

**5 AUGUST 2009**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 5 August 2009.

- p Cllr B Rickman (Chairman)
- p Cllr E J Heron (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

- p G C Beck
- p Mrs D M Brooks
- p Mrs J L Cleary

**Councillors:**

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

**In Attendance:**

**Councillors:**

Ms L C Ford  
Mrs A J Hoare  
J A G Hutchins  
Mrs M E Lewis

**Councillors:**

Sqn Ldr B M F Pemberton  
Mrs A M Rostand  
Mrs S I Snowden  
A J Swain

**Also In Attendance:**

Mrs P White and Mrs W Celea, Housing Policy and Report Focus Group Representatives.

**Officers Attending:**

D Yates, R Jackson, J Mascal, Ms J Bateman and Miss G O'Rourke and for part of the meeting D Brown, C Elliott, J Ives, Ms P Lewis, Ms S Gardener and Ms J Wheeler.

**18. MINUTES.**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2009, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

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

**20. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

**21. STRATEGIC REVIEW OF SHELTERED HOUSING ACCOMMODATION (REPORT A).**

The Cabinet considered proposals for changes to the way in which sheltered housing accommodation provision for older people's accommodation was provided.

The Housing Portfolio Holder said that the proposals marked a significant change and would target scarce staff resources to provide support to older people wherever they lived, which was not the case currently. In the short term some existing sheltered schemes would be decommissioned. However, the Portfolio Holder reassured members that officers would work closely with those residents affected to ensure that they were supported in their choice of either moving to alternative sheltered schemes or staying in their current accommodation. Either way, the new proposals would enable the Council to provide a tailored support service to older people wherever they happened to live.

The new proposals would give many older people the opportunity to elect to remain in their own homes for longer as they would have the support that they needed rather than move to other forms of care or support based accommodation. The Portfolio Holder said that she firmly believed that the new improved services would provide more and better support to a greater number of older residents in the New Forest.

Other members spoke in support of the proposals. The Chairman of the Housing Review Panel said that as decisions were made on individual sheltered housing schemes they would be considered by the review panel. There would be no timing gaps in service provision and residents would be consulted on every aspect of a proposal as it affected them. Local members would also be consulted on individual scheme decisions.

Mrs Celea, Housing Policy and Report Focus Group Representative, said that the tenants had some concerns that the proposals did not appear to be needs driven and that there were many vulnerable, elderly residents who would be affected. The Chairman replied that the needs of the residents were paramount and that addressing their individual requirements was the most important aspect and would drive the process.

Mrs White, Housing Policy and Report Focus Group Representative, said that it was important to move forward to ensure that changing needs were met. In the past, when other changes to sheltered housing provision had been made, it had gone very smoothly and the Council had dealt with the process very well.

**RESOLVED:**

That the proposals as outlined in Report A to the Cabinet to enable the Council to embark on a new, modern Older Persons' Service to provide a greater range of accommodation and choice which fully complies with National and Local Agenda be agreed.

**22. ST ANTHONY'S HOSTEL, LYNDHURST ROAD, ASHURST (REPORT B).**

The Cabinet considered the results of a strategic review of the Council's existing hostel accommodation and housing need. Some of the Council's hostel accommodation was no longer suitable for the changing demands of the housing needs the Council now faced.

Work had been undertaken to forecast the work needed on all the Council's hostels and to quantify the expenditure necessary to bring that type of accommodation to a level that met the changing requirements.

The Housing Portfolio Holder said that the use of hostels by the housing service had changed over the years as a direct result of the pressures on affordable rented housing. When originally designed, St Anthony's and the Council's other remaining hostels were used as temporary accommodation for homeless families awaiting permanent accommodation. This was usually only for a matter of weeks at a time. Unfortunately, the serious shortage for affordable rented housing meant that people could now be housed in hostels for as long as two years.

Properties like St Anthony's were old, outdated and bed/sit rooms were some distance away from bathrooms and kitchens. To rectify those conditions would require considerable investment to make them suitable as reasonable temporary accommodation for homeless families. This would not be a good use of scarce resources.

After discussion the Cabinet agreed that St Anthony's Hostel should be sold and the proceeds used to buy or build more appropriate accommodation for the homeless families in the district.

**RESOLVED:**

That the sale of St Anthony's Hostel, Lyndhurst Road, Ashurst be agreed, and that the proceeds from the sale be used to make provision for an alternative hostel in a more suitable location, either by purchasing an existing property or by providing a purpose built new hostel.

**23. CONSULTATION ON PARTIAL REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE SOUTH EAST : PROVISION FOR GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE (REPORT C).**

The Cabinet considered a draft response to a partial review of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East in relation to the provision for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople.

The Planning & Transportation Portfolio Holder detailed the discussion and consultation process that had been undertaken to reach agreement on provision. The Cabinet, in November 2008 had supported an option based on the Council's own needs assessment which proposed that the Council should have 5 pitches for gypsies and travellers and 5 pitches for travelling show people for the period 2006-2016. A formal response was made to then South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) on that basis.

However, in March 2009 SEERA formally agreed to recommend an option for a level of redistribution across the region in order to seek a more 'balanced' pitch distribution.

This meant a requirement for New Forest District, including the National Park, for 9 additional pitches for gypsies and travellers and 11 pitches for travelling show people. However, since the Local Development Framework looked beyond the 2016 end date for that provision to 2026, the total additional provision for the period 2006-2026 would amount to 26.5 pitches for gypsies and travellers, and 17 pitches for travelling showpeople. The Portfolio Holder was of the view that the recommended option did not take account of the needs in the area nor the environmental issues. He did not therefore support the redistributive approach to pitch provision.

The Employment, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder said that she strongly objected to the redistributive approach and the consequent proposed increased pitch numbers for the district. She was of the view that the Government had taken no account of local need and that the proposals would be to the detriment of local people and the environment.

**RESOLVED:**

That the response to recommendations of the partial review of the South East Plan on provision for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people as set out in Report C to the Cabinet, explaining that the Council does not support the redistributive approach to pitch provision, be approved.

**24. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES.**

**RESOLVED:**

That Cllrs Pemberton and Swain remain as this Council's representatives on the Lymington Citizens' Advice Bureau.

CHAIRMAN

(DEMOCRAT/CB050809/MINUTES.DOC)