

6 AUGUST 2008

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

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

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

Councillors:

- p 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:

Mrs D M Brooks
Ms L C Ford
D Harrison
Mrs M E Lewis
Mrs K J Lord

Councillors:

Sqn Ldr B M F Pemberton
L R Puttock
Mrs B Smith
A J Swain
F P Vickers

Also In Attendance:

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

Officers Attending:

D Yates, R Jackson, J Mascal, Ms J Bateman and Miss G O'Rourke.

27. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2008, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

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

29. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**Applemore Health and Leisure Centre**

Mrs J Fowler addressed the Cabinet. She said she had been a longstanding season ticket holder at Applemore Health and Leisure Centre and spoke for a number of other members of the Centre.

Mrs Fowler expressed concern at the changes to the changing room facilities. She agreed that the plans for the new wet changing facilities provided excellent space for disadvantaged and family use but felt that this was at the expense of other users as it reduced the areas of the current male and female group changing rooms. She said that the users had not been consulted and the new facilities would be much smaller with an inadequate number of showers.

The new "village" walk arrangements would mean that users had to move in and out of the facilities to toilets and showers. Lockers would be outside of the area of use and a vanity unit and hairdryers placed in the public walkway area.

Whilst she said that it was commendable to aim for the right balance for all groups the new arrangements actually provided fewer showers, toilets and lockers than were currently available.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Fowler for her comments which he said would be considered as part of any further discussion on the matter.

30. FUTURE PARKING PROVISION IN LYMINGTON (REPORT A).

The Cabinet considered a draft parking study project brief for Lyminster.

The Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder said that whilst it was accepted that there were considerable parking problems in Lyminster a properly constructed study was needed before any options for change could be considered. Local people and businesses had been kept fully informed of the proposal.

It was noted that, whilst income from on-street parking was ring fenced, income from off-street parking was able to be targeted to priority services and key local objectives without specific ring fencing. The Cabinet continued to support this approach.

Members noted that the study would be carried out using independent expertise, the results of which could also provide a basis for further work in areas elsewhere in the district where there were parking issues.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That an expenditure plan bid of approximately £15,000 to undertake a parking study based on the draft terms of reference set out in Appendix 1 of Report A to the Cabinet be approved in principle; and

- (b) That the existing financial strategy, which does not allow for ring fencing of income, be endorsed.

31. ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENT – BACKWARD LOOK 2007/08 (REPORT B).

The Cabinet considered the 'Backward Look' Efficiency Statement for 2007/08. The Council is required to submit two annual efficiency statements a year, one looking at proposed actions for the forthcoming year, the other looking back at what had been achieved in the previous year.

Members were pleased to note that the Council had so far achieved efficiencies in excess of the target figure set in the Annual Efficiency Statement, largely by cashable savings.

The Cabinet expressed their thanks to Heads of Service for the work they had done to achieve those savings that enabled the Council to achieve its objectives and fund priorities.

RESOLVED:

That the 2007/08 Backward Look Annual Efficiency Statement be approved for final submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government.

32. FINANCIAL REPORT – FORECAST FULL YEAR AND ACTUAL FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2008 – JUNE 2008 (REPORT C).

The Cabinet considered the forecast budget variations of all Portfolios and Committees from the approved original estimates for 2007/08.

It was predicted that in terms of interest rates the Council would generate an additional £250,000 of income during the year. However, in view of the economic climate it was also predicted that the Council would have to fund additional fuel and associated costs of £102,000.

The Chairman commented that the Council had moved to become debt free and as such had been able to build up prudent reserves which earned interest. In the current economic difficulties a number of charitable organisations were under increasing pressure to assist the community. He therefore proposed additional funding of £50,000 to be split between the Housing and Leisure, Culture & Youth Matters portfolio holders to enable them to grant aid associations and groups in the district who in turn could provide greater assistance to the most vulnerable members of the New Forest community.

The Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder said that even providing for this additional grant funding the budget for the current financial year was still on course.

Members noted that, through the Green Audit, an improvement plan was now in place targeted at reducing the carbon footprint of the Council's fleet of vehicles by up to 15% over the next three years.

In response to a question the Cabinet noted that the Planning and Transportation Review Panel could investigate the feasibility of the Council providing subsidies to assist in funding rural bus services.

RECOMMENDED:

That the following supplementary estimates be approved:

- (i) £102,000 in respect of additional fuel/fuel related General Fund revenue costs;***
- (ii) £57,000 in respect of temporary General Fund revenue staffing resources to update the asset management database; and***
- (iii) £79,000 in respect of Private Sector Disabled Facilities Capital Grants, financed by Council resources of £19,000 and Grant of £60,000.***

RESOLVED:

- (a) That, as detailed in Report C to the Cabinet, in the light of the current economic climate, both the Housing Portfolio Holder and the Leisure, Culture & Youth Matters Portfolio Holder be allocated additional budgetary provision of £25,000 each to enable them to provide grant aid funding to associations and groups in the district who in turn support the most vulnerable members of the New Forest community;
- (b) That the items set out in the revised General Fund, Capital Programme and Housing Revenue Account budgets, as set out in Appendices 1 – 3 of Report C to the Cabinet be approved; and
- (c) That the actual expenditure position after 3 months (25%) compared to budgets of the General Fund, Capital Programme and Housing Revenue Account as set out in Appendices 1 – 3 of Report C to the Cabinet be noted.

CHAIRMAN

(DEMOCRAT/CB060808/MINUTES.DOC)