

3 SEPTEMBER 2003
NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 3 September 2003.

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

Councillors:

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

Councillors:

p B Rickman
p M H Thierry
p C A Wise

In Attendance:

Councillors:

K F Ault
C Baker
D E Cracknell
F R Harrison

Councillors:

R J Neath
B M F Pemberton
Mrs M J Robinson
D N Scott

Also In Attendance:

Mrs P White Tenants' Representative.

Officers Attending:

D Yates, N Gibbs, Ms J Bateman, J Mascall, P Neville and Miss G O'Rourke and for part of the meeting M Devine and J Ward.

42. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 August 2003, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Councillor Harrison declared an interest in Minute 47
Councillor Heron declared an interest in Minute 49

44. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

Mr L Whitbread, Hampshire County Council Youth Council addressed the Cabinet.

Mr Whitbread asked the Cabinet what provision was made by the Council for the clearance of litter on beach fronts. He was concerned that the amount of litter that appeared in these areas was detrimental to the environment.

Members were informed that during the summer months there was daily cleaning of the beaches and surrounding areas. No specific additional provision was made to clean areas following events or parties however, if the County Council alerted this Council to such issues in advance then special arrangements would be considered.

In response to the question it was noted that there was a particular problem with litter on Goatee Beach, Marchwood. This area was the responsibility of Totton and Eling Town Council and Cllr Harrison, a member of that town council, agreed to follow the matter up.

45. FORDINGBRIDGE : PROVISION OF A SKATEBOARD FACILITY (REPORT A).

The Cabinet considered a request for funding for an extended skatepark using developers' contributions.

Members agreed that this scheme was an excellent example of partnership working and was a very good use of developers' contributions.

RESOLVED:

That a sum of £40,000 be allocated from developers' contributions to enable the construction of a skate park facility at the Recreation Ground, Fordingbridge with the funds to be released on the letting of the scheme.

46. TRINITY CHURCH RINGWOOD : USE OF DEVELOPERS' CONTRIBUTIONS (REPORT B).

The Cabinet considered a request for funding for the provision of a garden area adjacent to the Trinity Church Hall, Ringwood. Members noted that this scheme had the support of the whole community and was a further example of partnership working in the community.

RESOLVED:

That a sum of £10,000 be allocated from developers' contributions to enable the provision of a garden area at Trinity Church, Ringwood; the allocation dependent upon:-

- (a) the completion of a community use Agreement for a period of a least forty years; and
- (b) the detailing of the scheme being to the satisfaction of the Director of Community Services.

47. HANGER FARM, TOTTON : OUTCOME OF TENDERS (REPORT C).

Cllr Harrison declared a personal interest as a member of Totton and Eling Town Council. He remained at the meeting. There was no discussion. He did not have a vote.

The Cabinet considered the detail of urgent action taken by the Director of Resources in relation to the re-allocation of funding for the Hanger Farm scheme.

RESOLVED:

That the decision of the Director of Resources made in accordance with Financial Regulation 2.4, concerning the re-allocation of funds from developers' contributions for the Hanger Farm scheme be noted.

48. SITE THRESHOLDS FOR PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING (REPORT D).

The Cabinet considered proposed changes to PPG3 Housing : Consultation Paper on influencing the size, type and affordability of housing. The Chairman said that, whilst the whole Cabinet supported the need for more affordable housing and, the consequent requirement to maintain a flow of contributions from developers, there were differing views as to the most appropriate way to facilitate this.

The Housing Portfolio Holder said that given the level of land available in the district he would support a site threshold of 2 or more houses and with no size limitation. He said that the current government guidance did not assist in the provision of affordable housing for those most in need. Local Authority Social Housing Grant had been withdrawn and next year local authorities would not be allowed to use bed and breakfast accommodation. A radical solution to the problem was needed. He was of the view that 2 or more dwellings would still be commercially acceptable to developers who would continue to want to build in an area as desirable as the New Forest.

The Economy & Planning Portfolio Holder said that he did not support the proposed changes. The recommendation as set out in the report could be applied to single dwellings on sites of 0.17 hectares or more and as such would inhibit re-building of run-down dwellings in the New Forest to the detriment of housing standards generally. He was of the view that the proposals, if applied to potential developments of 2 – 4 houses, would place sufficient burden on the developer or land owner to inhibit the development from the outset, and the results would be a reduction in the availability of new housing generally. He said that a site threshold of below 5 would give viability problems to developers, and would force them to go for higher densities on sites which would change the character of the area. The current Government guidance on higher density housing could further exacerbate that problem.

Members were informed that single dwelling replacements were dealt with under other planning policies and were not subject to any affordable housing requirements.

The proposals in the report only applied to towns and built up areas. The Council had a separate Rural Exceptions Policy for other areas.

The Health and Social Inclusion Portfolio Holder agreed that, if the site threshold was dropped to below 5 dwellings, this would discourage landowners and developers from coming forward and there would be less affordable housing coming onto the market. She was of the view that, in order to overcome viability problems, developers would opt for higher densities on sites which would then change the character of the area.

The Crime and Disorder Portfolio Holder said that he supported the recommendation as proposed in the report of a site threshold of 5 or more dwellings or 0.17 of a hectare. The effect of this change on towns and villages should be monitored with further changes made in future years if required.

The Environment Portfolio Holder was of the view that the current policy had not delivered the amount of affordable housing that was needed. He supported the proposal that the site threshold should be amended to 2 or more dwellings with no area threshold.

After discussion, the Cabinet agreed that the Council should be recommended that the most appropriate way forward would be to amend the site threshold to 5 or more dwellings, with no minimum area threshold specified, in the expectation that the matter would be further debated at Council.

RECOMMENDED:

That at the Inquiry into the First Alteration to the New Forest District Local Plan, the Inspector be advised that the Council would wish to revise policy AH-1, replacing the current site thresholds of 15 or more dwellings, or 0.5 of a hectare or more, with a threshold of 5 or more dwellings, when this is permitted by revision to PPG3:Housing.

49. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS IN RINGWOOD TOWN CENTRE – PETITION (REPORT E).

Cllr Heron declared a personal interest as the president of the Ringwood Chamber of Trade. He also declared a personal and prejudicial interest in that his girlfriend was a member of the Ringwood Redevelopment Action Group. He left the meeting and took no part in the consideration of this item.

The Cabinet considered the response to a petition requesting a referendum in relation to the planning application lodged by UCG Ringwood for the redevelopment of Ringwood Town Centre.

Members agreed that, whilst understanding that the concerns of local residents and businesses had prompted the request for a referendum, that would not be the correct way in which to determine a planning application.

Members noted that the proposal involved land that was substantially owned by the Council and therefore, it was for the Council to decide on the most appropriate use of that land. The Council had not entered into any agreement with the developer about the use of its land. The developers had been asked to withdraw the application but had declined.

The Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder said that the Council would be considering their own proposals for redevelopment in Ringwood, and residents and businesses in Ringwood would be fully consulted on all options. The Chairman confirmed that the Council would initially develop a concept brief and ask developers to put forward proposals based on that. Residents, businesses and stakeholders would all be consulted for their views.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Planning Development Control Committee be asked to determine planning applications (refs: 68762 and 75580) as soon as possible; and
- (b) That the proposal to hold a referendum on the planning applications be not supported.

50. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (REPORT F).

The Cabinet considered a revised Risk Management Strategy that embraced what the Council were already doing in terms of risk management and sought to ensure that processes were more demonstrable and consistently applied across the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Risk Management Strategy as attached at appendix A to Report F be approved.

51. SOUTHAMPTON, HAMPSHIRE, ISLE OF WIGHT AND PORTSMOUTH (SHIPS) MEMBERS ARTS FORUM (REPORT G).

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Rickman be appointed the member and Cllr Greenfield the deputy on the new Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth Members Arts Forum.

CHAIRMAN