

**1 NOVEMBER 2006**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 1 November 2006.

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

**Councillors:**

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

**Councillors:**

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

**In Attendance:**

**Councillors:**

- C Baker
- C J Harrison
- F R Harrison
- Mrs M Humber
- B M F Pemberton
- L R Puttock

**Councillors:**

- Mrs B Smith
- Mrs S I Snowden
- C R Treleaven
- J G Ward
- A Weeks
- P R Woods

**Also In Attendance:**

Mrs P White and Mrs A Murphy, Tenants' Representatives.

**Officers Attending:**

D Yates, C Malyon, J Mascall, Ms J Bateman, C Elliott, B Millard and for part of the meeting Mrs N Heaselden.

**53. MINUTES.**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2006, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**54. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

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

**55. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

**56. CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 2005 (REPORT A).**

The Cabinet considered proposals for the implementation of new powers under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment (CNEA) Act 2005.

In considering the arrangements the Cabinet were mindful of the need to agree a measured common sense approach to the new legislation with an emphasis placed upon education of the public to aid compliance, and publicity of the enforcement measures now available. The CNEA gave the Council a range of new powers to improve local environmental quality, many of which supplemented existing legislation. The Cabinet agreed that a measured response was appropriate, with the new powers being directed at those cases where repeated offences were causing nuisance to the public. The legislation should not be seen as a method to generate additional income.

Members noted that town and parish councils had been given the opportunity to attend a full briefing on the new legislation and the ways in which they could work in partnership with the Council. Members noted that some parts of the legislation gave town and parish councils their own powers, whilst other areas would require consultation to agree who would be responsible for specific issues in order to avoid duplication.

Some concern was expressed at the amount of additional work and hidden costs that might be incurred, particularly as a result of increased court proceedings. Employees would be asked to undertake new and different duties and it was essential that they were given the appropriate training. Members agreed that it was important that all the arrangements were closely monitored by the relevant Portfolio Holders with a complete review of the processes after one year.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That, in considering the approach to the provisions of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, whilst agreeing to take action in respect of the powers identified in Appendix 3 to Report A, the Cabinet are mindful of the need to ensure that the powers are directed to those cases where repeated offences are causing nuisance to the public rather than the legislation being seen as a method to generate revenue;
- (b) That the levels of delegations as proposed in Appendix 3 to Report A to the Cabinet be agreed;
- (c) That the levels of fixed penalty notice charges and discounted amounts as proposed in Appendix 5 to Report A to the Cabinet be agreed;
- (d) That a supplementary estimate of £15,000 for 2006/7 and a committed expenditure plan bid of £8,000 for 2007/8 be agreed; and

- (e) That an appropriate review mechanism be agreed with the relevant Portfolio Holders to include an annual review of the whole operation of the arrangements.

#### **57. EXPENDITURE PLANS PROPOSALS AND FEES AND CHARGES (REPORT B).**

The Cabinet considered their broad expenditure plan proposals together with proposed fees and charges for the coming financial year. All review panels and committees would be considering the detail of the proposals at their next meeting and would be reporting back to the Cabinet in December.

Members again expressed concern at the level of government grant. They noted that the grant settlement for 2006/07 had been a 2 year settlement and was therefore fixed for 2007/08. However, following the Government's comprehensive spending review it was anticipated that there would be major changes to local government financing in 2008/09. Officers and members would have an opportunity, at that time, to make representations on grant settlement distribution.

The Council's Financial Strategy proposed a council tax increase in line with inflation. The Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder said that budgetary savings of £718,000 were required in order for the Council to keep the Council tax increase at 3% in line with inflation.

The Leader of the Council said that the Council would be benefiting from funding through the Government's capacity building programme. £30,000 was being made available to enable the Council to look at ways of expanding joint working with Test Valley Borough Council and with other local authorities. In addition the Council was leading a review of council tax and housing benefit administration with a view to possible partnership working across the County for which funding was available.

To assist committees and review panels in their budget deliberations, it was noted that copies of the budget books were available to all members either as a hard copy or on the Intranet. In addition, copies of the detailed management budgets would be placed in the Members' Room. The Director of Resources said he was happy to provide any individual member with any specific additional detailed budgetary information that they required.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That all the items contained in the Expenditure Plan proposals as contained in the Appendices to Report B to the Cabinet be considered by the relevant review panels and committees with any comments arising from them being fed back to the December meeting of the Cabinet;
- (b) That further work continues in order to identify ways of reducing net expenditure with particular emphasis on savings that can be considered as 'efficiency' savings; and

- (c) That further proposals be considered once the aforementioned exercise has been concluded thereby enabling the Cabinet to make an informed decision in the light of available resources.

CHAIRMAN

(DEMOCRAT/CB011106/MINUTES.DOC)