

**5 JULY 2004**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 5 July 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  
F R Harrison  
R J Neath  
B M F Pemberton

**Councillors:**

L R Puttock  
Mrs M J Robinson  
D B Tipp  
P R Woods

**Also In Attendance:**

Mrs P White, Tenants' Representative.

**Officers Attending:**

D Yates, N Gibbs, J Mascal, C Malyon, Ms J Bateman and Miss G O'Rourke and for part of the meeting J Bull.

**19. MINUTES.**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meetings held on 17 May and 2 June 2004, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as correct records.

**20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Cllrs Heron declared an interest in Minute 29  
Cllr Thierry declared interests in Minutes 29 and 30

**21. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

**22. COMMERCIAL SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE – EXTENSION OF POWERS (REPORT A).**

The Cabinet considered extending the powers of the Joint Committee to enable them to tender for additional work from other public bodies.

***RECOMMENDED:***

- (a) That the Joint Committee be empowered to tender for work with other public bodies (being a public body within the Local Government (Goods and Services) Act 1970) up to a maximum cumulative annual value of £650,000;***
- (b) That the Commercial Agreement be amended as appropriate to include provision for power to tender for new contracts to be delegated to officers, the wording to be agreed by the Heads of Legal Services of the 2 authorities; and***
- (c) That the Financial Regulations of the Joint Committee be amended to authorise spending, by Commercial Services, in addition to existing budgets, up to the value of new contracts in order to purchase the materials, equipment and staff necessary for the contract.***

**23. PROVISIONAL FINAL ACCOUNTS 2003/04.(REPORT B).**

The Cabinet considered the provisional revenue and capital outturn figures for 2003/2004. It was noted that the way in which the budget was forecast had previously indicated an overspend however, the provisional final accounts now showed an underspend. In the last financial year there had been a large number of budget variations but some issues such as changes to the Council tax and benefits payments were beyond the Council's control. Members agreed that there was a need to improve budgetary information to inform decisions more accurately.

**RESOLVED:**

That the provisional outturn figures be noted.

**24. FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2005/08 (REPORT C).**

The Cabinet considered a Financial Strategy that set out the likely potential resources the Council would have at its disposal over the next four years. Members noted that the Council continued to face a financially challenging situation made worse in the coming year by the possibility of being capped. Resources would again need to be closely aligned to priorities. The financial implications of the establishment of the National Park needed to be confirmed and will no longer be as positive as first envisaged as a result of the change of the boundary.

Members noted that the Government would be announcing the Balance of Funding review in the next week but they were not optimistic as to the final grant settlement that the Council would receive.

The Crime and Disorder Portfolio Holder expressed disappointment that no agreement had been reached with the Police and Fire authorities over the retention of additional income generated from the reduction in the second homes discount within the district. The Cabinet agreed that both these authorities should be approached again with a view to securing this money as a grant towards the employment of Community Wardens in Hythe and New Milton.

The Finance and Support Portfolio Holder thanked officers for their hard work in developing service plans linked to corporate priorities and budgets. Members noted that whilst the Council had chosen to become debt free the capital programme did make an assumption that borrowing would be necessary in future years. Bids still needed to be matched by savings and corporate priorities agreed as in previous years.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) That the Financial Strategy as detailed in paragraph 8 of report C to the Cabinet be approved;**
- (b) That the timetable for the expenditure planning and budget setting process be approved; and**
- (c) That officers write to the Police and Fire Authorities formally requesting that, in the light of the additional funding they have received following the reduction in Council Tax discount on second homes, they make a grant to the Council towards the employment of Community Wardens in Hythe and New Milton.**

**25. THE COUNCIL'S IMPROVEMENT PLAN (REPORT D).**

The Cabinet considered the Council's Improvement Plan and the progress made against the various areas for improvement. The Council had been judged as an 'excellent and improving' authority and it was important that the Council continued to improve. The Improvement Plan attached to report D to the Cabinet provided a simple checklist that would be updated every six months as some areas for improvement were completed and new ones were identified.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Council's Improvement Plan be approved and the progress made noted.

**26. REVIEW OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FUNCTIONS (REPORT E).**

The Cabinet considered the views of the Corporate and Finance Review Panel in respect of a review of the overview and scrutiny function. Members noted that the Chairman of the current Corporate and Finance Review Panel had suggested that the Panel should be re-named Corporate Overview Panel. Members agreed that this would be an appropriate title.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) That the Corporate and Finance Review Panel be renamed the "Corporate Overview Panel";**
- (b) That the membership of this Panel be increased to 14 (on the basis of the current proportionality of the Council this would mean 8 Conservative and 6 Liberal Democrat places);**
- (c) That the terms of reference of all Panels be amended to include a responsibility to scrutinise the Corporate Plan (Heart of the Forest) and to choose which of the aims and topics they wish to examine;**
- (d) That the Corporate Overview Panel be given the administrative task of pulling these choices together with a view to assessing whether or not adequate resources were available, to assist in linking the annual budget with the strategic objectives;**
- (e) That the Corporate Overview Panel also be tasked with identifying any aims and topics that are:**
  - (i) not covered; or**
  - (ii) are duplicated****and to request the relevant Panel Chairmen to agree a way forward (This could be by employing small joint working groups, holding joint meetings, or a simple split of responsibilities);**
- (f) That all Panels have responsibility to assist in the development, implementation and monitoring of the Council's Performance Management framework, including the fundamental and annual service plans relating to their functions;**
- (g) That Portfolio Holders and Panels continue to work towards constructive relationships;**

- (h) *That members at all times retain the right to call in or scrutinise any particular issue (on the same basis as present), but that Panels be encouraged to work together with the Portfolio Holder to move issues forward. (Final decision-making will rest with the Cabinet and the Portfolio Holders but the Panels should play a part leading up to the decision);*
- (i) *That comprehensive training for both members and officers on the roles and responsibilities of overview and scrutiny, and the skills needed to undertake the roles, be implemented;*
- (j) *That the Corporate Overview Panel undertake a review of officer support for the scrutiny function and identify future areas for improvement which should preferably be cost-neutral and robust;*
- (k) *That there should be a further review of the scrutiny arrangements in two years' time, in particular to analyse the effectiveness of the new measures; and*
- (l) *That the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the necessary amendments to the Constitution.*

**27. COMMERCIAL SERVICES DIRECTORATE – SERVICE PLAN (REPORT F).**

The Cabinet considered the Commercial Services Directorate Service Plan for 2004/2005. The Plan was fully supported by the Environment Portfolio Holder.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

*That the 2004/05 Service Plan for the Commercial Services Directorate be approved.*

**28. DECRIMINALISATION OF ON STREET PARKING (REPORT G).**

The Cabinet considered the results of discussions with Hampshire County Council and the Police on the decriminalisation of on-street parking and the undertaking of local enforcement. In supporting the proposals, the Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder also said that there was an ongoing need for Government funding for an integrated public transport system.

Following the implementation of a traffic management scheme within the district earlier in the year, information surveys had been carried out to ascertain the effectiveness of the measures that were introduced. A further report would be made to Cabinet in due course with the results of those surveys.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) *That, in partnership with Hampshire County Council, Decriminalised Parking be introduced throughout the District, the target date for introduction being January 2006;*
- (b) *That the set up and ongoing revenue costs shown in report G to the Cabinet be incorporated in future expenditure plans;*
- (c) *That, in partnership with Hampshire County Council, an application for the introduction of decriminalised parking be made to the Secretary of State. The application to cover the setting up of Special Parking Areas (SPA) / Permitted Parking Areas (PPA) to cover the whole of the District except for designated Trunk Roads or Motorways;*
- (d) *That an Agency Agreement be entered into with the Highway Authority (Hampshire County Council) to facilitate the introduction of decriminalised parking with terms to be agreed by the Director of Resources;*
- (e) *That the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be given authority to enter into an Agreement under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to join the National Parking Adjudication Service;*
- (f) *That the Council nominate one member to act as representative on the Joint Committee of the National Parking Adjudication Service;*
- (g) *That the District Council adopt the higher level of charges as set out in table 1 of 7.1 of report G to the Cabinet; and*
- (h) *That the following levels of charges, as prescribed by the Home Secretary be adopted in the event of the Council removing a vehicle under the Road Traffic Act 1991.*

<i>Vehicle Removal</i>	<i>£105</i>
<i>Vehicle Storage</i>	<i>£12 for each 24 hours, or part thereof, that the vehicle is impounded</i>
<i>Disposal of unclaimed Vehicle</i>	<i>£50</i>

**29. RINGWOOD LONG STAY PARKING/USE OF LORRY PARK (REPORT H).**

Cllr Thierry declared a personal interest as a member of Ringwood Town Council. He did not consider his interest to be prejudicial. He remained at the meeting, took part in the discussion and voted.

Cllr Heron declared a personal interest in that he was a member of the Town Council and the Chamber of Trade. His partner was also a member of the Town Council and President of the Chamber of Trade. He did not consider his interest to be prejudicial. He remained at the meeting, took part in the discussion and voted.

The Cabinet noted concerns that had been expressed about the shortage of long stay parking in the Central Furlong Car Park in Ringwood and considered proposals that had been made by the Town Council and the Chamber of Trade to alleviate the difficulties.

The Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder said that there had been extensive consultation on the proposals and they represented a local solution to a local problem.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That officers advertise amendments to the District of New Forest Parking Order to reflect the following;
  - (i) Allowing lorries to park only between the hours of 18:00 and 08:00 in the existing lorry parking area of Ringwood Car Park;
  - (ii) Reducing the waiting restriction in the long stay Furlong Car Park to nine hours between 08:00 and 18:00; and
- (b) That the area forming the present Ringwood Lorry Park be marked to accommodate cars in order to increase its capacity;
- (c) That a supplementary estimate of £8,000 be raised to cover the cost of implementing recommendations (a) and (b); and
- (d) That officers investigate the financial and parking management implications of providing reserved parking spaces for use by local business.

**30. RINGWOOD HEALTH AND LEISURE CENTRE – CREATION OF A MIND-BODY/DANCE STUDIO (REPORT I).**

Cllr Thierry declared a personal interest in this matter in that he had a business relationship with Ringwood Health and Leisure Centre. He considered his interest to be prejudicial and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

The Cabinet considered proposals for the conversion of two squash courts at Ringwood Health and Leisure Centre to a purpose built dance/mind-body studio.

The Leisure Portfolio Holder thanked the Leisure Review Panel for the work they had done in exploring the options for the Ringwood Centre.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the option to create a dance/ mind-body studio at Ringwood Health and Leisure Centre by converting two of the three existing squash courts be approved; and
- (b) That consideration be given to developing squash at New Milton Health and Leisure Centre as a specialist activity to cater for the demand for squash over a wider area to include Ringwood.

**31. NEW FOREST TRANSPORT STRATEGY PANEL – APPOINTMENT OF SUB GROUP.**

**RESOLVED:**

That Cllrs Heron and Mrs Wyeth be appointed to serve on the New Forest Transport Strategy Panel Sub Group to consider the operation of the road network within the New Forest.

CHAIRMAN

(DEMOCRAT/CB050704/MINUTES.DOC)