

4 SEPTEMBER 2002

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 4 September 2002.

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

Councillors:

e P C Greenfield
p J D Heron
p Mrs M D Holding

Councillors:

p B Rickman
p T M Russell
p C A Wise

In Attendance:

Councillors:

K F Ault
W R Catt
B D Dash
R C H Hale
F R Harrison
P E Hickman

Councillors:

Mrs M Humber
Mrs B M Maynard
Mrs M J Robinson
D N Scott
D B Tipp
M H Thierry

Also In Attendance:

Mrs P White, Tenant Representative

Officers Attending:

D Yates, N Gibbs, Ms E Malcolm, C Malyon and Ms J Bateman, and for part of the meeting G Ashworth, S Avery, Miss J Norman, M Poole, Ms A Righton, D Roe and J Ward.

49. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 August 2002, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

The following members disclosed interests in the under mentioned items:

Cllr Kendal – Minutes 54 and 56
Cllrs Heron and Thierry – Minute 65

51. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

Mr G Richardson representing Age Concern, addressed the Cabinet on the matter of a replacement for the Day Centre at Cussens in Dibden Purlieu.

Mr Richardson said that Age Concern had been looking for a replacement for the Day Care Centre at Cussens in Dibden Purlieu for over ten years. The present Centre was at the end of its practical life and was in need of constant repair. Whilst the care provided by the staff was very good, the Centre itself was unable to offer the facilities needed at a modern Day Centre.

Approximately 2 ½ years ago there had been negotiations between the Council and Waterside Baptist Church in relation to the development of land at Challenger Way. A Working Party comprising the Council, Social Services, Waterside Baptist Church, local Members and the Primary Care Trust was formed and a Project Plan prepared. It was proposed that a Housing Association would buy the land from the Council for the provision of affordable homes and would lease the remainder of the site to Age Concern for a Day Care Centre. The Waterside Baptist Church had been replaced in the project by the Methodist Church who were to build a Church/Community Centre.

Mr Richardson said that there was now a Housing Association willing to purchase the land, the finance was available to build a Day Centre and the Church, in the next couple years, hoped to be able to finance a Community Centre. However, it was still not clear whether the Council would make the land available. Mr Richardson was aware that a consultation process was to be undertaken by the Council and he asked that this was done as soon as possible.

The Chairman of the Cabinet agreed that there was a willingness on behalf of the Council for the project to proceed and he confirmed that the consultation process would be completed as soon as possible, hopefully by the end of October to allow consideration by the Cabinet by the end of the year.

52. COMMERCIAL SERVICES DIVISION, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – BEST VALUE REVIEW (REPORT A).

The Cabinet considered the Best Value review of the Commercial Services Division of Environmental Health together with the five year action plan for continuous improvement. The Cabinet congratulated officers on the work they were doing. It was reported that the Best Value Inspectorate had chosen this review to be the subject of an Inspection which would take place in October.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Action Plan for continuous improvement of the Commercial Services Division of Environmental Health as set out in Appendix 1 to Report A 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 are not implemented until sufficient budgetary provision is provided.

53. DRAFT LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL (REPORT B).

In December 2001, the Government published its blueprint for the future of Local Government in a White Paper entitled "Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services". As a result of consultation on the White Paper with local authorities and other stakeholders, a draft Bill was recently issued for comment.

Many of the measures in the Bill related to local government finance and the Cabinet considered a response to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister specifically on the financial issues.

RESOLVED:

That the response to the DTLR on the Draft Local Government Bill as set out in Appendix 1 to Report B be agreed.

54. YOUR REGION YOUR CHOICE WHITE PAPER (REPORT C).

Cllr Kendal declared an interest in this item in that he was a member of the County Council. He did not consider the interest to be prejudicial. He remained at the meeting, took part in the discussion and voted.

Your Region, Your Choice was a White paper that was published in May 2002 and set out a new regional policy for England.

The Cabinet were of the opinion that, in view of the importance of the issues raised in the White Paper, the matter should be referred to a full meeting of the Council to give all members an opportunity to make their views known to the Cabinet. The Chairman said that there were a number of common points of view amongst members and he felt that it would be helpful for the Political group leaders to meet prior to the meeting of the Council to discuss an appropriate way forward. In order to allow time for this to take place it was agreed that the matter should be considered by the Council at their meeting on 14 October.

RESOLVED:

That the matter be considered by the Council on 14 October to enable all members' views to be canvassed before the Cabinet agrees a response to the Government on the White Paper.

55. STRATEGY FOR THE NEW FOREST – WORKING DRAFT CONSULTATION FROM NEW FOREST COMMITTEE (REPORT D).

The New Forest Committee adopted the first Strategy for the New Forest in February 1996. It has now reviewed this Strategy and the Cabinet considered a response to a revised document published for public consultation.

Members praised the work of the New Forest Committee and the economic benefits that they had achieved for the New Forest. Whilst the Cabinet acknowledged that the future role of the New Forest Committee would need to be considered they felt that in view of the proposed National Park status for the New Forest, it was too early to undertake any such review. They were however mindful that this would need to be done at some point in the future.

Members highlighted a number of aspects in the proposed strategy including the need to ensure that consultation on initiatives was undertaken through the proper democratic process at Town and Parish Council level; the need to protect and maintain back-up commoning land and the importance of the use of demand management to reduce the environmental impact of car use.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the New Forest Committee be thanked for their consultation on the draft revised 'Strategy for the New Forest', and congratulated on the production of a useful and comprehensive document;
- (b) That the New Forest Committee be advised of the following general concerns of this Council:
 - (i) **Lymington and Ringwood:** the special considerations that will apply in these towns and their particular role in relation to the National Park need to be drawn out more strongly, and the revised Strategy needs to clarify the proposals that would apply within these settlements;
 - (ii) **Affordable housing:** Section 4.6 needs to be updated and broadened to cover policies applying in Lymington and Ringwood and those in other districts included in the proposed National Park;
 - (iii) **Design:** many of the detailed design issues raised are covered already by existing published documents; where they are not, the onus should be on local communities to undertake necessary appraisals through the Countryside Agency's Village Design Statement and Vital Villages schemes;

- (iv) **Commoning (back-up grazing):** in view of inability of the planning process to provide effective protection for back-up land, the Strategy needs to address in more detail alternative ways of protecting and maintaining a supply of such land;
 - (v) **Tourism:** a greater focus is needed on the very strong and crucial link between tourism, visitor management, recreation and transport, including a comprehensive forest-wide research programme, where all agencies agree on comparable and non-duplicated research needs that can be applied to GIS delivery;
 - (vi) **Understanding and enjoying the New Forest:** the introduction to this section should include the need to reflect on the interaction of social, environmental and economic aspects when action is being considered. This theme should be at the centre of any work that raises awareness of the Forest and the issues which face it;
 - (vii) **Recreation:** the future plan for a detailed recreation management plan should be done at a level that looks across the whole Forest and then it can be decided if there is value in plans based at a more local level;
 - (viii) **Environmental quality:** there is a need for some amendment to clarify the role of this Council in work on air quality, contaminated land and monitoring water quality;
 - (ix) **Transport:** some clarification is needed of the relationship between the draft Strategy and the New Forest Transport Strategy (NFTS);
 - (x) **Coast:** in view of the length of the Forest's coastline, the historic links between the Forest and the coast and the potential of the coast for recreational and grazing use, the strategy should explore in more detail the coastal characteristics of the Forest.
- (c) That officers be authorised to negotiate with the New Forest Committee such detailed wording changes to the Strategy as are necessary to resolve these concerns, and to make other minor corrections/ clarify statements as necessary.
- (d) That the New Forest Committee be invited to participate in the consultation process relating to traffic management and parking currently being undertaken by New Forest District Council, having particular regard to means of overcoming problems arising from those seeking to avoid paying parking charges (e.g. parking on road verges, track entrances and illegal on-street parking).

56. SOUTH EAST REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY – CONSULTATION DRAFT (REPORT E).

Cllr Kendal declared an interest in this item in that he was a member of the County Council. He did not consider the interest to be prejudicial. He remained at the meeting, took part in the discussion and voted.

The Cabinet considered a response to the South East Regional Transport Strategy produced by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA).

Members agreed that the transport system in the region currently failed to meet need and that, before travel could be diverted from cars and lorries, there had to be significant investment in other modes of transport. In order for public transport to be accessible the Cabinet agreed that it had to be fully funded by central government.

RESOLVED:

That the following comments be made to SEERA as this Council's response to the South East Regional Transport Strategy:

- (i) The basic aims and principles of the draft Regional Transport Strategy should be supported. Many of them are clearly embodied in national guidance, local transport plans and strategies, and development plans.
- (ii) The policies focus on capacity improvements, mainly in public transport infrastructure. However, it is not clear whether the measures proposed are sufficiently radical and extensive to achieve the aims of putting the region "as good as the best region in North West Europe by 2021". Given the current scale of the problems and the increasing demands for transport, the transport "crisis" in the south east region is likely to get worse unless:
 - major improvements are forthcoming in the capacity of transport systems in the region;
 - ways can be found of stemming the growth in travel demands and successfully diverting travel modes towards walking, cycling and public transport. This will need practical solutions that result in non-car modes being (relative to the car) the most convenient and/or least cost ways of travelling; and
 - a substantial increase is forthcoming in funding available for public transport, including areas such as the New Forest District.
- (iii) With regard to Policy T8 (Airport development), the implications of the statement that the Regional Assembly "encourages Southampton Airport to sustain and enhance its role as an airport of regional significance" need to be assessed. What would be the implications for the surrounding areas, including this District? How much of a constraint is the length of the runway? There could be major implications for the M27 and the railway (including the effect on planned railway improvements) if the runway were to be extended to allow the Airport to achieve its full potential?

- (iv) Policy T9 refers to the encouragement of short sea shipping connections linking into the wider European network; and Policy T21 states that Development Plans should safeguard wharves, depots and others sites which are, or could be, critical in developing infrastructure for the movement of freight, particularly by rail or water. However, the draft strategy does not make any policy statements directly relating to Dibden Bay.
- (v) With regard to Policy T13 (Development of the public transport network):
 - (a) the Regional Transport Strategy should aim to ensure that real improvements are forthcoming in public transport services in areas such as New Forest District, as well as in and between the proposed regional transport "hubs". This is likely to need substantial increases in funding for relatively small scale local measures and support. This needs to be considered alongside the major regional infrastructure proposals specified in the draft strategy.
 - (b) the strategy should ensure real improvements in rail capacity and services within the region – both for passengers and freight;
 - (c) a recent study commissioned by Hampshire County Council makes it clear that Quality Bus Partnerships on their own will not deliver "area wide" higher patronage of bus services in areas where the bus services are not commercially viable (i.e. have to be subsidised by the Local Authority) or the services are not frequent (say less than 4/hr). In the NF area there is perhaps only one corridor (Waterside to Southampton) that is likely to be the subject of a QBP in the next few years;
- (vi) Policy T18 deals with parking provision. It allows for local levels of parking provision for non-residential developments to be within 30% and 100% of the maximum level of provision set out in PPG13. Provision in a largely rural District like this one would be expected to be generally towards the upper end of this range. This policy is consistent with the approach to local parking standards recommended to Cabinet in April this year with regard to the Local Plan Alterations.

57. LYNDHURST CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL (REPORT F).

The Cabinet considered the adoption, as supplementary planning guidance to the New Forest District Council Local Plan, of the Lyndhurst Conservation Area Appraisal.

RESOLVED:

That the Lyndhurst Conservation Area Appraisal, as attached at Appendix 1 to Report F, be approved and adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

58. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT – POLICY GUIDANCE (REPORT G).

The Cabinet considered a revised Planning Enforcement Policy Guidance booklet.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to minor drafting amendments, the Planning Enforcement Policy Guidance as attached at Appendix 1 to Report G be approved.

59. TOTTON DEPOT DRAINAGE – SUPPLEMENTARY CAPITAL ESTIMATE (REPORT H).

The Cabinet considered a request for a supplementary capital estimate of £19,700 to fund works to improve the drainage system at Totton depot.

Members noted that as a consequence of the incident that occurred at Totton depot earlier in the year, the Environment Agency had decided to prosecute the Council.

RESOLVED:

That a supplementary capital estimate of £19,700 be approved to enable work to be undertaken to upgrade to existing drainage system at Totton Depot.

60. DIBDEN GOLF CENTRE VIREMENTS (REPORT I).

The Cabinet considered a request for virements to enable additional drainage works to be undertaken on the 18th fairway, and for the installation of CCTV in the car park at Dibden Golf Centre.

RECOMMENDED:

That virements of £9,000 for additional drainage to the 18th fairway and £12,000 to implement the first stage of a CCTV system in the car parks at Dibden Golf Centre be approved, to be funded from the existing £21,000 budget for resurfacing the overflow car park.

61. COLLECTION OF CLINICAL WASTE (REPORT J).

The Cabinet considered a request for a supplementary estimate to cover the cost of operating a second clinical waste collection vehicle and to take on board the recommendations of the Industrial Relations Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a supplementary estimate of £19,600 be approved for 2002/03 with the full year effect of £25,600 being included in the 2003/04 Expenditure Plan to enable the operation of a second clinical waste collection vehicle in order that low grade clinical waste could be collected through the Council's Clinical Waste Collection Service; and
- (b) That officers be authorised to use their discretion to allow such waste to be disposed of through the normal domestic waste stream where this would not cause any problem.

62. LOCAL COUNTY HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT ADVISORY PANEL.

RESOLVED:

That the Political Group Leaders agree the names of Councillors to be appointed to serve on the proposed Local County Highway Management Advisory Panel.

63. 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 items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

64. REVIEW OF ROAD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEME – EMPLOYMENT OF CONSULTANTS (REPORT K).

The Cabinet considered the employment of consultants to undertake a review of the Road Traffic Management scheme.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That, following an exception of Standing Orders as to Contracts agreed by the Director of Environment Services, the appointment of RTA Associates Ltd to carry out a consultation process in support of the Council's review of future Road Traffic Management needs be approved; and
- (b) That funding be met by a virement of £16,000 plus expenses from the salaries budget.

65. LAND AT ASHLEY HEATH, RINGWOOD (REPORT L).

Cllrs Heron and Thierry declared interests as members of Ringwood Town Council. They did not consider their interests to be prejudicial. Cllr Heron remained at the meeting, took part in the discussion and voted. Cllr Thierry remained at the meeting and took part in the discussion but did not have a vote.

The Cabinet considered a report concerning land that had been sold to Ringwood Town Council in 2001, and over which another party now asserted an interest.

RESOLVED:

That officers be authorised to resolve this matter on the basis that Ringwood Town Council be enabled to complete registration of title to the land, subject to a two fifths interest in favour of St Leonards and St Ives Parish Council, such interest to terminate upon Ringwood Town Council ceasing to own the land.

CHAIRMAN

(DEMOCRAT/CB040902/MINUTES.DOC)