

4 JULY 2005

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 4 July 2005.

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

Councillors:

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

Councillors:

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

In Attendance:

Councillors:

C Baker
Mrs J L Cleary
F R Harrison
R J Neath
Sqn Ldr B M F Pemberton

Councillors:

L R Puttock
Mrs M J Robinson
Mrs S I Snowden
C R Treleaven
P R Woods

Also In Attendance:

Mrs P White (Tenants' Representative).

Officers Attending:

D Yates, N Gibbs, J Mascall, C Malyon, D Brown, Miss J Debnam, K Green and Miss G O'Rourke.

14. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2005, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest made by any member in connection with an agenda item.

16. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

17. NEW PUBLIC CONVENIENCES, CALSHOT SPIT (REPORT A).

The Cabinet noted that the Environment Agency was unlikely to grant consent for replacement public conveniences to be constructed on the site by the Activities Centre as originally intended, because of the lack of a connection to the public sewer. As a consequence, it was necessary to construct the replacement conveniences at the Hillhead site, in the car park. There had been consultations over the proposals. The Project Board had consulted the Parish Council and also briefed the Beach Hut Owners Focus Group. They would be kept informed of any significant developments.

While recognising the concerns of the Environment Agency, which arose from more modern environmental standards which had developed since the existing conveniences were built, the Cabinet noted concerns that the lack of a convenience to serve the beach hut owners at the far end of the Spit might lead to alternative environmental problems.

The work of the Project Board, who had steered the project through a number of unexpected problems and delays, was commended.

The Cabinet endorsed the decision to award the contract to Amos Danby, without going out to tender. This was in the light of their success in tendering for and constructing 3 other conveniences in the District, an analysis of the submitted rates, and also the 2 ½% savings consequent upon not submitting the works to tender.

RESOLVED:

That the decision taken by the Director of Commercial Services, in accordance with paragraph 3.1.2 of Standing Orders as to Contracts, to award the contract for rebuilding the new Calshot toilets to Amos Danby Ltd., without inviting other tenders, be approved.

18. FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2006/08(REPORT B).

The Cabinet considered the Financial Strategy for the period 2006 to 2008.

One key difference to previous years was the greater emphasis now placed on risk management. This was partly as a result of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process, and partly a result of greater transparency in the reporting mechanisms.

In addition, the forecasts of likely net expenditure included targeted savings that would be required to achieve inflation only Council Tax increases.

The Financial Strategy defined the framework within which the Panels and the Cabinet should develop their expenditure plan proposals. Of particular note was the need to achieve efficiency savings and it would be challenging to integrate this with the need to direct resources to meet the Council's priorities.

This Council had been one of five local authorities nationally who had piloted the Use of Resources assessment process. This had proved to be a time intensive process for a period of about 5 weeks, but there was no doubt that the Council had gained considerable operational benefit from the process and, as a consequence, would be in a much better position for the CPA assessment to take place in September of this year.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Financial Strategy, as set out in paragraph 12 of Report B, be approved.

19. PROVISIONAL FINAL ACCOUNTS – 2004/05 (REPORT C).

Members noted the provisional final accounts for 2004/05. It was proposed that monies should be transferred to the Redundancy Fund, Renewals and Replacements Reserve, Revenue Reserves and Capital Programme Reserve.

RESOLVED:

That the provisional outturn figures be noted; and

RECOMMENDED:

That the transfer of £354,000 to the Redundancy Fund, £150,000 to the Renewals and Replacements Reserve, £162,000 to specific revenue reserves and the balance of any other General Fund outturn variation to the Capital Programme Reserve be approved.

20. REVIEW OF HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY (GRANTS/LOANS) (REPORT D).

The Cabinet considered a revised policy to guide the payment of grants and loans for works to help persons on low incomes with repair and improvement packages and also adaptations to meet the needs imposed by disability. The intention behind the revisions was to improve access to a wider range of persons than were previously helped. It was necessary to reduce the maximum payment in respect of Disabled Facilities Grants from £50,000 to £35,000. This scale of grant was however in the minority, mainly where there needed to be an extension to the property. The majority of grants were of relatively minor sums, for example for grab rails.

It was emphasised that the officers would continue to work with partner organisations to respond to the changing demands imposed by the increasing emphasis on maintaining older persons in their own homes.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Housing Assistance Policy be approved.

21. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT SERVICE AND ACTUAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS FOR 2004/05 (REPORT E).

Members noted the annual treasury stewardship report and actual Prudential Indicators for 2004/05.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the actual 2004/05 prudential indicators within Report E be approved; and
- (b) That the treasury management stewardship report for 2004/05 be noted.

22. THE COUNCIL'S IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2004/06 – PROGRESS (REPORT F).

The Cabinet was pleased to note that there was good progress against the improvement plan, with some activity against all identified actions. A number of actions would of course be completed in the longer term, but there was an encouraging level of progress to date.

It was noted that there was increasing emphasis on joint service delivery with other agencies, which would be achieved through Local Area Agreements (LAA's) and Local Public Services Agreements (LPSA's), largely working through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). It was agreed that there should be an additional topic to cover activity in this area.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That progress against the Council's Improvement Plan be noted; and
- (b) That an additional topic be included in the Improvement Plan on work in partnership with other bodies through Local Area Agreements and Local Public Services Agreements.

23. MEALS ON WHEELS IN COUNCIL OWNED SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEMES (REPORT G).

The Cabinet discussed the outcome of extensive research and consultations into the provision of meals to residents at 3 sheltered housing schemes. They concluded that the present arrangements were not equitable to all potential recipients and this must be addressed. There was some concern that the social aspect of dining together at the sheltered schemes might be prejudiced, as a result of withdrawing the subsidised service, but attendees would still be able to purchase a meal, at full cost, if they so wished.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council cease the provision of meals to residents of Clarks Close, Gore Grange and Winfrid House in the way that they are currently provided with effect from 1 November 2005, but that, in order to achieve equality, all residents of the Council's sheltered housing schemes be offered the opportunity to purchase meals on wheels at full cost if they are not entitled to receive one under existing Social Services criteria; and
- (b) That the Council cease the provision of meals to Gore Grange Day Centre in the way they are currently provided with effect from 1 November 2005, unless Age Concern are willing to pay the additional subsidy of £2.77 per meal, and offer a meal on wheels at full cost if attendees are not entitled to receive a subsidised meal under existing Social Services criteria.

24. SCHEME OF DELEGATION OF POWERS TO OFFICERS (REPORT H).

RESOLVED:

That the scheme of delegation of powers to officers be amended, as set out below:-

SOURCE	POWER DELEGATED	DELEGATION TO
Local Government Act 1972 s.223 Local Government Finance Acts 1988 and 1992	To institute, conduct, prosecute, defend and appear on behalf of the Council in Magistrates' Courts for the recovery and enforcement of the community charge, council tax and national non-domestic rates, and to represent New Forest District Council, at hearings of the Valuation Tribunal pursuant to the Local Government Finances Acts 1988 and 1992 or any statutory modifications or re-enactment thereof for the time being in force	Assistant Director (Customer Services); or Taxation and Benefits Manager; or Account Manager; or Manager (Taxation and Benefits); or Tax and Benefits Officer

CHAIRMAN