

17 JUNE 2002

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 17 June 2002.

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

Councillors:

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

Councillors:

p T M Russell
p C A Wise
p J D Heron

In Attendance:

Councillors:

K F Ault
G C Beck
W R Catt
Mrs J L Cleary
J E Coles
B C Earwicker

Councillors:

J A G Hutchins
B M F Pemberton
A W Rice TD
Mrs M J Robinson
D N Scott
S S Wade

Officers Attending:

D Yates, Ms E Malcolm, C Malyon, D Atwill, Ms J Bateman, C Elliott and R Eldred.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

The following members disclosed interests in the under-mentioned items:-

Cllrs Earwicker, Hutchins and Rice – Minute 20.

18. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

Mrs C Burgess, Manager of the Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB), New Milton spoke on the proposals in relation to the Local Information Office and Affordable Housing at Stannington Car Park, Ashley Road/Spencer Road, New Milton.

Mrs Burgess said that the CAB could not continue working in the current premises. There had been delays over proposals for new accommodation for over three years. Twelve volunteer employees had left the Bureau since last April and she felt that this was due in part to the poor conditions in which they were asked to work.

New Milton was ranked amongst the lowest in the country for child poverty; there was a lack of affordable housing and the area had a high percentage of retired residents on state pension. The services of CAB were vitally important to the residents of the area.

Members noted that there had been significant delays to the scheme, most recently as a result of the tendering process. Swaythling Housing Association had originally had difficulty in finding tenderers. The tenders subsequently received had been in excess of the budget and further negotiations had been required.

19. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.

RESOLVED:

That, under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and the Press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

20. LOCAL INFORMATION OFFICE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT STANNINGTON CAR PARK, ASHLEY ROAD/SPENCER ROAD, NEW MILTON (REPORT A).

Councillors Earwicker, Hutchins and Rice declared interests in this item as New Milton Town Councillors. None of them considered their interests to be prejudicial. They remained at the meeting and took part in the discussion. As they were not Cabinet members they did not vote.

The Cabinet considered revised proposals to provide new offices for the District Council, Town Council and the Citizens' Advice Bureau together with 12 affordable flats at Stannington Car Park, New Milton.

The lowest tender received, when compared to the estimate which was prepared in June 2001 and used for the budget process, showed that the cost of the office shell and office fit out costs had increased by £136,000 above the budget provided. Members discussed the reasons for the increase in costs and noted the proposals for reducing them. The lowest negotiated tender was still £70,000 higher than the approved budget however, the Cabinet agreed that the scheme should be revised as detailed in the report at a new estimated cost of £755,000. £20,000 of the increased costs were attributable to New Milton Town Council and the Cabinet noted that they had agreed to increase their capital commitment to the scheme by this amount.

There was still a shortfall of £50,000 for the Scheme and the Cabinet recommended to the Council that the budget provision for this scheme should be increased by £50,000 to cover the additional funding required.

RECOMMENDED:

That the scheme for the provision of new offices for the District Council, New Milton Town Council and Citizens' Advice Bureau (with 12 affordable flats controlled by Swaythling Housing Association) at Stannington Car Park, Ashley Road, New Milton be approved at a revised estimated cost of £755,000 to be funded by an additional £50,000 being included in the Capital Programme for 2003/2004 and an increased capital commitment from New Milton Town Council of £20,000.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the Council agreeing the additional funding as detailed above, the Cabinet approves the revised Scheme as detailed in Report A at an estimated cost of £755,000.

CHAIRMAN