

**5 NOVEMBER 2003**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 5 November 2003.

- p Cllr M J Kendal (Chairman)
- p Cllr B Rickman (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

- p G C Beck
- p P C Greenfield
- p J D Heron

**Councillors:**

- p Mrs M D Holding
- p M H Thierry
- p C A Wise

**In Attendance:**

**Councillors:**

- p K F Ault
- p C Baker
- p F R Harrison
- p Mrs B M Maynard
- p R J Neath

**Councillors:**

- p B M F Pemberton
- p L R Puttock
- p Mrs M J Robinson
- p Mrs S I Snowden
- p P R Woods

**Also In Attendance:**

Mr A Dougherty, Mr V Francis and Mrs P White, Tenants' Representatives.

**Officers Attending:**

D Yates, N Gibbs, C Malyon, Ms J Bateman, K Green and Miss G O'Rourke and for part of the meeting K Connolly, N Cross, B Millard, Ms A Sleet and J Ward.

**64. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

In accordance with Standing Order 3/1 the Leader announced some changes to Cabinet members and Portfolio responsibilities. Cllr Russell had resigned as a Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder due to pressure of work. The Leader expressed his thanks to Cllr Russell for his help and advice during his time as Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader.

The Leader said that he had appointed Cllr Heron as Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder; Cllr Beck as Crime and Disorder Portfolio Holder and Cllr Rickman as Deputy Leader of the Council.

In addition the Leader said that he would be looking at a realignment of some of the Portfolio Holder duties but would be considering this in parallel with the review of Scrutiny that Cllrs Ward and Mrs Robinson were undertaking.

**65. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN.**

**RESOLVED:**

That Cllr Rickman be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Cabinet for the remainder of the municipal year.

**66. MINUTES.**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2003, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**67. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Cllr Rickman declared an interest in Minute 69.

**68. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

**69. EXPENDITURE PLAN PROPOSALS (REPORT A).**

Cllr Rickman declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a Beach Hut owner. There was no discussion on this aspect of the report.

The Cabinet considered the expenditure plan proposals which set out, in financial terms, service aspirations, service efficiencies and reductions and other unavoidable financial issues to be faced by the Council.

Members noted that as part of the Financial Strategy, the Council had already agreed in principle that the majority of any new income generated from reducing the discount on second homes should be allocated through the Local Strategic Partnership. However, nothing had yet been included in the expenditure plan in relation to this possible additional income. A further report would be made to the Cabinet in due course.

All relevant committees and review panels would be asked to consider the expenditure plan proposals and their comments would be fed back to the Cabinet in December.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That all the items contained in the Expenditure Plan proposals as detailed in the Appendices to Report A be noted and referred to the relevant committees and review panels with any comments arising from them being fed back to the December Cabinet meeting; and
- (b) That further work continues in order to identify ways of reducing net expenditure.

**70. ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT – PROGRESS REPORT (REPORT B).**

The Cabinet considered the progress made on electronic government within the Council. The development of key access channels for customers to engage with the Council's services was progressing well. Members agreed that it was essential to ensure that the Council's IT infrastructure remained capable of delivering the programme.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That Members note the progress to date in implementing the electronic governance strategy; and
- (b) That Members support the production of an action plan to assist in developing the organisation to enable fully electronic service delivery.

**71. HOUSING STOCK OPTIONS REVIEW (REPORT C).**

The Government, in June 2003, issued guidance on delivering decent homes and carrying out an options appraisal. The Cabinet were advised that the options appraisal needed to be submitted by July 2005 and that a project group should be set up to carry out the review. Additional funding would be required to undertake the work.

The Tenants' representatives supported the proposals. However, they said that appraisal would generate a high volume of work for the Tenants' Consultative Group (TCG) and, this would make the need for a larger resource room even more urgent. Members noted that officers would continue to seek alternative, more appropriate accommodation for the TCG.

**RECOMMENDED:**

***That a supplementary estimate of £154,000 be approved to undertake the housing stock options review, to be met from the HRA (£124,000) and the General Fund (£30,000).***

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Housing, Health and Social Inclusion Review Panel be asked to appoint a Housing Stock Options Project Group comprising members, Tenants and Officers to manage this project;
- (b) That the appointment of a Tenants Advisor within the budget of £32,000 be agreed and the Housing Portfolio Holder be authorised, in conjunction with the Stock Options Project Group, to formally appoint the Tenants' Advisor after the Tenants have completed the selection process;
- (c) That the Housing Portfolio Holder be authorised, in conjunction with the Stock Options Project Group, to appoint the communications expert and suitable consultants to carry out a stock condition survey;
- (d) That standing orders be waived and Butlers be appointed as advisors to the Council at a cost of £15,000; and
- (e) That officers give further consideration to the provision of a resource room for use by the Tenants' Consultative Group.

**72. CATERING SERVICE – FINANCIAL POSITION 2003/04 – 2004/05 (REPORT D).**

The Cabinet considered details of the Catering Service financial position for 2003/04 and 2004/05.

**RECOMMENDED:**

***That a supplementary estimate for catering in 2003/04 of £106,000 be approved together with an Expenditure Plan bid of £50,000 for 2004/05.***

**73. RECREATION CENTRES – FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY (REPORT E).**

The Cabinet considered the results of the benchmarking exercises and the action plan produced as a result.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Action Plan and timetable as outlined in Appendix 1 to Report E be approved.

**74. ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR - PROTOCOL (REPORT F).**

The Cabinet considered a draft Anti Social Behaviour Protocol. Members noted that the problem of anti social behaviour was increasing and the Protocol, which had been recognised both regionally and nationally, would make a real practical difference in addressing the issues.

There was still some concern that the intention of Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) was being frustrated by the Courts as they did not allow offenders to be named. Members were of the view that, in order to obtain the maximum benefit from an ASBO, the name of the individual should be publicised.

**RESOLVED:**

That the 'Dealing With Anti Social Behaviour Protocol' as attached as Appendix 1 to report F be approved.

**75. NEW FOREST HEALTH STRATEGY – 'IMPROVING LIFE IN THE NEW FOREST' 2003/2004 (REPORT G).**

The District Council has, for many years, had its own Health Strategy. In addition, many other organisations concerned with health care have had their own individual strategies. For the first time a strategy has now been developed that joins up all the work into one single document owned and developed by a partnership.

The Health and Social Inclusion Portfolio Holder said that the Government Office for the South East had commended the cross cutting Strategy as an example of excellence.

**RESOLVED:**

That the New Forest Health Strategy 'Improving Life in the New Forest' 2003/2004 be adopted and officers be congratulated on the partnership work carried out in the development of the Strategy.

**76. RESOURCES DIRECTORATE (AUDIT SERVICES) – ADDITIONAL RESOURCE (REPORT H).**

The Cabinet considered a request for approval for a combined Freedom of Information and Benefit Fraud clerical post within the Audit Services Unit of the Resources Directorate.

**RESOLVED:**

That a new clerical post within the Audit Services Section of the Resources Directorate be approved, to be funded from within existing budgets.

**77. PROPOSED CHANGES TO PPG3 : HOUSING (REPORT I).**

The Government has published two consultation papers on proposed changes to parts of Planning Guidance Note 3 (PPG3) Housing: relating to influencing the size, type and affordability of housing and supporting the delivery of new housing.

The Cabinet considered comments on the main proposed changes. Within the New Forest area there were small rural villages and market towns and, members were of the view that the proposals for increasing housing density were inappropriate for areas such as these, and that the Government's attention should be drawn to the Council's concerns.

Whilst the need to meet increased housing targets was acknowledged it was agreed that this should not be done at the expense of urbanising rural areas of the district. A balance also needed to be maintained between use of land for housing and use of land for employment.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That, in responding to the consultation on revisions to PPG3: Housing, the Council would wish to take the opportunity to reiterate their general concern that increases in housing densities could change the character of certain towns and villages in the New Forest;
- (b) That the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister be informed:
  - (i) That the Council supports the proposed changes set out in "Influencing the size, type and affordability of housing" subject to the comments that:
    - (a) the revised guidance should allow for tenure considerations to be set out where appropriate in Supplementary Planning Guidance and Development Briefs related to more general Local Plan (or LDD) policies, as this will provide for greater flexibility as circumstances change (this comment relates to para. 6 of the proposed revisions);
    - (b) there is a strong case for allowing site allocations for affordable housing within the larger villages where there are severe constraints on expansion (as in this District). The "rural exceptions" policy should also be allowed to continue because not all suitable opportunities that might come forward for small rural affordable housing schemes can be foreseen during plan preparation (this comment relates to para. 16 of the proposed revisions).

- (ii) That the Council objects to the proposed additional paragraph 42a suggested in "Supporting the delivery of new housing."

**78. LYNTHURST FLOOD RELIEF SCHEME (REPORT J).**

The Cabinet considered an update on the Lyndhurst Flood Relief Scheme and the reasons for an increase in the projected expenditure.

**RECOMMENDED:**

***That a supplementary estimate of £93,000, to be funded by grant and SCA, as detailed in report J to the Cabinet, be approved to enable the Lyndhurst Flood Relief Scheme to be completed.***

**79. HYTHE PIER.**

Cllr Robinson updated the Cabinet on the latest position in relation to Hythe Pier following the severe damage it sustained on Saturday 1 November, when it was hit by a dredging vessel.

Early indications were that subject to a detailed survey, the 130 foot damaged section could be repaired and it was estimated that the works would take up to three weeks. This could therefore effectively bring the ferries back into operation from the end of the Pier in as little as eight weeks. However, the position in relation to the train service was not clear.

White Horse Ferries reacted quickly to ensure that services were maintained. As a temporary measure an agreement had been reached with Hythe Marina and residents, to operate the service from Hythe Marina pontoon with a minibus transporting passengers to the Marina from the Ferry Pier offices.

Members expressed their thanks to Hythe Marina and to the Ferry operators for their efforts in maintaining a service.

CHAIRMAN