

3 AUGUST 2005

A

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 3 August 2005.

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

Councillors:

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

Councillors:

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

In Attendance:

Councillors:

Mrs J Cleary
F R Harrison
Mrs M Humber
R J Neath
Sqn Ldr B M F Pemberton

Councillors:

L R Puttock
Mrs M J Robinson
Mrs B Smith
C R Treleaven

Also In Attendance:

Mrs P White and Mrs A Murphy (Tenants' Representatives).

Officers Attending:

D Yates, N Gibbs, J Mascall, C Malyon, D Brown, Miss J Debnam,
Mrs C Gallagher, S Maggs and Miss G O'Rourke.

25. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2005, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllrs Kendal, Mrs Holding, F R Harrison, Neath, Mrs Robinson and Mrs Smith declared personal interests in respect of Agenda Item 4 relating to land at Challenger Way, Dibden.

27. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

28. LAND AT CHALLENGER WAY, DIBDEN (REPORT A).

Cllr Kendal disclosed a personal interest as a member of Hampshire County Council, which was a partner in the scheme. He considered such interest was not prejudicial and remained in the meeting to speak and to vote.

Cllr Holding disclosed a personal interest as a member of the Planning Development Control Committee which might have to take a planning decision on this matter. She considered such interest was not prejudicial and remained in the meeting to speak and to vote.

Cllr F R Harrison disclosed a personal interest as a member of the Planning Development Control Committee which might have to take a planning decision on this matter. He considered such interest was not prejudicial and remained in the meeting to speak. He did not have a vote.

Cllr Neath disclosed a personal interest as a Council appointed member of New Forest Villages Housing Association which was a potential partner in the scheme. He considered such interest was not prejudicial and remained in the meeting to speak. He did not have a vote.

Cllrs Mrs Robinson and Mrs Smith disclosed personal interests as members of Hythe and Dibden Parish Council, which was a partner in the scheme. They considered such interests were not prejudicial and remained in the meeting to speak. They did not have a vote.

Members were advised that it was now understood that the County Council would wish to provide only one or two keyworker homes. In the light of this, and the need if possible to retain capital receipts, members requested that the option of disposing of the residual plots, designated for keyworker housing but no longer needed for that purpose, for market housing should be evaluated. It was noted that this option may be contrary to planning policy for the site, but it was agreed that this should at least be investigated. On the same basis, the Cabinet sought confirmation that none of the land designated for open space could be reallocated for open market housing.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) *That, subject to further discussions to establish the planning situation, the option of disposing of the balance of the 5 housing plots designated for key worker housing, but not needed by the County Council for that purpose, for private sector housing, in order to maintain the capital receipts to this Council be investigated. If this is not acceptable in planning terms the key worker housing not required by the County Council should be re-allocated as general needs affordable housing.***

(b) That, In the light of this investigation and subject to:

- (i) the subsequent granting of planning permission, and**
- (ii) funding being available to implement the scheme;**

the housing land be disposed of to one of the Council's partner housing associations to provide a mix of affordable rented, shared ownership/equity and HCC key worker housing broadly in the proportions as set out in Scenario 1 of Report A to the Cabinet (final details to be agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Housing) for the following consideration:

- ***Nil cost for any general needs affordable housing (rent or shared ownership/equity);***
- ***Market value for key worker or open market housing (with the receipt being allocated to the Council's social housing grant budget for the provision of new affordable housing);***

(c) That the area of land intended for a community use building should be landscaped and set aside as open space, pending a provider being found.

29. HOUSING STRATEGY AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN (REPORT B).

The Cabinet was advised that the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) had confirmed that both the housing strategy and the business plan met the required standard to be deemed fit for purpose and they had consequently signed off the stock options appraisal. GOSE would continue to work with the Council to review progress on meeting the Decent Homes Standard.

In answer to questions, members were advised that expenditure within the strategy, particularly to provide affordable housing, was based upon the current level of receipts under the Right to Buy Scheme. If receipts through this source continued to fall, a report would be brought back to the Cabinet to decide how to respond to the shortfall.

Members noted, on page 22 of the Housing Strategy, the proposal to use planning powers to promote the building of small market dwellings that were more affordable by local people and designed to meet local demand. This option, which tended to promote higher density developments, would not however be appropriate in all settlements and due regard must be taken of the character of the surrounding area.

It was reported that the Housing Corporation were proposing to tell local authorities which partner Housing Associations they might use. In the New Forest District, over a number of years, the Council had developed a range of partnerships with Housing Associations which shared similar values and objectives. There was very considerable concern at any proposal to remove local discretion.

Members discussed the concerns raised by Mrs White, one of the Tenants' Representatives, regarding changes in the way in which social care for elderly persons in their own homes would be funded; and also about health service proposals which may lead to the closure of cottage hospitals. She felt it was particularly unfortunate that New Milton, which was the second largest population centre in the district, had not yet been consulted about the potential closure of the Milford-on-Sea Hospital, which was the closest.

It was noted that concerns within the local population about the way in which social care was funded may be unfounded, and caused by a misunderstanding about the way in which payments were made. It was not intended to withdraw any services. It was agreed that an item would be included on the Agenda for the next meeting of the Housing, Health and Social Inclusion Review Panel to update everyone on the changes to social care funding through Hampshire County Council.

With respect to the potential closure of the Milford-on-Sea Hospital, it was noted that consultations with the population in New Milton would start shortly. It was important however that the Primary Health Care Trust were made aware that the cottage hospitals served more than just the immediate local population. One of the arguments being used for closure was that not all areas had the benefit of a cottage hospital and there was a disproportionate service. This was not the perception of local populations which were drawn from a much wider area than the initial consultations carried out by the Health Care Trust suggested.

It was emphasised that discussions were continuing with the Primary Health Care Trust, and the County Council with the objective of ensuring that the long term care of the local population would not suffer as a result of any changes. The District Council would be considering its formal response to the PCT consultation at the next meeting of the Cabinet in September.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Council's Housing Strategy, as amended on page 22 by the insertion of the words 'where appropriate' with respect to the use of planning powers to secure small scale affordable housing, and the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, be adopted.

30. FINANCIAL REPORT – FORECAST FULL YEAR AND ACTUAL FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2005 TO JUNE 2005 (REPORT C).

The Cabinet was advised that the variations within the current budget were being scrutinised to try to consolidate them into next year's spending proposals.

With regard to the revised capital expenditure set out in Appendix 2 to Report C, it was noted that Financial Regulations had had to be suspended in order to incur £51,000 for urgent works to sports hall floors. The suspension was reported to the Cabinet and would be reported to the Council in accordance with Financial Regulation 2.4.1.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) ***That the items set out in the revised General Fund budget in Appendix 1 to Report C be approved to include a supplementary estimate of:***
 - (i) ***£20,000 for an income shortfall on beach hut assignment fees (this is the 2005/06 effect of a supplementary estimate already approved by the Council in respect of 2004/05 on 25 April 2005 as a result of a recommendation by the Cabinet based on Report E submitted to its meeting of 5 April);***
 - (ii) ***£32,000 in respect of Dibden Golf Centre Catering budgets (Detailed Cabinet Report B; 5 May 2005);***
- (b) ***That the revised capital expenditure as set out in Appendix 2 to Report C be approved.***
- (c) ***That the suspension of Financial Regulations in order to incur expenditure of £51,000 for urgent works to sports hall floors be noted.***

31. SUSPENSION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS – APPLEMORE HEALTH AND LEISURE CENTRE (REPORT D).

The Cabinet noted the decision taken by the Director of Resources to suspend financial regulations in order to allow the Council to take advantage of the 'inclusive fitness initiative' funded by Sport England to improve accessibility to areas such as gymnasiums for disabled people.

Members warmly welcomed this initiative and thanked the officers for their hard work in securing Council involvement in such an important initiative.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Resources' decision to suspend Financial Regulations be noted.

32. REPORT OF ENVIRONMENT REVIEW PANEL – PLANNING POLICIES TO AID RECYCLING (REPORT E).

Members welcomed the suggestion by the Environment Review Panel that policies should be included within the Local Development Framework, at the earliest opportunity, to promote the infrastructure to make recycling activity easier. It was noted that the quickest way forward was likely to be the preparation of a

supplementary planning document and it was suggested that the lead scrutiny members for the planning function should meet with members of the Environment Review Panel in order progress this matter further.

RESOLVED:

That the request of the Environment Review Panel be supported, and that the officers come back with more detailed proposals on policies to promote recycling activity in the emerging Local Development Framework, preferably early in the process by means of an informal advice note or a Supplementary Planning Document.

33. AIR QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT (REPORT F).

Members were advised that the monitoring of air quality could be carried out within the existing budget. The County Council had now agreed to fund the air quality modelling work for Lyndhurst and Totton.

Members welcomed the work being done by the officers in this field and looked forward to the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area for Fawley village in the hope that this would improve air quality for local residents. In answer to questions, members were advised that the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area did bring with it actions to seek to remedy the identified air quality problems.

It was noted that there had recently been road works in Junction Road, Totton. It was agreed that monitoring information for the relevant period would be sent to Cllr F R Harrison to establish whether the consequent road closures had had any measurable effect on air quality.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the findings of the Progress Report on air quality be accepted;
- (b) That an Air Quality Management Area be declared in respect of sulphur dioxide in Fawley; and
- (c) That a monitoring programme be continued in accordance with DEFRA's requirements to review and assess air quality in the district.

34. COMMUNITY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2005/06 (REPORT G).

The Cabinet was advised that the Local Strategic Partnership's (LSP's) Community Strategy was now within its second year of operation. Encouragingly, over 80% of the 100 actions to be carried out by this Council in the first year had been achieved. While many of these actions had been process-based, setting the scene for service delivery, the second year's actions would start to bring tangible benefits for service delivery.

Many of the community action networks (CANs) were performing well. Work on home energy conservation through the environmental quality and protection CAN had attracted particular praise from GOSE. There was scope to improve the effectiveness of some CANs, particularly the one working on older persons issues. The LSP had discussed and approved the action plans proposed, subject to some minor amendments.

Members supported a suggestion that action should be included to promote the integration of ethnic minorities in the district. It was noted that the LSP had been updated on issues concerning race and equality standards and an Equalities Forum established.

In answer to questions, it was agreed that the mechanisms for measuring performance, and the scrutiny functions undertaken by the review panels within this Council had not yet been developed within the LSP. While it was noted that there was a degree of peer review operating within the partnership, this was an issue which did perhaps need further thought. The review of functions which were the responsibility of this Council was certainly an issue which could be given further consideration.

A number of members applauded the very successful play schemes which were run throughout the school holidays by this Council in conjunction with partner organisations.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Community Strategy Action Plan for 2005/06 be agreed, subject to final redrafting being agreed with the Leader of the Council; and
- (b) That actions to promote the integration of ethnic minorities in the district be included in the Action Plan.

35. ELING TIDE MILL.

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Weeks be appointed as one of the Council's representatives on Eling Tide Mill Trust in place of Cllr Abbott, who has resigned his position.

36. DATES OF MEETINGS.

RESOLVED:

That the following programme of meetings be agreed:

7 June 2006
3 July 2006 (Monday – to accommodate the Annual LGA Conference week)
2 August 2006
6 September 2006
4 October 2006
1 November 2006
6 December 2006
3 January 2007
7 February 2007
7 March 2007
4 April 2007
2 May 2007

CHAIRMAN