

8 APRIL 2002

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 8 April 2002.

- p Cllr S A Hayes (Chairman)
- p Cllr M J Kendal (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- p P C Greenfield
- p Mrs M D Holding
- p B Rickman

Councillors:

- p T M Russell
- p C A Wise

In Attendance:

Councillors:

- K F Ault
- W R Catt
- B D Dash
- Mrs L C Ford
- F R Harrison

Councillors:

- J D Heron
- B M F Pemberton
- Mrs M J Robinson
- D N Scott
- D B Tipp

Also In Attendance:

Mrs P White – Tenant Representative
Mr Love - Ringwood & Fordingbridge Branch of the Hampshire Association for the Visually Impaired and Blind (Minute No. 194).

Officers Attending:

D Yates, N Gibbs, Ms E Malcolm, C Malyon, D Atwill, Ms J Bateman, and Miss G O'Rourke and for part of the meeting Ms D Dabrowska, C Elliott, A Foster, J Ives, Ms S Jenkins, and K Smith.

188. HER ROYAL HIGHNESS QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER.

The Cabinet, other members and officers stood in silent tribute to the memory of Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

189. MINUTES. "amended at Council on 22 April 2002 - see Minute Book"

A member commented that other nominations made and the reasons for the decision in relation to Minute 184 – "Appointments to Outside Bodies" should have been recorded. For all other items of business this had been done on the Cabinet Decision Notice. It was noted that the individual members appointed to the outside

bodies listed in Minute 184 had, in each case, been the preferred choice of the Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 6 and 18 March 2002, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as correct records.

190. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No declarations of interest were made.

191. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

192. BEST VALUE PROGRESS REPORT (REPORT A).

The Cabinet considered the key changes in Best Value over the last 12 months and noted expected developments in the short to medium term. Forecasts and comparisons with all other Districts in England for the Best Value Performance Indicators were also noted.

Members congratulated officers on the excellent outcomes. They commented that it was very encouraging to see the Council with the right managerial environment that fostered a willingness amongst officers to embrace change and as a consequence improve.

Best Value Inspectors' reports were available to everyone on the Intranet. It was agreed that whilst this was the most appropriate way to inform members, the route into the information needed to be clearer.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council's forecasted performance against the BVPI's be noted and taken forward to agree targets at service level;
- (b) That proposed changes to the 5 year service review programme be approved;
- (c) That the Council's proposed cross cutting reviews be reconsidered and a way forward agreed to involve the Local Strategic Partnership and the Corporate Plan review and performance to inform the future shaping of the review programme;
- (d) That the proposed streamlined approach to Best Value be approved;
and

- (e) That the arrangements for approving the Council's Best Value Performance Plan be approved.

193. BEST VALUE REPORT OF THE BUILDING CONTROL SERVICE (REPORT B).

The Cabinet considered the Best Value report of the Building Control Service.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the action plan for continuous improvement of the building control service, as set out in Appendix 3 to Report B, as amended and recommended by the Economy and Planning Review Panel, be approved;
- (b) That those actions not requiring additional resources be implemented in accordance with the timetable; and
- (c) That those actions requiring additional resources either be met by efficiency savings, or be not implemented until sufficient budgetary provision is provided.

194. CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL SCHEME (REPORT C).

The Cabinet considered a report proposing an extension to the Concessionary Travel Scheme

Mr Love addressed the Cabinet on behalf of the Ringwood and Fordingbridge Branch of the Hampshire Association for the Visually Impaired and Blind.

Mr Love commented that the recent changes in legislation had caused a great deal of confusion. Holders of "Yellow passes", which were no longer valid on public transport, had been able to travel considerable distances, free of charge outside of Hampshire. Because different authorities now had a variety of schemes running this was no longer possible. It was inconvenient and difficult for blind people to deal with money. Mr Love requested that free travel for the blind should be reinstated.

The Environment Portfolio Holder said that he was grateful that officers had brought forward the report as a matter of urgency and proposed that adjoining authorities should be urged to make similar arrangements to that proposed in New Forest. The Cabinet supported this view.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a free travel pass currently defined as the 'red pass' provided within the Farepass scheme be agreed and be offered at no charge to residents who are blind, or without arms, or with a severe mental handicap or who cannot hear and speak;

- (b) That a supplementary estimate of £1,890 be approved to cover the additional costs of the extension to the scheme; and
- (c) That adjoining authorities, particularly those with bus services that cross boundaries, be urged to make similar arrangements to those detailed above.

195. DRAFT COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY 2002-2005 (REPORT D).

The Cabinet considered the proposed Community Safety Strategy for the New Forest Community Safety Partnership, which had been compiled following an extensive consultation process.

In discussing the issues it was agreed that youth workers, particularly detached youth workers, had been of great benefit in helping to target young people to ensure that they became responsible citizens in future years. Whilst the work was invaluable the Cabinet noted that the District Council should not be solely responsible for funding it. This was a matter for the County Council and others.

Members noted that the level of "fear of crime" had reduced. Whilst the incidence of petty crime was still relatively high, a new approach to policing in the New Forest area was targeting resources at this aspect. New Forest now had its full complement of Police officers. The Cabinet agreed that rural areas deserved greater resources to deal with the increasing displacement of crime from urban areas.

It was agreed that there needed to be a strong element of parental responsibility in combating crime. Consideration was being given to setting up a "Parenting Project" in the district in addition to specific elements of the Community Safety Strategy.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Community Safety Strategy attached as an appendix to Report D be approved.

196. FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2001 TO JANUARY 2002 (REPORT E).

The Cabinet considered the forecast budget variations of all Portfolios and Committees from the approved original estimates for 2001/2002.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) ***That approval be given to capital expenditure of £398,000 for Highways Agency Works; £210,000 for the CCTV Programme and £120,000 for Housing Environmental Enhancements; and***

- (b) *That approval be given for supplementary estimates of £20,000 for increased grounds maintenance costs and £120,000 revenue contribution for Environmental Enhancements.*

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the revised General Fund budget as set out in Appendix 1 to Report E be approved;
- (d) That the revised capital expenditure as set out in Appendix 2 to Report E be approved subject to those items reserved to Council as set out above; and
- (e) That the revised Housing Revenue Account budget as set out in Appendix 3 to Report E be approved subject to those items reserved to Council as set out above.

197. PLANNED MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMME AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMME 2002/03 (REPORT F).

The Cabinet considered the programme of individual schemes, comprising the Planned Maintenance Improvements Programme and the Environmental Improvements Programme.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) *That the schemes listed in Appendices I and II of Report F be approved as the planned maintenance and improvements programme and environmental improvement programme for 2002/2003;*
- (b) *That a virement of £227,000 be made from the Planned Maintenance Programme (decreasing it to £4,879,810) to the Cyclical budget (increasing that to £977,000); and*
- (c) *That the budget for elderly persons internal redecorations be increased by £5,000 from within the overall programme to £30,000.*

198. FLEET MANAGEMENT – ALTERNATIVE FUELLED VEHICLES (REPORT G).

The Cabinet noted developments in alternative fuel technology and considered an opportunity to apply for grant aid from the Energy Saving Trust to fit an exhaust gas treatment system to replacement refuse collection vehicles.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the principle of fitting the Continuously Regenerating Traps (CRTs) to replacement refuse collection vehicles within the agreed capital programme, commencing with two vehicles in the 2002/3 programme, be agreed; and that it be noted that this commits the Council to future lease costs that can be offset in the main by a reduction in annual excise duty and that the balance of £90 per vehicle can be funded within existing budgets; and
- (b) That opportunities to utilise Energy Savings Trust grant schemes be pursued by officers.

199. PUBLICITY FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS – NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION (REPORT H).

The Cabinet considered the arrangements for publicity for planning applications following a six month trial of new methods.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That neighbour notifications be retained as a permanent part of the Council's publicity arrangements for planning applications, and that, in addition a green site notice continue to be posted on all sites by planning staff but that newspaper publicity of applications (paid for by the Council) only be undertaken in those cases where there is a statutory requirement; and
- (b) That £20,000 be vired from the applications publicity budget, of which £15,000 be transferred to the staffing budget and the balance of £5,000 to postage and stationery budgets.

200. LOCAL GOVERNMENT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (LGIP) (REPORT I).

The Council had been participating in the Local Government Improvement Programme, which consisted of three peer group visits and reports. The first two of these had already taken place and the third and final visit was scheduled for Wednesday 17 April 2002.

RESOLVED:

That the arrangements for the final visit of the LGIP team be agreed together with the latest assessment of progress against the Team's earlier recommendations.

201. SCHEME OF DELEGATION OF POWERS (REPORT J).

The Cabinet considered a revised Scheme of Delegation of Powers to officers.

The Finance and Support Portfolio holder commented that he did not feel it appropriate for the Terms of Reference of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee to be amended to enable the Committee to approve the Council's statement of accounts, income and expenditure. He understood the timetabling reasons for the proposed change and accepted the need for agreement for the current period. However, he asked that the matter should be revisited in the near future. The Cabinet supported this view.

RESOLVED:

That the scheme of delegation of powers to officers be amended as set out at Appendix 1 to Report J, and adopted with immediate effect.

202. FORMER WEBBS FACTORY SITE, LYMINGTON : DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE – RESULTS OF CONSULTATION (REPORT K).

The Cabinet considered the results of recent consultation on draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for the former Webbs Factory site, Lymington.

Members discussed the proposed percentage use of the site for housing and agreed that limiting the housing element of the site to 25% was a firm but flexible position which would enable the best use of the site in the future. The proposal had been subject to full consultation with all interested parties in the area and was supported by Lymington and Pennington Town Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's response to the comments received and consequential amendments to the draft SPG as set out in Appendix 2 to Report K be approved; and that the revised SPG as set out in Appendix 3 to Report K be formally adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Adopted New Forest District Local Plan.

203. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Health and Social Exclusion Portfolio Holder be appointed as the Council's representative on the Health For All Core Group; and

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- (b) That Cllr Pemberton be appointed to the Lymington Coastal Area Joint Management Committee and Coastal Advisory Panel.

CHAIRMAN

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