

6 JANUARY 2003
NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 6 January 2003.

p Cllr M J Kendal (Chairman)
e Cllr T M Russell (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

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

Councillors:

p B Rickman
p N L T Smith
p C A Wise

In Attendance:

Councillors:

K F Ault
G C Beck
W R Catt
Mrs M Humber

Councillors:

J A G Hutchins
Mrs M J Robinson
D N Scott
D B Tipp

Also Present:

Mrs P White, Tenant Representative.

Officers Attending:

D Yates, N Gibbs, C Malyon, Ms J Bateman, K Green, Ms G O'Rourke, J Ward and for part of the meeting M Field and N Williamson.

107. Cllr K E AUSTIN

The Cabinet expressed their condolences to Cllr Austin on the sad death of his wife.

108. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2002, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

109. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllrs Ault, Humber and Robinson declared interests in Minute 113.

Cllr Rickman declared an interest in Minute 115.

110. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

111. FLOODING EMERGENCY.

The Environment Portfolio Holder updated the Cabinet on the flooding situation in the district. The first emergency call for help had been received on 1 January and 6,000 sandbags had been filled and delivered so far.

The emergency response procedures had worked very well and much had been learnt from previous experience. There had been excellent co-operation with Town and Parish Councils and close working with the Environment Agency.

The Cabinet expressed their thanks to all the officers involved in the emergency.

112. FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2002 – NOVEMBER 2002 (REPORT A).

The Cabinet considered the forecast budget variations of all Portfolios and Committees from the approved original estimates for 2002/2003.

RECOMMENDED:

(a) That the following supplementary estimates be approved:

- (i) £63,000 for additional expenditure on fuel and sacks within Refuse and Recycling;***
- (ii) £18,000 for Tourism due to reduced income; and***
- (iii) £60,000 for increased expenditure on Housing cyclical repairs and maintenance.***

RESOLVED:

- (b) That the revised General Fund budget as set out in Appendix 1 to Report A be approved;**
- (c) That the revised capital expenditure as set out in Appendix 2 to Report A be approved; and**

- (d) That the revised Housing Revenue Account as set out in Appendix 3 to Report A be approved.

113. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2003/2004 (REPORT B).

Cllr Robinson declared a personal interest as a member of the Management Board of Waterside Citizens' Advice Bureau.

Cllrs Ault and Humber declared personal interests as members of the Management Board of Lymington Citizens' Advice Bureau. It was noted that Cllr Ault was the Council's Representative on the Lymington Citizens Advice Bureau.

None of the members considered their interests to be prejudicial. They remained at the meeting. They did not have a vote.

The Cabinet considered the latest forecast for the General Fund Revenue budget and Capital Programme for 2003/04.

Members noted that Review Panels and Committees would have a further opportunity at the coming cycle of meetings to consider the General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme. The Finance and Support Portfolio Holder said that Council's finances remained very strong and he thanked officers for their hard work and sound advice.

It was noted that a number of the figures were still provisional. The exact financial settlement was not yet known. Bearing this in mind, the Finance and Support Portfolio Holder said that the increase in Government funding for this Council still fell short of inflation, which would mean that more tax needed to be collected locally. The portfolio holder was pleased that the Council had attracted additional grants and borrowing approvals that ensured that additional tax would not have to be raised in the coming year to fund the existing capital programme.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the amendments to the Expenditure Plans revenue proposals as contained in Appendix 2 to Report B be agreed;
- (b) That the amendments to the proposed Capital Programme as contained in Appendix 5 to Report B be agreed;
- (c) That the additional Minimum Revenue Provision in the sum of £566,000 for the period 1993/94 to 1999/00 be transferred to the Capital Reserve in 2002/03 to meet future years' capital expenditure;
- (d) That the sum of £440,000 be transferred to the IT Renewals Fund; and

- (e) That the Basic Borrowing Approvals for 2003/04 be allocated in the sum of £1.459 million towards the Housing Capital Programme and £0.153 million to the Capital Programme for 'Other Services'.

114. AMENDMENT TO THE HOUSING RENEWAL GRANTS POLICY (REPORT C).

The Cabinet considered amendments to the current Housing Renewal Grant Policy prior to a full review, which would be carried out in 2003/04

RESOLVED:

That the Housing Health and Social Inclusion Review Panel be consulted on the principles for change as set out in Report C and their comments be reported back to the Cabinet on 5 February 2003.

115. FEES AND CHARGES (REPORT D).

Cllr Rickman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the Fees and Charges relating to Beach Huts as a Beach Hut owner. There was no discussion on this particular issue.

The Cabinet considered proposed fees and charges applicable from 1 April 2003 for all Portfolios and General Purposes & Licensing and Planning Development Control Committees.

The Cabinet were of the view that the charge proposed for use of a Guestroom at Sheltered Housing should be reduced. Members agreed that the proposed new charge should be set at £6.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the proposed Sheltered Housing Guestroom Charge being reduced from £6.50 to £6, Review Panels and Committees be asked to comment on the proposed fees and charges set out in Appendix A to Report D, for adoption and implementation from 1 April 2003.

116. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT ESTIMATES FOR 2003/2004 (REPORT E).

The Cabinet considered the anticipated impact of the draft 2003/04 Subsidy determination on the Council's 2003/04 HRA estimates and on the Council's 10 year Business Plan projection for the HRA.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the comments of the Housing, Health and Social Inclusion Review Panel:-

- (a) The bases for preparation of the final 2003/04 estimates as outlined in Report E be approved;
- (b) That the reduction in expenditure outlined in Paragraph 4 of Report E be approved;
- (c) That the following increases be proposed:-
 - 2.85% (average) in rents for Council dwellings; in line with the rent restructuring guidelines;
 - Service charges in line with the detailed proposals in paragraph 2 of Report E (5% for hostels and 2.5% for sheltered housing); and
 - 10p per week in garage rents (plus VAT for garages let to non-Council tenants);
- (d) That the expenditure and savings proposals as outlined in paragraph 5 of Report E be included in the 2003/04 HRA estimate; and
- (e) That the report process proposed and outlined in paragraph 2.3 of Report E be agreed.

117. HOUSING CAPITAL ESTIMATES 2003/2004 (REPORT F).

The Cabinet considered the Housing Portfolio's draft capital estimates for 2003/04.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the comments of the Housing, Health and Social Inclusion Review Panel, the Council be recommended to agree the proposed Housing Capital Estimates for 2003/2004.

118. HYTHE PROMENADE ENHANCEMENT (REPORT G).

The Cabinet considered the detail of the proposed enhancements to Hythe Promenade and waterfront. Members said that the proposed scheme was excellent and would provide good access to the water. It was noted that, in the longer term, further enhancements to the area would be considered with a view to creating a continuous walkway from Hythe Marina North to the development site known as Dreamland.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the project design be approved; and
- (b) That, subject to the grant of any necessary planning permissions, Developers Contributions in the sum of £167,500 from Public Open Space be agreed to enable the Improvement scheme at Hythe Promenade to be completed, the monies to be released as the stages of the scheme develop.

119. GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON ENTITLEMENT CARDS AND IDENTITY FRAUD (REPORT H).

The Cabinet considered a response to a Government consultation paper on whether or not an Entitlement Card Scheme should be introduced.

A number of members spoke for and against the proposals. Some members were totally opposed to any form of compulsory identity card scheme whilst others felt that to ensure adequate protection against fraud everyone should carry an Entitlement Card.

The Cabinet broadly agreed that any Entitlement Card Scheme should be voluntary and concentrated on assisting people with their financial dealings with the Council or other financial institutions. Any card should contain a security feature to protect the information contained on the card and ensure that such information was only available to appropriate sources. In terms of specific information held on a card the Cabinet were of the view that a married woman's birth name should be included to make formal identification easier. Members were also of the view that it would be useful for any Entitlement Card to contain emergency medical information but again this should be on a voluntary basis.

RESOLVED:

That a response to the Home Office on this issue be prepared in line with the discussion at the meeting, the draft response to be agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Cabinet.

120. HAMPSHIRE PATH PARTNERSHIP (REPORT I).

The Cabinet considered a request from Hampshire County Council to continue in a partnership project with them and the Countryside Agency to provide resources to improve the rights of way network in the District.

RESOLVED:

That the continuation of the scheme be supported and the sum of £9,000 per annum for three years be allocated from developers' contributions for the District as a whole.

121. CABINET MEETINGS 2003/2004 MUNICIPAL YEAR.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the following dates be agreed for Cabinet meetings in 2003/04 with a start time of 10:00 a.m.

4 June 2003
7 July 2003
6 August 2003
3 September 2003
1 October 2003
5 November 2003
3 December 2003
7 January 2004
4 February 2004
3 March 2004
7 April 2004
5 May 2004

- (b) That, following the Council elections in May 2003, consultation be undertaken to confirm the most convenient start time for meetings of the Cabinet.

CHAIRMAN