

**6 FEBRUARY 2008**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 6 February 2008.

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

**Councillors:**

e G C Beck  
p Mrs J L Cleary  
p E J Heron

**Councillors:**

p Mrs M D Holding  
p C R Treleaven  
p C A Wise

**In Attendance:**

**Councillors:**

Ms L C Ford  
C J Harrison  
D Harrison  
Mrs A J Hoare  
Mrs M E Lewis  
B M F Pemberton  
L R Puttock  
A W Rice, TD

**Councillors:**

Mrs M J Robinson  
A E J Shotter  
Mrs B Smith  
Mrs S I Snowden  
M H Thierry  
F P Vickers  
J G Ward  
Mrs P A Wyeth

**Also In Attendance:**

Mrs A Murphy, Tenants' Representative.

**Officers Attending:**

D Yates, J Mascall and Ms J Bateman and for part of the meeting G Bettle, D Brown, C Elliott, K Green, D Groom, N Hunt, Mrs P Higgins, R Millard and Ms S Plumridge.

**82. MINUTES.**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 January 2008, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**83. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Cllrs Kendal and Rickman declared interests in Minute No. 89.

**84. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

**85. RINGWOOD HEALTH AND LEISURE CENTRE – GYM 816 (REPORT A).**

The Cabinet considered an option to convert the current squash court at Ringwood Health and Leisure Centre to enable the existing gym facility to be extended and provide a new 816 gym.

Mr M Bell, on behalf of Ringwood Squash Club, addressed the Cabinet. Mr Bell outlined the history of squash courts at Ringwood Health and Leisure Centre and his view of the usage of the current gym facilities. He felt that there was currently substantial under used capacity in the existing fitness suite and questioned how, on that basis, the Council could justify further investment. He had not been able to ascertain that the Council had achieved the original pay back period for the existing fitness suite. Mr Bell said that with the economy and the Council under serious financial strain and with the proposed council tax increases being in excess of inflation and average income increases, he did not think the Council should be spending £223,000 on this project.

Mr Bell said that three of the original four squash courts had been taken to expand other activities and closing the last squash court at Ringwood would deny choice at the centre. He said that the expansion of the 816 scheme could be done effectively using existing facilities without closing the squash court or spending such a large amount of money. There were other areas on the ground floor that could be converted to provide facilities with better health and safety requirements.

The Cabinet received a presentation from Ms Beth Scrivens and Ms Hanna Madge, students from Ringwood School.

They pointed out that, like learning, people exercised in different ways. Some found team sports motivating whilst others found the structured environment of a gym a better way to achieve their goals. The British Medical Association recommended that it was important to offer choice as not all children wanted to play competitive or mixed sports. In their presentation the students detailed a number of statistics relating to childhood obesity and health problems arising from poor nutrition and exercise levels. They said that the provision of an 816 gym alongside the existing fitness suite would give families an opportunity to exercise together.

Beth Scrivens and Hanna Madge had also carried out a survey of the students at Ringwood School to ascertain their preferred method of exercise. From a sample of 584 students, 37% said they would prefer the gym over sports; 70% said they would use the gym even if it was not their preferred method of exercise. 44% said they would use the gym more than once a week and 20% would use it at least once a week.

The students concluded that an 816 gym would promote health and fitness amongst young people through the use of specifically designed equipment within an environment that enabled them to have fun with their friends at the same time.

The Chairman said that the first 816 gym had been installed at Applemore Health and Leisure Centre and the Council had made a commitment to roll out the 816 programme across the district.

In response to some of the points raised in the presentations to the Cabinet, members noted that the current fitness suite at Ringwood Health and Leisure Centre was well used and the number of users per station was above the industry average. It was important not to mix the specific provision needed for young people and other specialist groups with normal provision. The Cabinet noted that the business plan for the project gave a pay back within the Council's agreed five year period and a substantial increase in participation rates was projected.

The Leisure, Culture and Youth Matters Portfolio Holder said that there had been a great deal of consultation over the proposal which had resulted in support for both sides of the argument. On balance, he was of the view that the gym option should be pursued however, he gave a commitment to work with Mr Bell to look at alternatives for squash provision in the area.

Other members of the Cabinet spoke in support of the provision of an 816 gym which they felt would be widely used by both young people and other specialist groups.

**RESOLVED:**

That the option to develop a new 816 gym and extend the current fitness suite in the area currently used as a squash court at Ringwood Health and Leisure Centre be agreed.

**86. FINANCIAL REPORT – FORECAST FULL YEAR AND ACTUAL FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2007 TO DECEMBER 2007 (REPORT B).**

The Cabinet considered the forecast budget variations of all Portfolios and Committees from the approved original estimates for 2007/08. Members noted that in terms of the General Fund it was anticipated that the latest estimated overall outturn position would be a reduction in net expenditure of £18,000 against the original budget, which would be transferred to the Capital Programme reserve. Estimated expenditure on the capital programme was £2.283m less than the last approved budget but this was largely due to rephasings of expenditure into later years. Net expenditure on the Housing Revenue Account was currently predicted to be £606,000 less than the original budget, of which £575,000 was newly reported variations. Principally an £800,000 reduction in capital expenditure financing, due to rephasing, offset by increased General Management costs of £300,000. The Final Accounts Committee on 22 February would consider the Financial Report in greater detail.

**RECOMMENDED:**

***That the following supplementary estimates be approved:-***

- (i) £300,000 in respect of HRA General Management costs, principally relating to one-off costs resulting from Central Control/Sheltered Housing Review redundancy and early retirement costs as detailed in Appendix 3 to Report B to the Cabinet;***
- (ii) £90,000 in respect of income shortfalls and employee overspends at health and leisure centres as detailed in Appendix 7 to Report B to the Cabinet; and***

- (iii) ***£71,000 in respect of additional costs relating to the vehicle and plant replacement programme as detailed in Appendix 5 to Report B to the Cabinet.***

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the items set out in the revised General Fund budget in Appendix 1 to Report B to the Cabinet be approved;
- (b) That the revised capital expenditure as set out in Appendix 2 to Report B to the Cabinet be approved;
- (c) That the revised Housing Revenue Account expenditure as set out in Appendix 3 to Report B to the Cabinet be approved;
- (d) That the financial position of Commercial Services as set out in section 5 of Report B to the Cabinet be noted ; and
- (e) That 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 B to the Cabinet be noted.

**87. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2008/09 (REPORT C).**

The Cabinet considered a strategy for the treasury management function of the Council for 2008/09. Members noted the detail of the financing of the capital expenditure for 2008/09 and the borrowing and investment of funds. It was noted that since the Council had withdrawn from the use of external fund managers performance had improved and the Council were now doing well against the general market.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) ***That the prudential indicators as detailed at Appendix 1 to Report C to the Cabinet be adopted; and***
- (b) ***That the treasury management strategy and the treasury prudential indicators, both as detailed in Appendix 2 to Report C to the Cabinet, be approved and adopted respectively.***

**88. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT ESTIMATES 2008/09 (REPORT D).**

The Cabinet considered the updated Housing Revenue Account estimates with the details of the most recent variations. An average rent increase of 5% was proposed in rents for 2008/09, in line with rent restructuring guidelines.

Members noted that the Tenants' Consultative Group were disappointed at the proposed increase which was above inflation. However, they did understand that this was as a result of the Government rent restructuring guidelines. The Cabinet also noted, with concern, that the Housing Subsidy calculations resulted in the Council being in a negative subsidy position, which meant that £7.9m of resources were forwarded to the Government for distribution to other areas with positive subsidy determinations.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) That an average increase of 5% in rents for 2008/09, in line with rent restructuring guidelines be approved ; and**
- (b) That the updated budget set out in Appendix 1 to Report D to the Cabinet be approved.**

**89. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/09 (REPORT E).**

Cllr Rickman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as the owner of a Beach Hut. There was no discussion on this aspect of the report and he therefore remained at the meeting took part in the discussion and voted on matters not related to beach huts.

Cllr Kendal declared a personal interest in this item as an Executive member at HCC. 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 draft General Fund revenue and capital budgets for the financial year 2008/09 together with comments from review panels on the proposals. The budget had been prepared with a number of issues still uncertain. In particular members were concerned at the unknown costs arising from the new nationwide concessionary travel scheme. They agreed that the potential financial impact that the scheme may have on council tax should be detailed in the council tax leaflet sent to all households.

The Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder said that he was continuing to re-assess budgeted expenditure with the aim of reducing the council tax increase further without any adverse impact on services. Members agreed that there would be no further cuts in frontline services and that it was hoped to keep the council tax increase to below 4%.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) That site licence fees and services charges at Stillwater Park be increased by 3.9%;**
- (b) That the revised 2008/09 fees and charges schedules for land charges and beach huts, as set out in Appendices 2 & 3 of Report E to the Cabinet be approved;**
- (c) That, subject to further consideration of the financial position that will be reported to Council in February 2008,**
  - (i) the General Fund revenue budget be agreed in the sum of £22.384m;**
  - (ii) the Council Tax be set at £150.06 for a band D property; and**
- (d) That the 2008/09 Capital Programme be set at £15.525m;**

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That, following consideration of the comments from the Review Panels and Committees the additional budget proposals as set out in Section 3 of Report E to the Cabinet be approved; and
- (b) That specific details of the impact on Council Tax of the Government's changes to the Concessionary Travel Scheme be included in the Council Tax leaflet.

**90. HEAVY GOODS VEHICLE OPERATORS LICENSING APPLICATIONS – NOTICE OF MOTION (REPORT F).**

In accordance with Standing Order 41, the Cabinet considered a Notice of Motion standing referred from the Council meeting on 17 December 2007 regarding the extent of consultation carried out by the Traffic Commissioners prior to considering Heavy Goods Vehicle Licence Applications and the considerations that could be taken into account by their Inspectors prior to a decision being made.

The Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder supported the need for additional consultation requirements and the widening of powers available to inspectors in determining applications. He was particularly concerned, as were a number of other members, at the damage to the environment and traffic safety issues caused by HGV movements to and from licensed sites.

Members hoped that pressure from local authorities and from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association would lead to a change in the rules that Government Inspectors used when dealing with applications for Site Operators Licences.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the motion with respect to both the additional consultation requirements and the widening of the powers available to Inspectors in determining applications be supported; and
- (b) That, until such times as the powers of Inspectors are widened, the current processes in place at New Forest District Council in terms of the consultations carried out by the Council and the generally limited input by Council Officers in terms of contesting applications be endorsed.

**91. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT : THE PROVISION OF CAR PARKING SPACE IN RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (REPORT G).**

The Cabinet considered the outcome of the consultation process undertaken on the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The Provision of Car Parking Space in Residential Development.

The Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder supported the proposed amendments to the SPD which he said would enable the Council to offer a more positive approach within the Council's planning policy framework.

**RESOLVED:**

That a Supplementary Planning Document for the Provision of Car Parking Space in Residential Development as set out in Annex B to Report G to the Cabinet be adopted and published.

CHAIRMAN

(DEMOCRAT/CB060208/MINUTES.DOC)

## **Presentation to NFDC Cabinet 6<sup>th</sup> February 2008**

### **Ref: Proposal to close the squash court at Ringwood L.C.**

#### **Chair & Members.**

From the original opening of RLC when there were 4 squash courts these have progressively been reduced to the 1 remaining court, to provide the current fitness suite & the dance studio.

The existing Gym facility, the extension of which is the subject of the current proposal, is under used (I supplied a usage survey to the representatives of NFDC and at the Public meeting, made during a period of 8 days) and this indicates that there is significant existing capacity yet to be utilised (without the substantial expenditure which is envisaged in the current proposal) especially at a time when Council Tax payers in the NFDC area are being asked to pay higher than inflation increases in council tax, and economies are needed to even maintain existing services.

The spare capacity would be better utilised to provide the capacity you claim is needed for the 816 club, without closing The remaining squash court, which will disenfranchise the existing squash players.

The original case for the expenditure on the existing fitness suite has not I believe been cost effectively proven over recent years, and no financial data has not been provided (as originally requested) which definitively proves the achievement of the payback criteria, which together with the existing under utilisation of the existing gym undermines the case for extending this at the cost of closing the last squash court to the detriment of the existing squash players.

We are not opposed to the development of the 816 concept or the efforts to provide facilities to help the younger generation to reduce obesity and help the handicapped in keeping fit but as



was particularly evident at the recent public meeting the majority of people attending considered that this should not be done at the expense of the existing squash players.

The options which have been suggested as alternative venues to play squash will either require players to travel in excess of 20 miles (return journey) when we are being asked to reduce Co2 by travelling less, or will cost 3 or 4 times the cost of playing on the existing court at RLC.

I have played squash for well over 30 years, it is one of the best sports for helping to tone the body and ensure physical & mental fitness as it uses many different parts of the body. UK Squash is also one of the few sports which can claim to have players in the top rankings in the world for both Men & Women.

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Additionally there are other alternatives available which would not require the ending of squash at Ringwood and at lower cost than the proposed scheme, such as:

- 1) Conversion of the equipment store. (equipment could be kept in porta-cabin/container type units)
- 2) Conversion of the Activity room which is not adequately utilised at present. (see my survey)
- 3) Use of the squash court as an activity area at none squash playing periods, with portable equipment or non equipment fitness programs.

In addition to the aspects I have raised earlier, I also would ask if the Health & Safety issues have been adequately addressed and suitable risk assessments made as the target markets detailed in this proposal include:

- 1)“Mentally & Physically Disabled”
- 2)“Older people

3) Children.

4) Blind

When the Centre was originally designed it was with 4 squash courts on the first floor, where it could be expected that a maximum of 15/20 people (including spectators) would be in this area of the building at any one time, not the possible 150, or more, which the existing usage (following the changes in the last 10 years) together with the additional users the current proposal is claimed to generate, will be using these facilities. (which now includes a 2<sup>nd</sup> floor mezzanine in the existing gym, which will be extended if this proposal is adopted) What has been done to provide better emergency exits? I cannot see any changes here, and in the event of a fire or other incident requiring evacuation of the building, there is only 1 staircase to the only single door on the ground floor at this end of the premises. The only 1<sup>st</sup> floor emergency exit is about as far away from the fitness suite as it possible to get, at the other side/end of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.

You are targeting the disabled and the obese with this new facility, with 10 times the original number of people it was originally envisaged would be using this area of the building.

There is also the question of the parking, which is often full now, where are the new users this extension is expected to generate going to park? There is no provision for extra parking in the current proposal, that I have seen.

### **In Summary**

- 1) **There is currently substantial under used capacity in the existing fitness suite.**
- 2) **The financial data requested, substantiating the achievement of the original payback criteria (for the existing fitness suite) has not been fully provided .**

**So how can you justify further investment when the existing capacity is not fully utilised?**

- 3) Now is not the time to send £223k when the economy and Council funding is under serious strain and is already in difficulty in funding its existing budgets for 2008/9 when council tax charges are already rising by more than inflation and average income increases**
- 4) Closing the last squash court will deny Ringwoods Squash player the chance to continue with their chosen method of keeping fit, when 3 of the original 4 squash courts have already been taken to expand other activities.**
- 5) The expansion of the 816 scheme can be effectively done using existing facilities without closing the squash Court or spending £223k, by using the existing facilities more effectively or at lower cost by converting other more suitable areas (for this target group) on the ground floor where there will not be the "high risk" Health & Safety Issues which this proposal poses for the proposed target groups, should there be a need to evacuate these groups due to fire or other emergency within the existing Centre.**

**Thank you for the opportunity to present our case.**

## **CABINET – 6 FEBRUARY 2008**

### **RINGWOOD HEALTH & LEISURE CENTRE – GYM 816**

Since the meeting of the Leisure, Culture and Youth Matters Review Panel held on 15 January there have been a number of further developments which the Cabinet Members should be made aware.

There are 3 squash courts at David Lloyd Leisure in Ringwood and the Review Panel requested officers to explore the possibilities of negotiating an offer for the squash players should the Cabinet agree the proposal. The Assistant Director has met with the Manager at David Lloyd who has indicated his willingness to discuss an offer on membership with the squash players. This information and the relevant contact details have been passed to Ringwood Squash Club.

A second public meeting was held at Ringwood Leisure Centre on 23 January when presentations were made by the squash club, council officers and the school. There was a lively debate which explored all aspects of the proposals and the main outcomes were;

- That everyone appreciated the merits and benefits of the 816 provision and the wider participation it would bring.
- The squash players did not feel it should be provided at the expense of the last remaining squash court.
- The school felt that the 816 gym would be widely used by young people who would benefit both physically and socially.
- The meeting concluded that ideally both the 816 gym and the squash court should be provided if funding allowed.

Other options for alternative provision in the area continue to be explored.

The Portfolio Holder for Employment, Health & Wellbeing fully supports the scheme and sees it as an important one given the increased participation levels and community gain which will result and the undoubted cross portfolio benefits this will bring.



Club 8-16

THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEW

# DANCE



# ATHLETICS



# BASKETBALL





# SWIMMING





Like learning, people exercise in different ways. Some find team sports motivating, some find the structured environment of a gym perfect to make sure that they achieve their goals.

## Some statistics...

- 25 % of boys and 33 % of girls aged between 2 and 19 years old are overweight or obese

Last year, a study from the Peninsula Medical School in Plymouth, revealed that:

- $\frac{3}{4}$  of parents failed to recognise their child was overweight.
- 33 % of mums and 57 % of dads considered their child's weight to be 'about right' when, in fact, they were obese.

# Some Statistics...

- In the UK there are around 1 million obese children under 16 years of age. These soaring rates in obesity have led to an increase in childhood type II diabetes and will lead to more future cases of heart disease, osteoarthritis and some cancers.
- Diabetes UK believes there are currently around 100 children with the condition, although some experts believe the figure could be as high as 1,400 based on the number of overweight and obese children there are in the UK.

# Some Statistics...

- Poor nutrition and exercise levels have adverse effects on children's health immediately and later in life.
- Estimates indicate that, if current trends continue, at least one fifth of boys and one third of girls will be obese by 2020.

## Some statistics...

The BMA recommends that:

Choice in the style of exercise offered to children is desirable, as not all children want to play competitive or mixed sports.



Although the gym may not be appealing to everyone, we are looking to provide more opportunities for people to have different options to get and stay healthy.

It would not only provide opportunities for young people but also offer a chance for families to be healthy together. Parents can exercise in the adult gym whilst their children have fun, in a safe and healthy environment at the same time



# Survey

We conducted a survey of the students at Ringwood School. We asked them how many prefer the gym to competitive sports, how many would use the gym and how often it would be used. We also asked them for their opinions on the proposed facility. It was made clear to the students that the proposed facility would mean the loss of the squash court.

# Survey

## Ringwood Recreation Centre in Partnership with Ringwood School

"To promote personal wellbeing and enable all sections of the community to have an opportunity to enjoy a sustained healthy lifestyle at an affordable cost"

The New Forest District Council, are looking to plan a gym facility for young people ages 8 to 16, with appropriate equipment for these age ranges. It aims to provide a different environment for young people to stay healthy. It is expected as part of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda, that all schools should be considering 'health and well-being' including both mental and physical health as a key part of a young person's education. Not all people enjoy team and competitive sports.

As student advisors to the town council, we (Beth Scrivens and Hannah Madge) are making a presentation to all stakeholders involved in the project to put across the young people's views. The 8-16 gym would be located as an extension to the current gym, covering the remaining squash court. The school would have free use of the facilities at certain times.

We would like to take the results of a small survey to the council, to represent the views of the students in the school. Please fill out this survey with your tutor group and send back to Mrs Yates in the sixth form reception.

# Survey

TUTOR GROUP:.....

No. of students present at time of survey.....

1. How many students would prefer to use appropriate gym facilities to keep fit instead of team/competitive sports?

Gym.....

Sports.....

Other.....

2. Even if not their preferred choice of activity, how many students would use the gym facilities if they were available?

.....

3. How many students would use the gym facilities at the frequencies below?

Every day       More than once a week       Once a week   
More than once a month       Once a month       Less than once a month

Please record approximately 3 quotes (sensible!!!) from your students about their opinions on the proposed facilities

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# Survey Results

From a sample of 584 students:

- 37% would prefer the gym over sports
- 70% would use the gym even if it is not their preferred method of exercise
- 44% would use the gym more than once a week and 20% would use it at least once a week.

# Survey Comments

“It will promote health and fitness”

“Good additional training options”

“A good plan because the equipment would be designed for us”

“Be with your friends, and help a whole group of friends to get healthier, it would have a snowball effect on youngsters who would follow their friends”

# Survey Comments

“Obesity is becoming a problem and if you're not good at sport, how can we lose weight? The gym is a good alternative”

“It is good to separate the gym for kids and adults, so the kids don't feel intimidated”

“I like keeping fit and I can have fun with my friends at the same time”

# Sources

Our facts from the first section of the power point were from the following sources:

- ◉ [bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/content/childhoodobesity](http://bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/content/childhoodobesity)
- ◉ [weightlossresources.co.uk/children/childhood\\_obesity.htm](http://weightlossresources.co.uk/children/childhood_obesity.htm)
- ◉ [bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/ChildObesity#Exercise](http://bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/ChildObesity#Exercise)