

4 OCTOBER 2006

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 4 October 2006.

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

**Councillors:**

e 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  
C Harrison  
F R Harrison  
Mrs M Humber  
R J Neath  
L R Puttock

**Councillors:**

Mrs M J Robinson  
D N Scott  
Mrs S I Snowden  
C R Treleaven  
A Weeks  
Dr M N Whitehead

**Also In Attendance:**

Mrs P White, Tenants' Representative.

**Officers Attending:**

D Yates, N Gibbs, J Mascall, C Elliott, K Green and Ms J Bateman and for part of the meeting G Ashworth, Mrs S Masterman and Ms H Renwick.

**45. MINUTES.**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2006, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Cllrs Mrs Humber, Rickman and Mrs Robinson declared interests in Minute 48

Cllrs Heron, Kendal, Rickman and Weeks declared interests in Minute 49

**47. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

**48. MODERNISING MATERNITY SERVICES (REPORT A).**

Cllr Mrs Robinson declared a personal interest as a chairman of an NHS Trust. She did not consider her interest to be prejudicial. She remained at the meeting and took part in the discussion. She did not have a vote.

Cllr Rickman declared a personal interest as a life member of the League of Friends of Lymington Hospital. He did not consider his interest to be prejudicial. He remained at the meeting and voted.

Cllr Mrs Humber declared a personal interest as a life member of the League of Friends of Lymington Hospital. She did not consider her interest to be prejudicial. She remained at the meeting and took part in the discussion. She did not have a vote.

The Cabinet considered a public consultation document on Modernising Maternity Services issued by Southampton University Hospitals Trust (SUHT). The Housing, Health and Social Inclusion Review Panel had received presentations from SUHT at their meetings on 19 July and 20 September and had considered the issues in detail. They made a number of recommendations to the Cabinet.

The Health and Social Inclusion Portfolio Holder said that she strongly supported the retention of the current New Forest birthing centres in Lymington and Hythe (and also Romsey). She expressed concern at the proposal from SUHT that the options for change included the rationalisation of the birth centres from three to a single twelve bed facility. The Portfolio Holder said that she had been assured that the services available in the current Lymington Hospital would be transferred to the new hospital and there would be 12 maternity beds available. She now understood that the proposal was for only 6 beds and this was being given as the reason for the unit not being viable. A birthing centre in Lymington would, geographically, be the most sensible option. There were traffic congestion problems in Lyndhurst and at the level crossing in Brockenhurst that could cause difficulties for people travelling north from the coastal towns and villages.

Whilst the Housing and Social Inclusion Portfolio Holder strongly supported the retention of a birthing centre in Lymington she did agree with the Housing, Health and Social Inclusion Review Panel that if that proposal did not go ahead then the next best option would be the proposed improvement and retention of the birthing centre in Hythe. However, the travel concerns were similar.

Other members spoke in support of the retention of the birthing centres in Hythe and Lymington. They agreed that the SUHT should be asked to honour their previous commitment to provide 12 maternity beds in the new Lymington Hospital. Members expressed concern generally at the suggestion by the SUHT that access to services across the district needed to be equalised to give the east of the district and the Southampton area a better quality of service. There were a number of areas of social deprivation in and around Lymington and New Milton and many people were without transport. The provision of services for people in those areas

would reduce if the Lymington birthing centre were closed to provide better services elsewhere. Members were also unhappy at the suggestion that the SUHT appeared to be attempting to solve their financial problems by reducing the services available in Lymington. Members agreed that patient care should come before financial balancing.

Concern was also expressed at the suggestion that NHS staff had been pressurised into remaining silent during the consultation period with threats of disciplinary action should they speak out on the subject.

It was agreed that all of the points raised in discussion together with the recommendations of the Housing, Health and Social Inclusion Review Panel would be reflected in the Portfolio Holder's response to the consultation.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Portfolio Holder for Health and Social Inclusion respond to the consultation document on Modernising Maternity Services taking into account the recommendations from the Housing, Health and Social Inclusion Review Panel and the points raised in discussion at the Cabinet meeting.

**49. EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT PLAN (REPORT B).**

Cllrs Heron, Kendal, Rickman and Weeks declared personal interests as members of the New Forest National Park Authority. They did not consider their interests to be prejudicial. They remained at the meeting, and where appropriate, took part in the discussion and voted.

The Cabinet considered the preferred options stage of the Employment Development Plan Document, part of the Council's Local Development Framework.

The Economy and Planning Review Panel had considered the matter at their meeting on 20 September, 2006 and supported the sites and options as set out in the report. They raised a number of issues that were reported to the Cabinet and which will be taken into account in preparing the final document for consultation. The Cabinet noted that all options considered would be consulted on but, with particular regard to Fordingbridge, neither the land at Lower Burgate to the north of the town nor the land at Redbrook Farm to the east of the town were included as preferred options at this stage.

The Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder supported the preferred options document. He said it was unfortunate that the New Forest National Park had not been able to align their work programme within a time frame that would have enabled a partnership approach with the Council on the proposals.

Members noted that, following their agreement of the document there would be a six week consultation period in late October/December 2006. A report would then be made back to the Economy and Planning Review Panel and the Cabinet before the document was submitted to the Government for public examination.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That, following consideration of the recommendations of the Economy and Planning Review Panel, the Employment Development Plan Document Preferred Options be approved for consultation; and
- (b) That the Planning Policy Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, be authorised to make any necessary editorial changes to the document in preparing it for publication.

**50. DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME (DES) (REPORT C).**

The Cabinet considered a draft policy for adoption as this Council's Disability Equality Scheme for 2007-2009.

The Health and Social Inclusion Portfolio Holder was pleased to propose the adoption of a DES for the Council. This was the first time that Councils had been required to produce such a document. The Portfolio Holder thanked the members of the DES Advisory Group for their help in compiling the document and producing the Action Plan. She said that some of the actions in the Plan were ambitious but were reasonable and attainable and it was important to ensure that everyone got the best from it. The publishing of the DES was just the beginning and work would now start to make a difference to people in the district. The document was an example of good partnership working between the Council and the community.

Pamela Bird and Mary Lewis, members of the Disability Equality Scheme Advisory Group, addressed the Cabinet.

Mrs Lewis said she was pleased to have been part of the Group and thanked the Cabinet for the opportunity to make an input into the DES. She said that all disabilities were covered by the proposals. She looked forward to the Group now taking on a monitoring role to ensure that all disabled peoples lives became more accessible.

Mrs Bird said that she was a registered blind person and she had been very pleased to be involved in the production of the document. She said it was important to think positive and she was sure that the lives of disabled people in the New Forest could be made very much better.

**RESOLVED:**

That the proposed Disability Equality Scheme, as detailed in Appendix 1 to Report C to the Cabinet, be approved for 2007-2009.

**51. FINANCIAL REPORT – FORECAST FULL YEAR AND ACTUAL FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2006 TO AUGUST 2006 (REPORT D).**

The Cabinet considered a report setting out the forecast budget variations of all portfolios and committees from the approved original estimates for 2006/07.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the items set out in the revised General Fund budget in Appendix 1 to Report D to the Cabinet be approved;
- (b) That the revised capital expenditure programme as set out in Appendix 2 to Report D to the Cabinet be approved;
- (c) That the financial position of Commercial Services as set out in section 5 of report D to the Cabinet be noted; and
- (d) That the actual expenditure to profiled budget positions of the General Fund, Capital Programme (subject to a minor drafting amendment) and Housing Revenue Account as set out in Appendices 1 to 3 of Report D to the Cabinet be noted.

**52. RINGWOOD TOWN CENTRE – OPTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT (REPORT E).**

The Cabinet considered the work undertaken to date by the Ringwood Town Centre Steering Group. The Group agreed that the broad options for the possible development of part of the Furlong Car Park at Ringwood should be the subject of a consultation exercise. It was also clear that technical work was needed to define the appropriate scale, environmental impact and practical constraints on the development of the site.

Members noted that all three options as detailed below would be consulted on:

- a purely retail scheme;
- a mixed retail, municipal and social scheme (including a public hall); and
- a municipal and social scheme (including a public hall).

The Chairman said that it was important to hear the views of the local community to ensure that a proper balance of development was achieved.

Other Cabinet members expressed varying views as to what they thought best but all agreed that obtaining the views of the local people was the first step. This would be done in a time frame that would allow the results of the town planning exercise to be taken on board.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the consultation exercise, as set out in report E to the Cabinet, on options for the possible development of part of the Furlong Car Park, Ringwood be approved;
- (b) That a supplementary estimate of £20,000 to appoint consultants to carry out the necessary technical and financial appraisal work be approved; and

- (c) That a further report on the progress of this work be made back to Cabinet when the initial consultation exercise and technical appraisal work has been carried out.

CHAIRMAN

(DEMOCRAT/CB041006/MINUTES.DOC)