

3 JULY 2006

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 3 July 2006.

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

In Attendance:

Councillors:

C J Harrison
Mrs M Humber
R J Neath
B M F Pemberton

Councillors:

M J Shand
Mrs S I Snowden
A Weeks
C A Wise

Officers Attending:

D Yates, N Gibbs, C Malyon, J Mascall, Ms J Bateman and Miss G O'Rourke and for part of the meeting R Easton and Ms J Norman.

15. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2006, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

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

17. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

18. PROVISIONAL FINAL ACCOUNTS 2005/06 (REPORT A).

The Cabinet considered the provisional outturn position of the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Capital Programme and Commercial Services. The Final Accounts Committee considered the matter at their meeting on 30 June 2006 and raised no points that they wished the Cabinet to consider.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) That additional provision of £200,000 be made for redundancy costs and £50,000 for possible Income Tax and National Insurance liabilities;**
- (b) That £139,000 be transferred to the Committed Schemes revenue reserve; and**
- (c) That the balance of any other General Fund outturn variation be transferred to the Capital Programme Reserve.**

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the recommendations above the provisional outturn figures be noted.

19. ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENT (REPORT B).

The Cabinet considered the 'Backward Look' Efficiency Statement for 2005/06. The Council is required to submit two annual efficiency statements a year, one looking at proposed actions for the forthcoming year, the other looking back at what had been achieved in the previous year.

RESOLVED:

That the 2005/06 Backward Look Annual Efficiency Statement be approved for submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government.

20. FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2006/2010 (REPORT C).

The Cabinet considered the Financial Strategy for 2006/10 that set out the broad financial framework that the Council would operate over the forthcoming four financial years.

In particular members noted that although there were still a number of challenges facing the Council, the immediate position was clearer than it had been in previous years as the amount of Government Revenue Support grant for 2007/08 was already known. The Government was moving to a three year Revenue Support Grant

settlement process in order to provide local authorities with greater stability to their medium term financial planning. However, members also noted that the Government had introduced a Comprehensive Spending Review as a precursor to each three-year settlement process and this would have an effect on local government finance in the future. The early indications were that it would be a tough review.

In response to a question in relation to financial provision for the possible introduction of wheeled refuse bins, it was reiterated that no provision had been made in the current draft General Fund forecast for any new growth items.

The Chairman said that if wheeled refuse bins were ever introduced they would be very expensive. He said that comments that he had received from residents were not in favour of such an introduction. Wheeled bins were seen as ugly, blocked footpaths for most of the day and the slower mechanical process of emptying them would be more costly to run. However, this had to be balanced against the improved health and safety element and the fact that wherever wheeled bins were used in alternate weekly refuse collection, recycling rates rose. The amount of refuse deposited over a fortnight was effectively limited to the capacity of the refuse bin, thus encouraging people to use the alternate recycling bin.

The Chairman said that he did not believe in coercing residents into having wheeled bins and providing them with a less convenient refuse collection system. That was not the only way to increase recycling rates. Over the coming months residents would be encouraged to make more and better use of their free clear recycling sacks.

The Environment Portfolio Holder said that the plastic refuse sacks were efficient but they were also expensive. There was no pressure from residents to introduce a wheeled refuse bin system, however the Council had to increase their recycling rates.

In terms of the Council's efficiency agenda generally, members noted that through the Council's ongoing Energy Management Programme a detailed assessment would be made of proposals such as alternative fuels for health and leisure centres.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Financial Strategy as set out in paragraph 13 of Report C to the Cabinet be approved.

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

The Cabinet considered a number of changes to the current Housing Assistance Policy. The changes were necessary to allow for effective targeting of grant budget.

The views of the Housing Portfolio Holder were reported. He supported the recommendation and said that the budgeted funds needed to be targeted at those most in need. There was no change in the Council's commitment to help people

remain in their own homes where possible. However, the use of public money would be balanced against the use of property equity release schemes where possible, enabling more funding to be focussed where it was most needed.

Members noted that it was difficult to predict the demand for the funding however, the budget would be targeted at Category 1 rated properties, and a further report would be made back to Cabinet if there were felt to be a significant shortfall in funding.

RESOLVED:

That the revisions to the existing Housing Assistance Policy as outlined in Report D to the Cabinet be approved.

22. HAMPSHIRE MINERALS & WASTE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - STRATEGY (REPORT E).

The Council had been consulted by HCC on the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework Strategy, the core element of the Development Framework. The Strategy covered the period up to 2020.

Members noted that there were additional concerns about proposals for disposal of London's waste in Hampshire and other counties in the South East. The submitted South East Plan, at Policy W3 proposed county apportionments for London's waste. HCC had already objected to that Policy. The Hampshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework Strategy stated that, 'No provision will be made for London's waste'. This was for a number of reasons, not least that the majority of current landfill void was in the south-west of Hampshire, within NFDC, and remote from sustainable transport networks. The Strategy further stated 'This is not to say that Hampshire will not accept any of London's waste, just that landfill sites will not be provided specifically for it. It is likely that Hampshire will, in the course of its business arrangements, accept waste from London for recycling and recovery and treatment'.

The Environment Portfolio Holder expressed concern at the linkages in the document between minerals and waste, particularly in relation to the transport structure. He said there were three incinerators in Hampshire that were currently working to full capacity dealing with Hampshire's own waste. There was no spare resource to deal with London's waste. Mineral extraction sites should not automatically be considered as landfill sites.

Members noted that there were particular problems in dealing with building waste. However, HLOWLA were making a bid to carry out a study looking at the disposal of commercial waste generally.

RESOLVED:

That the following written representations on the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework Strategy be made to the effect that this Council:

- (a) supports:
 - (i) the proposed two-stage approach to minerals apportionment which limits local apportionment to the period up to 2016 with a strategic reserve beyond that date (paragraph 20.10 of the Strategy); and
 - (ii) the proposal to make no provision for London's waste (Policy S3)
- (b) has some concerns about the soundness of the Strategy as follows:
 - (i) It does not contain sufficient criteria to direct the search for new sites for waste recycling/ composting/ recovery/ treatment or for mineral extraction (Policies S5 and S8). The factors listed in Appendix 2 of the document are not sufficiently related to objectives or principles such that they can provide a basis for site selection, for example, proximity to sources of waste and users of minerals, utilising existing sites/ allocations e.g. industrial sites, minimising transport distances, or where possible locating facilities/ extraction sites close to main transport routes. While recognising that minerals in particular have to be worked where they are, the Council is particularly concerned that if there are choices to be made, the Strategy should offer locational guidance in the form of criteria or principles such as these. A cross reference to a related policy in the South East Plan may be helpful, e.g. Policy W17, Location of Waste Management Facilities.
 - (ii) Insufficient attention is paid to the transport implications of minerals and waste developments generally, and consideration should be given to including in Section 11 of the document (Strategy Objectives) an objective to limit transport distances and to direct minerals and waste transport to strategic and main transport routes wherever possible.
 - (iii) It does not give a clear picture of the nature and distribution of the waste treatment facilities that already exist (for example the extensive array of public and private facilities in this District) or the extent and type of additional facilities required (Sections 17-19)
 - (iv) Certain forms of specialist waste are not mentioned, in particular end-of-life vehicles, tyres, plastics and asbestos (Section 19 and Policy S7) – end of life vehicles and tyres in particular are identified in the submitted Policy W10 of the South East Plan as requiring sub-regional facilities.
 - (v) Combining policies for minerals and waste leads to lack of clarity and a degree of confusion with regard to strategy objectives.

23. ICT SECURITY POLICY AND GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS (REPORT F).

In accordance with the agreed action plan under the Code of Practice for Corporate Governance for 2004/05, the Information and Communications Technology Security Policy and Guidance for Members had been updated.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Information and Communications Technology Security Policy and Guidance for members, as detailed in Appendix A to Report F to the Cabinet be approved.

24. INVESTIGATION OF POTENTIALLY CONTAMINATED SITES (REPORT G).

The Environment Act 1995 contained provisions introduced specifically to address the historical legacy of land contamination that arose from former industrial and military uses including scrap yards, landfill sites and petroleum storage etc. Members noted the detail of these provisions and the cost implications associated with site investigations. Currently funding was available from Defra to cover such costs.

The Cabinet noted the potentially contaminated site at Eling foreshore and agreed that all future potentially contaminated sites should be reported to them for information.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That an application to Defra for funding under the Contaminated Land Capital Projects Programme (CLCPP) in respect of the intrusive site investigations required for the Eling foreshore be supported;
- (b) That, subject to Defra funding being available, a supplementary estimate of £26,500 be approved to fund the intrusive site investigations mentioned in paragraph 11.1.1 of Report G to the Cabinet; and
- (c) That further applications be submitted to Defra on a priority basis as and when required without further member approval, subject to:
 - The current CLCPP remaining at 100% funding of eligible works;
 - Any site investigation is undertaken by one of the preferred contractors obtained through the recent tendering process; and
 - A report being made to the Cabinet, after each application is submitted, giving the detail of the site.

25. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT SERVICE AND ACTUAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2005/06 (REPORT H).

The Cabinet considered the annual treasury report that covered the treasury activity for 2005/06. They also considered the actual Prudential Indicators for 2005/06 in accordance with the requirements of the Prudential Code. In particular members noted that all cash investments were now dealt with in house. However, should the markets change the policy would be reviewed to maximise the benefits.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the actual 2005/06 prudential indicators as detailed in Report H to the Cabinet be noted; and
- (b) That the treasury management stewardship report for 2005/06 be noted.

26. HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (HIOWLA) – HAMPSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet supports the nomination of Cllr Miranda Whitehead to the Hampshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

CHAIRMAN