

8 MARCH 2007

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Thursday, 8 March 2007.

- 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:

Ms L C Ford
L Harris
C J Harrison
F R Harrison
P E Hickman
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

Officers Attending:

D Yates, C Malyon, J Mascall, C Elliott, Ms G O'Rourke, Ms A Righton and for part of the meeting K Smith.

97. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2007, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

98. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

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

99. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

100. UNDERTAKING A GREEN AUDIT OF NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL – SCOPING PAPER (REPORT A).

The Cabinet considered arrangements for the undertaking of a green audit of the Council. They noted that the audit proposed to focus on the use of non renewable resources and pollution of the environment; the service provider/enabler and community leadership roles of the Council and the nine main themes that would represent work to be undertaken over the next 21 months.

The audit would provide a better understanding of the issues, current performance, best practice and opportunities for improvement. It would also provide the basis for the Council to develop a strategic response to the challenge of Climate Change. The audit would produce improvement plans to mitigate the effects of Climate Change and also make sure the Council was planning to adapt to the impact of Climate Change. This would put the Council in a strong position to respond to any specific requirements coming out of national initiatives such as the Climate Change Bill.

The Council's own carbon footprint currently stood at 7,655 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. Nearly 6000 tonnes of that came from the Council's offices, health & leisure centres, sheltered housing schemes, depots, public conveniences and public lighting. The remainder (22%) came from vehicle emissions. In addition to that overall figure, commuting by Council employees accounted for about 700 tonnes of CO₂.

Although a significant figure, and one which could be improved on through a combination of raising awareness, changes in attitudes, use of technology, revised service practices etc, the really significant emission figures were in the community. The average UK citizen was responsible for 11.81 tonnes of carbon emissions annually. The size of the district's population meant that the residents alone accounted for over 2 million tonnes of CO₂ each year. Each day mankind was responsible for about 70 million tonnes of global warming pollution but as local authorities and others across the UK, Europe and the world were focusing on that as an issue, everyone's contribution counted.

Although the prime focus of the Green Audit was on environmental improvement, many of the outcomes would also contribute towards other agenda; health, poverty, social inclusion, economic development etc and, as energy costs money, if energy was saved then money could also be saved not only for the Council and its taxpayers but also for the residents of the District in the way they live their lives.

The Council was in a good position to build on a strong base. Compared to other local authorities NFDC's current performance showed:

- Household waste recycled was amongst the best 25% for all England districts;
- NFDC's streets were cleaner than the average district streets in England;
- NFDC's electricity and gas consumption, compared against the average for similar buildings, was better than half the districts in England.

The Council had also made progress on the green agenda using a variety of initiatives including:

- Being one of the first local authorities to sign up to green electricity to cover all electricity usage at the Council;
- Having combined heat and power plants at Applemore and Ringwood Health & Leisure Centres to produce the majority of daytime electricity in those centres;
- Solar water heating provided for showers at 3 health & leisure centres;
- Rainwater harvesting in place at Appletree Court for use in the toilets;
- The majority of Council sites having push taps to help control water use;
- Lighting efficiency a key consideration in maintaining offices and other buildings;
- Monitoring and production of management reports on energy usage across the Council;
- All paper used at the Council from a sustainable source or 100% recycled;
- £686,000 of Warm Front money used to help insulate 786 homes in the district in 2004/05 & 05/06;
- 5% bio diesel across the Council's fleet;
- All Council vehicles in either Euro 3 or Euro 4 standard with option to upgrade to Euro 5 when available;
- 104 recycling centres across the District;
- Recycling collected from every household each week via the clear sack recycling scheme;
- A "Go Green" employee travel plan that encouraged employees to use alternatives to the car and not to travel by car alone to work. As part of this improved cycle parking, showers/changing facilities were provided;
- Partnership work to improve pedestrian and cycle links particularly aimed at home to school runs; and
- Lyndhurst, Totton and Fawley designated as Air Quality Management Areas.

However, members agreed that more could always be done. Whilst what would happen to the climate over the next 20 years could not be influenced, what happened after that could be influenced by actions now.

The Chairman said that this issue needed to become part of the core thinking of the Council and should have cross party support. Members agreed that there would be joint working across the Council and progress would be made on a unanimous basis. This would give officers the certainty to prioritise resources on a long term basis. To this end members agreed some revisions to the recommendations to reflect the agreed cross party working.

In discussion members agreed a number of issues that the Green Audit Working Group should consider including increased emphasis on public transport; representation of other interested groups on the Project Board and the need to take advantage of scientific knowledge wherever possible. In particular members noted that sustainability was a key consideration in the Planning Core Strategy and that a report would be made to the Cabinet in July to agree the new Strategy document for consultation.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Leader of the Council, the Environment Portfolio Holder and two representatives from the Opposition Group together with officers, form a working group to recommend the constitution and terms of reference for a Green Audit Project Board together with an Environmental Challenge Group(s) to work with services and other groups;
- (b) That the working group considers the development of a Green Audit using Appendix 2 of Report A to the Cabinet (which includes the working definition of "impact on the environment") as a basis for the work, to include discussion on budget provision for any urgent issues arising from climate change and the designation of a key contact officer, for recommendation to the Cabinet and the Council;
- (c) That the following programme be agreed:
- For pre May 2007 commence work on the way:
- we operate our vehicles
 - communities are developed
- For the remainder of 2007/08 complete the above two themes as well as the way:
- we operate our offices & other buildings
 - we operate our services
 - we procure our goods & services
- Complete by 31 December 2008 the way:
- households are run
 - communities are run
 - we work with businesses
 - we understand and plan for the impact of Climate Change
- (d) That all Members of the Council be invited to complete an e-survey prior to the elections in May.

101. CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT POLICY (REPORT B).

The Cabinet considered a corporate enforcement policy that would give a consistent approach across all Council services. Beneath this policy were a number of service led policies or protocols that detailed what actions would be taken in various circumstances and provided clarity and consistency of approach.

A public leaflet outlining the key principles of the policy would be produced and would provide an opportunity for feedback.

RECOMMENDED:

That, subject to some minor amendments to clarify wording, the Enforcement Policy as set out in Appendix 1 to Report B to the Cabinet be agreed in so far as the Council are empowered to do so by law in respect of those functions for which they are responsible.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to some minor amendments to clarify wording, the Enforcement Policy as set out in Appendix 1 to Report B to the Cabinet be agreed in so far as the Cabinet are empowered to do so by law in respect of those functions for which they are responsible.

102. DEVELOPMENT IN LYMINGTON – PETITION (REPORT C).

Following the presentation of a petition to the Council in February the Cabinet considered the comments of the Planning Development Control Committee who had received a report on the matters in the petition that were within their areas of responsibility.

In particular the Cabinet noted that under Planning Policy Supplement (PPS) 3 the Council now had greater discretion to consider densities of development in particular areas but only in the context that they could demonstrate a strategy to meet the overall housing numbers required in the district. The work was being progressed through the "Core Strategy".

Members agreed that the Lymington Society should be informed of the processes and encouraged to participate fully in the public consultation arrangements.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the work that is being undertaken be noted and that a letter be sent to the Lymington Society on behalf of the Cabinet, setting out the decision making process for the Local Development Framework and encouraging the Society to participate fully in the public consultation arrangements.

CHAIRMAN