

6 DECEMBER 2006

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 6 December 2006.

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

Councillors:

- p 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
Mrs J L Cleary
W H Dow
C J Harrison
F R Harrison
Mrs M Humber
R J Neath

Councillors:

B M F Pemberton
Mrs B Smith
Mrs S I Snowden
C R Treleaven
A Weeks
P R Woods

Also In Attendance:

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

Officers Attending:

D Yates, J Mascall, C Malyon, R Millard and Ms J Bateman and for part of the meeting D Brown, N Hunt, N Miller and M Powell.

58. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2006, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllr Kendal declared personal interests in Minute Nos 60, 61, 63 and 65
Cllrs Heron and Rickman declared personal interests in Minute No. 65.

60. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

Town Councillor Mrs Brooks presented a petition to the Cabinet on behalf of Totton Conservatives. She said that earlier this year the Liberal Democrats in Totton held a public meeting on the subject of rubbish collection and wheelie bins. A Liberal Democrat Councillor from Eastleigh tried to promote the use of wheelie bins, but nearly everyone at the meeting was against the idea.

Totton Conservatives then decided to carry out a wider survey of opinion in the town, with a follow-up survey which is currently ongoing. The result so far was an unprecedented response from 1602 households of whom 1530 did not want wheelie bins, while just 70 favoured with 2 undecided.

The survey found that wheelie bins would be difficult to manoeuvre, especially for the elderly; they would be unsightly and would present storage difficulties; they would also be smelly in hot weather. People valued their current weekly collections which would be ended by the introduction of wheelie bins.

Extra supplies of clear plastic sacks would encourage people to recycle more. Town Councillor Mrs Brooks hoped that the survey would be taken fully into account when a final decision about wheelie bins was made.

In response to questions Town Councillor Mrs Brooks said that the signatures had been obtained by leafleting households in Totton. Individual residents then replied. No reply paid envelopes were given. The response had been unprecedented.

The Chairman said that later in the agenda the Cabinet would be asked to consider increasing the number of clear recycling sacks given to residents. He said that the response to a letter that had recently been sent to all households in the district on recycling had show that, almost exclusively, residents wanted to retain the current refuse collection arrangements. The Chairman said that, with an increase in clear recycling sacks he was confident that the Council would meet their targets. However, the Council may need to revisit the options if the amount of waste recycled did not increase.

61. NEW FOREST DISTRICT'S TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (REPORT A).

Cllr Kendal declared a personal interest as the Executive member for the Environment at Hampshire County Council. He did not consider his interest to be prejudicial. He remained at the meeting, took part in the discussion and voted.

The Cabinet considered a revised traffic management strategy for the district. The document had been prepared following extensive consultation with a number of key partners including HCC, the Police, the National Park Authority and the Forestry Commission.

Members discussed the options for limiting the numbers of HGV's above a certain size traveling within and through the New Forest. It was noted that following a Business Partnership Meeting a working group, at which the Council was represented, had been set up and was considering ways in which to take the matter forward.

In relation to the longer term agreement for the use of parking clocks members noted that there was a requirement to consult HCC. The current approval for the use of parking clocks ran out in 2007. The Cabinet was informed that the indications were that the current arrangements for short and long stay parking had been effective and it was therefore likely that HCC would give longer lasting approval for the parking clock scheme next time.

Members also discussed the need for safer options for cyclists in the district. All proposals for cycle routes were subject to a safety audit but officers were striving to bring forward low cost cycle links where possible.

The Cabinet were informed that the new Planning Policy Statement 3 gave councils more flexibility in terms of parking standards in new developments which would enable them to reflect better the character of an area.

RESOLVED:

That the Traffic Management Strategy attached as Appendix A to Report A to the Cabinet be approved.

62. NEW FOREST COMMUNITY TRANSPORT REVIEW (REPORT B).

Cllr Kendal declared a personal interest as the Executive member for the Environment at Hampshire County Council. He did not consider his interest to be prejudicial. He remained at the meeting, took part in the discussion and voted.

The Cabinet considered the results of a review undertaken to assess if additional support could be provided by the Council to Community Transport in rural areas not served by registered bus services.

Members were pleased at the high level of consultation that had been undertaken as part of the review. The data obtained had been very informative and it was agreed that the information should be shared with HCC with a view to it being included in their Area Transport Review for the New Forest.

Members noted that there was an ongoing issue in relation to access to the new Lymington Hospital. There was no public transport provision after 6:00 p.m. The Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder said he was very aware of the difficulties and work was underway to try and resolve the problem. In the meantime some effort had been made to help alleviate the situation in the form of a travel hardship fund that could assist individuals with multiple medical related journeys.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the conclusions of the recent Community Transport Review as set out in Report B to the Cabinet be noted;
- (b) That, with effect from 1 January 2007, the Young Persons' Concessionary Fares Scheme be expanded to include 17 year old people, provided they permanently live in the District; and
- (c) That the data collected during the review be passed to HCC with the option of it being included within their Area Transport Review for the New Forest.

63. SHELTERED HOUSING REVIEW (REPORT C).

The Cabinet considered proposals for changes to the provision of the Sheltered Housing Service that will provide a future strategy to achieve a quality service that meets the needs of the residents.

The Housing Portfolio Holder said that the review was an excellent example of good cross party/stakeholder working. The changes proposed were mainly as a result of a reduction in Government funding, a need to respond to residents' changing needs and the difficulties in recruiting 'live in' managers. The Portfolio Holder was confident that the changes would improve the service provided to residents particularly in terms of 'extra care'.

Members noted that officers would ensure that all employees affected by the changes would be dealt with as sensitively as possible.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed changes to the Sheltered Housing Service as set out in Report C to the Cabinet and in the comments from the Housing, Health and Social Inclusion Review Panel be approved.

64. NOTICES OF MOTION FROM COUNCIL MEETING ON 30 OCTOBER 2006 (REPORT D).

Cllr Kendal declared a personal interest as the Executive member for the Environment at Hampshire County Council. He did not consider his interest to be prejudicial. He remained at the meeting, took part in the discussion and voted.

The Cabinet considered three Notices of Motion referred from the Council meeting on 30 October 2006.

The Parking Clock Scheme

The Cabinet noted that the Parking Clock scheme was a District Wide Scheme in which special provision had been made for commuters using the Hythe ferry. They were able to purchase a £8 clock which allowed them to park all day when using the ferry.

At a Local Member Transportation Liaison meeting in March 2006, it was recognised that there were concerns about inappropriate parking in some side roads in Hythe. A review of the restrictions in those roads was being undertaken as part of the 2007/8 traffic management programme. Short term white lining/bus clearway measures have been ordered which should assist in reducing parking problems pending the full review next year. Local Members have been advised of this progress.

Except for market days there was always spare capacity in off-street car parks in Hythe usually in St John's Street Car Park. Now that the new clock scheme had been in place for some time a series of surveys to monitor car park usage had been put in place.

Members noted the comments from the Hythe & Dibden Parish Council and from local members. However, in view of the work already undertaken and the monitoring processes already in place the Cabinet agreed that no additional measures were required.

Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005 – Shopping Trolleys

The Cabinet agreed that the Economy and Planning Review Panel should be asked to consider this matter in detail and report back to the Cabinet in due course.

Green Audit

The Cabinet agreed that this matter should also be considered by the Economy and Planning Review Panel and a report be made back to the Cabinet in due course.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That no changes be made to the Council's existing traffic management policies and that no further action be taken in relation to the Notice of Motion relating to the abolition of the £80 parking clock in Hythe Car Parks; and
- (b) That the Environment Review Panel be asked to consider the issues raised in the Notice of Motion relating to the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 – Shopping Trolleys and the Notice of Motion relating to the Green Audit and reports be received by the Cabinet in due course.

65. FINANCIAL REPORT – FORECAST FULL YEAR AND ACTUAL FOR PERIOD APRIL 2006 TO OCTOBER 2006 (REPORT E).

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

The Cabinet considered the forecast budget variations of all Portfolios and Committees from the approved original estimates for 2006/07. Members noted that there were a number of variations highlighted but they mainly negated each other. However, the Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder encouraged all members to consider the issues carefully.

Members noted that, in accordance with Financial Regulation 1.3, the Director of Resources had suspended Financial Regulations on two occasions to enable additional capital spending to occur as a matter of urgency.

RECOMMENDED:

That the following supplementary estimates be approved:-

- ***£206,000 for Health & Leisure Centres (General Fund Revenue Budget)***
- ***£52,000 for Planning Income (General Fund Revenue Budget)***

RESOLVED:

- (a) That, subject to the approval of the recommendation above:-
- (i) the items set out in the revised General Fund budget in Appendix 1 to Report E to the Cabinet be approved;
 - (ii) the revised capital expenditure programme, as set out in Appendix 2 to Report E to the Cabinet be approved;
 - (iii) the revised Housing Revenue Account programme, as set out in Appendix 3 to Report E to the Cabinet be approved;
 - (iv) the financial position of Commercial Services, as set out in section 5 of Report E to the Cabinet be noted ;
 - (v) the actual expenditure to profiled budget positions of the General Fund, Capital Programme and Housing Revenue Account, as set out in Appendices 1 to 3 of Report E to the Cabinet be noted; and
- (b) That it be noted that, in accordance with Financial Regulation 1.3, the Director of Resources has suspended Financial Regulations, in order that additional capital expenditure of £57,000 can be incurred on the Eling Tide Mill capital scheme and to enable £73,000 to be incurred on ICT software enhancement for the Environmental Health and Licensing functions.

66. ECONOMIC STRATEGY (REPORT F).

The Cabinet considered a revised Economic Strategy for the Council. The Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder supported the new Strategy which he felt was a concise and easy to read document.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Economic Strategy as detailed in Appendix 1 to Report F to the Cabinet be adopted.

67. EXPENDITURE PLAN CONSULTATION (REPORT G).

The process and the timetable for the Expenditure Plans for 2007/2008 was included in the Financial Strategy approved by the Council in July 2006. The timetable included consultation with all review panels and committees during November.

The Cabinet noted the responses from the review panels and committees, which they would take into account during their detailed consideration of the expenditure plans in January. However, at the current stage in the budget process they expressed a view on a number of specific issues that had been raised.

Members considered and agreed that the fees and charges as set out in Appendix 1 to Report G to the Cabinet should be recommended to the Council for approval.

RECOMMENDED:

That the fees and charges as set out in Appendix 1 to Report G to the Cabinet be approved.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the comments made by the Panels and Committees be noted, and that further recommendations on the budget be considered by the Cabinet at their meeting in January; and
- (b) That in relation to the specific issues raised by Panels and Committees the view of Cabinet at this stage in the budget process is as follows:
 - (i) That a sum of £10,000 for a feasibility study to identify alternative burial sites be delayed from 2007/08 to 2008/09;
 - (ii) No change be made to the current arrangements for the Rural Assistance Grant Scheme but the matter be re-visited in the new year in the light of the proposals to empower local councillors more fully in the Government White Paper "Strong and Prosperous Communities" (Corporate Overview Panel);
 - (iii) The number of clear recycling sacks be increased at a net additional revenue cost of £53,000 (Environment Panel);
 - (iv) No additional revenue bid be made in relation to a proposal to increase the number of cuts on highway verges (Environment Panel);
 - (v) Option 1 (£200,000) be the preferred option in respect of the Hordle Cliff Path (Leisure); and
 - (vi) The bid for funding for Probity and Ethical training for Town/Parish Councils be increased to £6,000 in the light of the forthcoming elections, with a view to training reducing the likelihood of complaints (Standards Committee).

68. BLACKFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAY AREA (REPORT H).

The Cabinet considered proposals for a play area at Blackfield Neighbourhood Centre and were pleased to support the excellent work that had been undertaken on the project.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the resolution of the lease:

- (i) the scheme for a play area at Blackfield Neighbourhood Centre be implemented and thereafter maintained by the Council; and
- (ii) the necessary sums for maintenance be submitted through the Expenditure Plan process for 2007/08 as an unavoidable item.

69. ICT SECURITY POLICY & GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS – AMENDMENTS (REPORT I).

The Cabinet has considered proposed amendments to the members' ICT security policy and guidance in relation to the personal use condition of Council owned ICT equipment.

RECOMMENDED:

That the amendments to the members' ICT security policy and guidance, as set out in Appendix 1 to Report I to the Cabinet be agreed.

70. GAMBLING ACT 2005 (REPORT J).

The Gambling Act 2005 requires Licensing Authorities to produce a three year Statement of Principles/Policy similar to that previously required under the Licensing Act 2003. The General Purposes and Licensing Committee at their meeting on 17 November 2006 consider and supported the proposed new policy.

The Housing, Health and Social Inclusion Portfolio Holder expressed concern at the increase in gambling problems generally. Members noted that the licensing objectives, to which the Council had to show due regard in their policy statement, provided for the protection of individuals.

RECOMMENDED:

That, subject to officers being authorised to correct any typographical errors and ensure consistency in the use of terminology, the policy document, as attached at Appendix 2 to report J be adopted as the Council's Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act 2005.

71. THE COUNCIL TAX BASE 2007/08 – SETTING THE TAX BASE (REPORT K).

The Cabinet has considered, in so far as it is empowered to do so by law, the calculation of the Council Tax base for the year 2006/07.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That, in so far as it is empowered to do so by law, the calculation of the Council Tax Base for the year 2006/07 be approved as set out below.
- (b) That, pursuant to this report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (Amendment) Regulations 2003, the amount calculated by this Council as its council tax base for the year 2007/08 be as follows and as detailed in Appendix 1 to Report K to the Cabinet

PARISH/TOWN	TAX BASE 07/08
Ashurst & Colbury	920.2
Beaulieu	516.4
Boldre	1051.4
Bramshaw	342.0
Bransgore	1865.1
Breamore	184.5
Brockenhurst	1793.1
Burley	791.1
Copythorne	1228.1
Damerham	237.3
Denny Lodge	153.8
East Boldre	398.8
Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley	585.7
Exbury & Lepe	110.1
Fawley	4824.3
Fordingbridge	2363.3
Godshill	214.2
Hale	266.8
Hordle	2437.3
Hyde	506.7
Hythe & Dibden	7699.2
Lymington & Pennington	6898.3
Lyndhurst	1384.0
Marchwood	2035.8
Martin	191.8
Milford on Sea	2715.2
Minstead	365.9
Netley Marsh	821.9
New Milton	10808.4
Ringwood	5408.0
Rockbourne	166.5
Sandleheath	271.3
Sopley	304.9
Sway	1665.9
Totton & Eling	9805.5
Whitsbury	102.8
Woodgreen	251.8
Whole District	71687.4

72. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER – STRONG AND PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES (REPORT L).

The Cabinet considered the detail of the Local Government White Paper “Strong and Prosperous Communities”. Although it was not formally a consultation document, its general approach was to seek “a new relationship with local government based on a mature conversation about what was best for local people”. Many of the proposals would be developed in consultation with local government and where necessary be the subject of further guidance or legislation.

The White Paper contained an invitation to all Councils to submit proposals for unitary structures or to be pathfinders for pioneering new two-tier models of working by 25 January 2007.

Currently neither Hampshire County Council nor any other districts in Hampshire were proposing to take forward a bid for unitary status. Members noted that New Forest District Council would be well placed to make a powerful submission for both unitary status and clear two tier working, but agreed that the Council should be recommended that currently NFDC should not pursue an invitation to bid for unitary status and/or bid for pioneering two-tier working.

A workshop on the Local Government White Paper – “Strong and Prosperous Communities” would be held for all Members on 18 December 2006 at 5:00 p.m. prior to the meeting of the Council.

RECOMMENDED:

That currently the Council should not pursue an invitation to bid for unitary status and/or to bid for pioneering two-tier working.

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that a workshop on the Local Government White Paper – “Strong and Prosperous Communities” will be held for all Members on 18 December 2006 at 5:00 p.m. prior to the meeting of the Council.

73. ELING TIDE MILL TRUST.

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Treleven be appointed as a Council representative on the Eling Tide Mill Trust in place of Cllr Weeks

74. CHANGE OF DATE OF CABINET.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet meeting take place on Thursday 8 March 2007 instead of Wednesday 7 March 2007.

CHAIRMAN