

EXTRACT OF MINUTE

Cabinet - 18.05.04

2095 EMERGENCY PLANNING

The report advised members of current changes in the management arrangements for Emergency Planning in the Gwent area, and sought approval to establish a small Emergency Planning Unit within the authority in line with those new arrangements. The county-wide joint arrangement for Emergency Planning in Gwent, which had been in operation since 1996, was in the process of being wound up to give each local authority more control and responsibility for their local arrangements. Each Authority was required to put in place arrangements to supersede this joint arrangement, and also to prepare for the added responsibilities likely to be imposed by the Civil Contingencies Bill.

The report outlined proposals to put in place the necessary local arrangements. Because of the nature of central government funding towards these arrangements, these proposals are likely to be cost neutral and can be accommodated within current budgets.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the report a small Emergency Planning Unit be established, comprising a senior post graded PO 5-8 and an assistant post graded SO1.

2096

COUNCIL TAX- FURNISHED AND UNFURNISHED PROPERTIES

The Cabinet were aware that empty and unfurnished properties benefited from a reduction in council tax liability. For the first 6 months there was no charge and subsequently a 50% charge applied. On balance it was considered beneficial to the county borough to remove the 50% discount and levy the full charge. There was a need to prepare occupiers for such a change in the Council's approach and it was proposed the 100% charge be introduced from 1st April 2005. Subject to Cabinet agreement owners of properties currently subject to the 50% charge will be advised now of the charging arrangements to be introduced in April 2005.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the report all unoccupied and substantially unfurnished properties which have been empty for more than 6 months will be liable to the full council tax charge and receive no discount from 1st April 2005.

MATTERS WHICH REQUIRE A RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**2097 ADOPTION OF SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN 2004 – 2009**

In December 2003, Cabinet approved the draft School Organisation Plan 2004-2009 which was then widely distributed as part of the required consultative process, which ended in March 2004.

The Authority is now required at the end of the consultative period and after consideration of any comments received, to decide whether or not to adopt the School Organisation Plan. The National Assembly of Wales have made suggested minor amendments to the draft plan and these have been incorporated into the plan. Other minor amendments have also been taken into consideration.

The Cabinet recommended to the Council that for the reasons contained in the report the School Organisation Plan 2004-2009 be adopted.