

1 SEPTEMBER 2004
NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 1 September 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
Mrs M Humber
R J Neath
L R Puttock

Councillors:

Mrs M J Robinson
D N Scott
J G Ward
P R Woods
Mrs P A Wyeth

Also In Attendance:

Mrs P White, Tenants' Representatives.

Officers Attending:

D Yates, N Gibbs, J Mascal, C Malyon, Ms J Bateman and Miss G O'Rourke and, for part of the meeting, D Brown, N Cross, Mrs C Gallagher, G Spawton and D Wright.

45. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 August 2004, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No declarations of interest made by members in connection with any agenda item.

47. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

48. COST OF TOWN/VILLAGE PARKING CLOCKS FOR PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2005 TO 31 DECEMBER 2005 (REPORT A).

The Cabinet considered proposals for the cost of parking clocks for the period 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2005.

The Leader reiterated that the parking clocks were part of the Council's overall traffic management proposals. The next part of the process was the introduction of decriminalisation enabling proper enforcement around towns and villages. The set up costs for decriminalisation were considerable and there was a shortfall in funding from HCC towards those costs. To increase the cost of the parking clocks to £6 would assist in covering that shortfall.

The Leader of the Opposition said that she did not think that to increase the cost of a parking clock to £6 would have any effect on traffic management and would not lead to the modal shift that HCC were suggesting. If there was a need for more income then she suggested that further charges should be agreed for car parks for Sundays and Bank Holidays. This approach would enable more tourists to be targeted rather than obtaining additional money from residents through an increase in the clock price.

The Cabinet agreed that car owners, rather than the council tax payer should fund any traffic management scheme and it would not be helpful at this stage to appeal against the decision of HCC in relation to clock price.

RECOMMENDED:

That the District of New Forest (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 1983 be altered by notice of amendment under section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to the effect that the cost of parking clocks for the period 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2005 be £6.

49. HOMESearch HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME (REPORT B).

The Cabinet considered amendments to the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme.

The Housing Portfolio Holder thanked officers, tenants and the Housing, Health and Social Inclusion Review Panel for the work they had undertaken in revising the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme. In terms of the Corporate Plan he said that the revised scheme would have a major effect on the Council Housing priorities.

In terms of responsibility for decisions made under the Scheme, the Housing Portfolio Holder suggested that it would be helpful if the Scheme were amended to include both he and the Housing Needs Manager in addition to the Assistant Director of Housing for decisions made on Lettings Plans. The Cabinet supported this approach.

The Housing Portfolio Holder also drew attention to the Review Panel discussions on the changes proposed to the policy on local connection areas. The Cabinet agreed that in terms of Band C, the lowest level of connection, it would be appropriate to change the eligibility criteria from one year to two years.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's amended Housing Allocation Scheme, as detailed in report B to the Cabinet, be adopted with effect from 1 January 2005, subject to:

- (i) The named persons with responsibility for decisions made on Lettings Plans being amended to include the Housing Portfolio Holder and the Housing Needs Manager in addition to the Assistant Director of Housing; and
- (ii) That the Band C local connection eligibility criteria be amended from one year to two years.

50. CIVIL ENGINEERING SERVICE – FINAL BEST VALUE REPORT (REPORT C).

The Cabinet considered the findings of the Civil Engineering Service Best Value Review and the associated Improvement Plan.

The Environment Portfolio Holder congratulated officers on their excellent report. The Cabinet noted that there would be ongoing resource implications arising from Capital Schemes relating to coastal works, over the coming years. These were already identified in expenditure plans and the funding issues arising would need to be addressed as part of that process.

There were ongoing issues relating to land drainage that would be subject to a separate report to the Cabinet in the near future.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Action Plan for continuous improvement of the Civil Engineering Service as set out in Appendix 1 to report C to the Cabinet be approved;
- (b) That those actions not requiring additional resources be implemented in accordance with the timetable; and
- (c) That those actions requiring additional resources either be met by efficiency savings, or not implemented until sufficient budgetary provision is provided.

51. AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT (REPORT D).

The Cabinet considered the findings of the detailed Air Quality Assessment as submitted to DEFRA in April 2004 and, in particular, considered the establishment of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in Totton and Lyndhurst.

An AQMA would require an action plan to be formulated to alleviate the problems. The objectives of the plan would then be evaluated in terms of cost effectiveness and their environmental, economic and social impact. The Cabinet noted some of the options that could be considered such as signs to encourage motorists to switch off their engines, whilst waiting in traffic queues, and greater enforcement of the lorry ban through Lyndhurst. In Totton the impact of traffic and resultant pollution needed to be considered as an integral part of the regeneration of the Town Centre.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the findings of the detailed Air Quality Assessment are accepted;
- (b) That Air Quality Management Areas are declared in respect of NO₂ for Lyndhurst and Totton;
- (c) That the real time monitor for NO₂ be relocated from Ringwood to Lyndhurst but that monitoring in Ringwood for NO₂ should continue with diffusion tubes;
- (d) That the Ringwood monitoring site be decommissioned but reinstated should future problems be detected; and
- (e) That the monitoring programme be continued in accordance with DEFRA's requirements to review and assess air quality in the district.

52. STILLWATER PARK – FUTURE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS (REPORT E).

The Cabinet considered proposals for the involvement of the residents at Stillwater Park in the future management and control of the mobile home park.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Residents' Association at Stillwater Park be recognised and that formal consultation, as detailed in Paragraph 2.4 of report E to the Cabinet, be undertaken with this group relating to the future management and control of the Park; and
- (b) That the group be financially supported by the provision of an annual grant of £360 and by the reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred as part of the consultation process.

53. OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF STILLWATER PARK (REPORT F).

Mr Brian Terry, Chairman of the Residents' Association addressed the Cabinet. He said that he had not had time to speak to his association and therefore could only speak from a personal point of view. However, he was confident that none of the residents would support an expansion of the Park. In terms of environmental impact, the addition of 6 mobile homes would reduce the current 10% of recreational space by 50%. Mr Terry also pointed out that there were no controls on age groups purchasing homes and it was quite likely that families with children would increase if new homes were added. This would place further pressure on the recreational space. Mr Terry said that, in the past, when he had approached the Council as licensing authority, there had been a possibility of relaxing the requirement for recreation space but he was not sure that this remained an option.

Mr Terry said that further investigation was needed in terms of the Council's authority under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, to purchase mobile homes.

The Cabinet considered the options to provide an additional 6 mobile homes on the site with a potential for 12. Members noted that a detailed site survey would be required to determine the necessary infrastructure for any additional homes. In response to Mr Terry's comments the Cabinet noted that any decision that they took would be subject to further legal advice.

To assist in the Council's provision of affordable housing, Members were of the opinion that the provision of 12 additional homes on the site should be agreed. There would be economies of scale in completing the work as a single project. It was also agreed it was important to ensure that the new homes were marketed locally and to this end tenders should be sought from local agents for this purpose. The Housing Portfolio Holder and the Leader would meet with the residents to discuss the detail of the proposal.

The Cabinet agreed that they would also seek to ensure that any necessary improvement works to the site were funded and undertaken as a result of this project.

RESOLVED:

That, to further the Council's aims to provide affordable housing and subject to further legal advice:

- (i) An additional 12 mobile homes be sited at Stillwater Park and that they be offered for sale;
- (ii) Tenders be sought from local agents to market the homes;
- (iii) Immediate work be undertaken to decide the location of the 12 additional mobile homes and to assess the necessary infrastructure required for them; and

- (iv) Residents be consulted during this period to obtain their views on the above points.

54. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.

RESOLVED:

That, under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and the Press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 8 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

55. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS RELATING TO OPTIONS FOR THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF STILLWATER PARK (REPORT G).

The Cabinet considered the confidential financial arrangements relating to the options for the further development of Stillwater Park.

RESOLVED:

That the confidential detailed financial calculations relating to the further development of Stillwater Park be noted.

CHAIRMAN