Group has considered the proposals and is in agreement with the recommended course of action.

#### **External Funding Monitoring Report**

366.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive which provided an analysis of the external funding activity across the County Council for the financial years 2005-06 and 2006-07. The report included a full list of all bids for funding and the results where decisions had already been made.

366.2 Members welcomed the successful outcomes and emphasised the importance of external funding in achieving the Council's aims. They noted the reduction in funding opportunities resulting from the ending of the European Union funding programmes for 2000-2006. Members recognised the importance of accessing EU funding when the programme for 2007-13 began operating fully in 2008.

#### **Noted**

#### **Winfrith CE VA and West Lulworth CE VC First Schools – Amalgamation**

367. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director for Children's Services which, following authorisation to consult and to the publication of statutory notices, sought approval of the amalgamation of the two schools with effect from September 2007.

**Resolved**

368. That, in accordance with the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2007, the proposal:-

- (a) to close Winfrith CE VA First and West Lulworth CE VC First (Federated) Schools, with effect from 31 August 2007, and
- (b) to create a 100 place single voluntary controlled first school based on the sites of the two existing schools, with effect from 1 September 2007

be approved.

**Reason for Decision**

369.1 The proposal will enhance the viability of the school, thereby creating improved opportunities to ensure the corporate aim of learning and achievement.

369.2 To support the Governing Body in their wish to formalise the closer beneficial arrangements that federation has already brought to the schools.

**Partners and Communities Together (PACT) Panels**

370.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director for Adult and Community Services on the development of Safer Neighbourhood Teams in Dorset. The report suggested an approach to County Council representation on PACT Panels.

370.2 A question was reported from the County Council member for Highcliffe and Walkford, who was also Vice-Chairman of the Police Authority, as to whether district and borough council local members would also be invited to attend PACT panel meetings, on an equal footing with County Council members, and what the position of members of town and parish councils would be.

370.3 Officers confirmed that Dorset Police were keen for all key partners to be involved in PACT panels. They were encouraging elected member involvement from all three tiers, but it would be for each organisation to determine how it wished to be represented. All representatives on PACT panels would have equal status.

370.4 The Chief Executive alerted members to budget implications not mentioned in the report. Should a large number of members wish to be involved, they would need to be briefed before attending meetings and the Chief Executive and the Director for Adult and Community Services were unsure, at this stage, whether the County Council's existing resources for community safety would be sufficient.

**Resolved**

371. That the development of Safer Neighbourhood Teams and PACT Panels be noted and that the County Council's local members represent the authority on PACT Panel meetings.

**Reason for Decision**

372. To ensure that the County Council meets its statutory obligation to help reduce crime and the fear of crime, and to help towards the corporate aim of improving health, community safety and well-being.

**"Tetra" Communications System**

(The Chief Executive and the Chief Financial Officer explained that, as Clerk and Treasurer to the Fire Authority respectively, they would advise the Cabinet but had not/would not give advice to the Fire Authority on this issue.)

373.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director for Corporate Resources on a formal request from Airwave Solutions Ltd, on behalf of the Dorset Fire and Rescue Service, to install antennae on the end of the north wing of County Hall and on the existing mast on the roof of the library building, subject to planning permission being granted.

373.2 The Director for Corporate Resources explained that the report on emission levels requested by the Joint Health, Safety and Welfare Committee had not yet been commissioned, as had been indicated when the report was written. The reason for this was that the quality of analysis would be less accurate than if obtained once the masts were in position. If members were inclined to approve the installation of the aerials for a trial period, the report would be commissioned and the process of obtaining the information would begin, as soon as the aerials were in place and operating.

373.3 The Chairman highlighted the difficult balance between the clear need for the mast, to allow inter-operation between the Dorset Fire and Rescue Service and other emergency services, and the health and safety concerns of staff.

373.4 Members were mindful of the need to ensure that staff concerns were taken into account. In view of advice that radiation emission levels would be considerably below guideline levels and would therefore not be considered hazardous, and on the understanding that an independent study would be carried out as soon as the aerials were in operation, to ensure that levels were acceptable, the Cabinet:-

#### **Resolved**

374. That the request by Airwave Solutions on behalf of the Dorset Fire and Rescue Service, to install small antennae mounted on the end of the north wing of County Hall and on the existing mast on the roof of the Library building be granted for a trial period, pending the expert report being considered to determine any longer term arrangement.

#### **Reason for Decision**

375.1 The antennae are required to enable the Dorset Fire and Rescue Service to update its current VHF radio scheme and to allow inter-operation with other emergency services.

375.2 To support the corporate aim of improving health, community safety and well-being.

### **Appointments**

#### **Dorset Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

#### **Resolved**

376.1 That Toni Coombs be appointed to fill the vacancy for a County Council representative on the Council of Governors of the Dorset Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust for the period up to the next County Council elections in 2009.

#### **Joint Health, Safety and Welfare Committee**

#### **Resolved**

376.2 That Donald Hiatt be appointed to the Joint Health, Safety and Welfare Committee in place of Andrew Cattaway for the year 2007/08.

**Exempt Business****Exclusion of the Public****Resolved**

377. That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the business specified in minutes 378 to 386 because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs indicated alongside each item of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.

**Disposal of the Former Longburton Highways Depot (paragraph 3)**

378.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director for Environment which updated them on proposals for disposing of the former depot. The report provided further information on the options for disposal and the implications for the potential capital receipt.

378.2 Members supported the proposal to offer the site initially for the provision of affordable housing as this was one of the Council's corporate priorities and an aim of the Community Strategy.

378.3 The County Council member for Sherborne Rural welcomed the proposals but expressed some reservations in respect of the twelve months timescale in which a prospective purchaser would need to obtain planning consent, and emphasised particularly the need to alert housing corporations to the availability of the site in time for them to make offers before their bidding round closed in mid-September.

378.4 The Director for Environment agreed that time was of the essence. He drew members' attention to the need for affordable housing in the area to be established before the site could be considered for exemption from West Dorset District Council's settlement policy. In order to establish the need, a Parish Need Survey would have to be carried out. This might impose limits on the number of homes that could be supported in the planning process.

378.5 Members sought assurance that the contract would be structured in such a way that, should the latter be the case, the Council would be in a position to sell any land surplus to affordable housing needs on the open market.

**Resolved**

379. That:-

- (a) the site be offered in the first instance solely for the provision of affordable housing and disposed of on terms to be agreed by the Director for Environment.
- (b) in the event that a purchaser is unable within 12 months to obtain a planning consent to develop the site with affordable housing, the site be disposed of on the open market for the best price reasonably obtainable.
- (c) an area of 0.16 ha (0.4 acres) be gifted to Cam Vale Parish Council for the provision of a new village hall.
- (d) a right of access be maintained to land at the rear of the site intended for playing field use.

**Reason for Decision**

380. To support the aims of the Community Strategy and the County Council's corporate plan through the provision of land for affordable housing.

**Customer Connect Programme****Business Case – Financial Update (paragraph 4)**

381.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director for Corporate Resources which provided a review of the financial business case for Customer Connect (formerly Access to Services), as requested by members at their meeting on 5 February 2007.

381.2 Members noted that, at present, the implementation cost of the contact centre (Dorset Direct) could be contained within existing budgets, although part of the funding for this was always dependent upon future savings.

381.3 The on-going size of the contact centre, together with any additional investment in customer care capacity, would be directly related to future savings that could be made by rigorously re-engineering more back office functions. The re-engineering should identify elements of many processes that could be more efficiently carried out in the contact centre. This further work was now largely encapsulated in the various business cases that constituted the Fit for the Future Programme.

381.4 The Director for Corporate Resources explained that the Audit Commission had been asked to undertake a voluntary improvement review of the way the contact centre project was operating. They had recently submitted a very positive report. The final report would be presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee in September 2007.

381.5 Members welcomed the information in the report and asked that arrangements be made for them to visit the centre before it commenced 'live' operations. Officers undertook to include this in the programme.

**Resolved**

382.1 That the updated financial position regarding the Customer Connect programme be agreed.

382.2 That the proposal that ongoing benefits from the Customer Connect Programme will in future be realised in conjunction with the Fit for the Future Programme be noted.

**Reasons for Decision**

383.1 In February 2007, the Cabinet noted the position regarding implementation of the Customer Connect Programme, allowing the Director for Corporate Resources to sign the contract with the ICT solution provider - Steria UK. The update also explained that the contact centre would be implemented in Autumn 2007 and that additional costs had been incurred relating to the ICT contract and the refurbishment costs relating to the Pullman Court site. The Cabinet then asked for an updated financial business case to be provided once the Programme was in a position to provide more accurate figures.

383.2 The Programme is now in a position to be much firmer on both the investment and operating costs following the contract signature and the completion of the joint detailed planning.

383.3 The 'go live' date for the Dorset Direct contact centre has been set for the week commencing 19 November 2007, with the training of new centre staff starting in September. A public launch will follow in early 2008.

**Structural Design and Construction Standards (paragraphs 2 and 7)**

384. The Cabinet considered a joint report by the Director for Environment and the Chief Financial Officer which informed members of ongoing investigations into a number of structural design issues raised by checking engineers employed by district council building control officers and the implications for the County Council. Members noted that the Audit

and Scrutiny Committee had considered reports on the issues involved at their meetings in December 2006 and February 2007. Following further work, a detailed report would be presented to the Committee at their meeting on 31 July, setting out the findings so far.

**Resolved**

385. That the Cabinet note the contents of the report, commends the work of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, and looks forward to a future final report and recommendations.

**Reason for Decision**

386. Ensuring that adequate arrangements exist for the structural design and management of major capital projects is a necessary part of asset management and contributes to the corporate aims of improving Dorset's infrastructure and building a council fit for the future.