

7 APRIL 2004

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 7 April 2004

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:

C Baker
D A Hibbert
Mrs M Humber
R J Neath
B M F Pemberton

Councillors:

L R Puttock
Mrs M J Robinson
D N Scott
J G Ward
P R Woods

Also In Attendance:

Mrs P White, Tenants' Representative.

Officers Attending:

D Yates, N Gibbs, J Mascall, C Malyon, Ms J Bateman and D Brown and for part of the meeting A Climpson.

136. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2004, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

137. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No declarations of interest were made.

138. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

139. BEACON COUNCIL – PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM.

The Chairman announced, with pleasure, that the Council had been successful in its application for Beacon Status in Promoting Sustainable Tourism. This confirmed the excellent reputation the Council had built up in that field. The award was received by the Leisure Portfolio Holder; Mr A Climpson, the Council's Tourism and Publicity Officer and a representative of the Industry.

Members paid particular tribute to Mr Climpson for all his work for the Council in the field of tourism and to all the private stakeholders involved in the joint effort to achieve the Beacon Council status.

140. CHURCHILL COURT, GORE ROAD, NEW MILTON (REPORT A).

The Cabinet considered further detailed options for the future of Churchill Court.

The Housing Portfolio Holder said that, having considered the options, and in view of the pressure on the housing register, particularly in the New Milton area, he felt that the most effective use of the site was to redevelop it for general housing needs. The main concern of the residents was that they did not want any change. Although some residents had already moved out, and no new allocations were being made, the Housing Portfolio Holder made it quite clear that no residents would be forced to move out. The proposed redevelopment was a long-term policy and residents could stay in their homes for as long as they wished. If a resident did decide to move they would be offered all the support they needed at the Council's expense. Alternatively, they could choose to move out temporarily and come back to a new build unit. If required they could also be offered mobile sheltered warden services.

The Housing Portfolio Holder said he had met with the residents and had confirmed to them that they could stay in their homes for as long as they wished and under no circumstances would they be forced to move.

Mrs White, the Tenants' representative, said that the residents were not happy with the proposal to redevelop the site for general affordable housing. Whilst they accepted that the standard of their accommodation was poor they still wanted to remain.

The residents of Churchill Court had circulated to members, a document asking them to consider the option of refurbishment and reiterating their wish to remain in sheltered housing in their current location. In response to this, members again reiterated that the proposal to develop the site was a long term one and none of the residents would be forced to move.

Cllr Mrs Robinson said that Churchill Court should be refurbished as sheltered accommodation and should not be redeveloped as general affordable housing. She accepted that the current accommodation was inappropriate and did need refurbishment. However, the site of Churchill Court was a prime location for sheltered housing provision and should remain as such. There had been general refurbishment of sheltered housing across the district and Cllr Robinson said that the residents of Churchill Court should be treated equally and not told that they either had to remain in inappropriate accommodation or move.

Another member said that Barfields Sheltered accommodation had recently been refurbished and those residents were very pleased with the result. She asked why the same work could not be done at Churchill Court. Members noted that the work at Barfields had been very expensive and the Council needed to weigh such costs against the amount of new sheltered housing or affordable housing that could be provided for a similar investment.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a detailed feasibility study be carried out with a view to pursuing the option of redevelopment of Churchill Court for the provision of general needs affordable housing provided by a Registered Social Landlord; and
- (b) That discussions be held with the Housing Corporation with the aim of securing funding but that it be recognised that in the absence of funding being made available through this route, consideration would need to be given to the Council providing grant assistance.

141. DISPOSAL OF LAND FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING, LANGDOWN LAWN, HYTHE (REPORT B).

The Cabinet considered the disposal of land at Langdown Lawn, Hythe. The Housing Portfolio Holder said that he supported the need for more affordable housing.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) *That the land at Langdown Lawn be transferred freehold to Hampshire Voluntary Housing Society (HVHS) for £440,000, the transfer being subject to planning consent being granted to HVHS to develop the site for 11 affordable dwellings; and*
- (b) *That the capital receipt (£440,000) be recycled as LASHG to facilitate the development.*

142. PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2004/2005 (REPORT C).

The Cabinet considered the Planned Maintenance Programme for 2004/2005. The Housing Portfolio Holder said that the programme would enable work to be carried out on time and within budget and would meet the required demand. Members noted that the work would enable further properties meet the Decent Homes Standard.

RECOMMENDED:

That a virement of £77,000 be made from the Planned Maintenance Programme 2004/05 (decreasing it to £3,674,000) to the Cyclical Maintenance budget (increasing that to £1,060,000).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That, subject to the recommendation above, the schemes listed in Appendix I to Report C be approved as the Planned Maintenance and Improvements programme and Cyclical Maintenance Programme for 2004/2005; and
- (b) That the Assistant Director (Housing Landlord Services) be delegated power to agree the works to be carried out at specific addresses, within the budget heads allocated by the Council.

143. HANGER FARM, TOTTON : ADDITIONAL ALLOCATION (REPORT D).

The Cabinet considered the allocation of further funds from Developers' Contributions to cover additional commitments that had emerged during the contracted works.

RESOLVED:

That a sum of up to £200,000 be allocated from developers' contributions for open space, to be applied on the basis of the current arrangements for staged payments.

144. MEALS ON WHEELS – CHARGES FOR 2004/2005 (REPORT E).

The Cabinet considered the level at which to set the charge for a Meals on Wheels meal for 2004/05 and the need for a supplementary estimate to cover additional costs in 2003/04.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Meals on Wheels meal price for 2004/05 be set at £2.60 per Meal, generating an additional budget contribution of £6,400 towards increased service costs.

RESOLVED:

That a supplementary estimate of £3,300 for the 2003/04 financial year be agreed in respect of increased charges from the Women's Royal Voluntary Service.

145. FINANCIAL REPORT – FORECAST FULL YEAR AND ACTUAL FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2003 TO FEBRUARY 2004 (REPORT F).

The Cabinet considered the forecast budget variations of all Portfolios and Committees from the approved original estimates for 2003/04.

The Finance and Support Portfolio Holder thanked the Corporate Management Team and officers for the proactive action that had been taken to address the possible budgetary overspend. He was pleased to note that the position of the General Fund budget was now in line with projections.

RECOMMENDED:

That the following supplementary estimates be approved:

- *£75,000 increase in costs for Highways Agency Services;*
- *£25,000 for Portmore Flood Relief;*
- *£20,000 increase in costs as a result of reduced service charges income.*

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the approval of the above recommendations

- (a) The revised General Fund budget as set out in Appendix 1 to report F be approved;
- (b) The revised Capital Expenditure budget as set out in Appendix 2 to report F be approved;
- (c) The revised Housing Revenue Account as set out in Appendix 3 to Report F be approved;
- (d) The financial position of Commercial Services as set out in Appendix 4 to Report F be noted; and
- (e) the actual expenditure to profiled budget positions of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account as set out in Appendices 1 and 3 to Report F be noted.

146. REVIEW OF HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ARRANGEMENTS FOR GRASS AND SHRUB MAINTENANCE (REPORT G).

The Cabinet considered a revised agency agreement with Hampshire County Council for grass and shrub maintenance.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the legal agreement meeting the approval of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, New Forest District Council enter into a renewed agency agreement with Hampshire County Council to maintain the urban grassed areas and shrub beds on highway land from 1 April, 2004.

147. APPOINTMENT TO NEW FOREST TRANSPORT PANEL.

The Chairman said that the remit of this Panel had changed and as a result it was now to undertake a much more strategic role. It was now felt important that the Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder should be appointed to this body. After consultation, it was agreed that Cllr Shand would stand down and Cllr Heron, as Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder would be appointed in his place. The membership of the Panel would be reviewed again at the end of the municipal year.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Heron be appointed to the New Forest Transport Strategy Panel in place of Councillor Shand.

CHAIRMAN