

1 DECEMBER 2010

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 1 December 2010.

- 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:

Mrs A J Hoare
Mrs M E Lewis
L R Puttock
Mrs B Smith
A J Swain

Councillors:

F P Vickers
J G Ward
A Weeks
Dr M N Whitehead

Also In Attendance:

Mr G Waters, Housing Policy and Report Focus Group Representative.

Officers Attending D Yates, R Jackson, J Mascall, Ms J Bateman and Miss G O'Rourke and for part of the meeting G Ashworth and C Elliott.

41. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2010, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

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

43. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

44. ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT (REPORT A).

The Cabinet considered the Annual Audit and Inspection letter that summarised the work undertaken by the Audit Commission and the District Auditor for the preceding year.

Mr P Jarvis and Ms K Lee from the Audit Commission presented the report and commented in detail on each specific area.

The 2009/10 audit comprised two elements; the audit of the Council's financial statements and the auditor's assessment of the Council's arrangements to achieve value for money in use of resources.

The Audit Commission had issued an unqualified opinion on the Council's financial statements. The Auditor said that the Council was well placed to implement the International Financial Reporting Standards in 2010/11.

The Audit Commission had also issued an unqualified Value for Money conclusion stating that the Council had satisfactory arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Members noted the current and future challenges that the Audit Commission had set out for the Council. Overall the Auditors said that the Council's position continued to be positive with its management arrangements rated high.

The Chairman thanked members and officers for the work they had undertaken to maintain the Council's position. He said that the Council had prepared well and was ready to update its medium term financial strategy to reflect the grant settlement when known.

The Chief Executive thanked the Audit Commission for the professional and constructive way in which they had carried out their audit.

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Audit Letter for 2009/10 be noted.

Action: Bob Jackson

45. NEW EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS (REPORT B).

The Cabinet considered the requirements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 which meant that the Council had to move to either the "Strong Leader plus", or the "Mayoral", model of executive arrangements from their elections in May 2011.

The Chairman said that the consultation had been carried out at minimum cost. Only one member of the public had replied and had supported the current system. Members noted the Leader and Cabinet model had worked satisfactorily in this district for almost 10 years. The Strong Leader plus model was the least costly option to operate. No groundswell of opinion in favour of a change to the Mayoral system was apparent.

Members noted that the main differences between the Strong Leader plus model and the system the Council currently operated were:

- (a) The Leader would be elected for a four year term, instead of annually;
- (b) The Leader, rather than full Council, would decide on the number and content of Cabinet portfolios;
- (c) The Leader, rather than the Cabinet, would decide on how executive decision-making powers were to be delegated; and
- (d) The office of Deputy Leader would become a formal appointment, and the post-holder would assume all the Leader's powers if the Leader was unable to act.

The Leader of the Opposition said that in his view both the current and the proposed models concentrated power down to one person and he would be in favour of a more democratic process that engaged all members of the Council more fully.

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) ***That the new Leader and Cabinet option for executive arrangements, to operate from the May 2011 quadrennial elections, as set out in Report B to the Cabinet be agreed;***
- (b) ***That the list of functions at Appendix 1 to Report B to the Cabinet (functions which may, but need not, be the responsibility of the executive) continue to be executive functions; and***
- (c) ***That the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make any necessary amendments to the Council's constitution directly consequent on the recommendations above being approved.***

Action: Lynne Battersby

46. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – SITES AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (REPORT C).

The Cabinet considered, as a basis for general public consultation, a consultation document on the proposed "Sites and Development Management Development Plan Document". The document, circulated separately to all members of the Council, set out for consultation purposes proposed detailed planning policies and proposals within the framework set by the Council's adopted Core Strategy.

The Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder said that the document represented the next stage in producing the Council's Local Plan. Following a detailed selection process, the document now identified specific sites and development management policies to fulfill the aims of the Council's Core Strategy.

The document would be published in January 2011 for a six week public consultation period. The Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder strongly encouraged everyone including members to comment on the suitability of the proposed sites. The final agreed policies would be those that members would use to determine future planning applications.

Members noted that whilst the expected 'Localism Bill' might change the Core Strategy/Local Plan processes, the fundamental planning considerations which were evidence based would not change and therefore it was appropriate to continue with the programme.

In discussion, other members agreed that there was increasing development pressure on the district council areas on the edge of the New Forest National Park boundary. The process to produce the document for public consultation had been a comprehensive and rigorous exercise. The Council had worked with the New Forest National Park Authority and they had informally supported the proposals. They would comment formally through the public consultation process. Members were confident that the final document would produce strong and robust policies.

In conclusion the Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder thanked officers for their hard work in producing a very comprehensive and readable document.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That, having regard to the views expressed by Planning and Transportation Review Panel and the Planning Development Control Committee, the Sites and Development Management Development Plan Document, as amended, be agreed for public consultation; and
- (b) That the Policy Planning Manager, in consultation with the Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder, be authorised to make editing changes in preparing the document for public consultation.

Action: Graham Ashworth

47. THE COUNCIL TAX 2011/2012 – SETTING THE TAX BASE (REPORT D).

The Cabinet considered the detail of the proposed tax base for 2010/11. The Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder pointed out that the report formed the basis of the calculations for the council tax for the district for the coming year and gave details of individual town and parish council precepts.

The Housing Portfolio Holder said that she had set up a working party to look at the reasons for the continuing number of long term empty homes in the district.

RESOLVED:

That, in so far as it is empowered to do so by law, the calculation of the Council Tax Base for the year 2011/12 as set out below be agreed:

- (a) The calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2011/2012 be approved; and
- (b) 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 2011/12 be as follows and as detailed in Appendix 1 to Report D to the Cabinet:

PARISH/TOWN	TAX BASE 2011/12
Ashurst & Colbury	934.1
Beaulieu	516.4
Boldre	1051.9
Bramshaw	345.0
Bransgore	1870.4
Breamore	185.5
Brockenhurst	1849.5
Burley	774.9
Copythorne	1231.1
Damerham	236.5
Denny Lodge	153.7
East Boldre	403.4
Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley	594.7
Exbury & Lepe	109
Fawley	4904.1
Fordingbridge	2402.1
Godshill	219.3
Hale	265.5
Hordle	2477.6
Hyde	508.5
Hythe & Dibden	7843.0
Lymington & Pennington	7244.3
Lyndhurst	1415.1
Marchwood	2129.5
Martin	189.6
Milford on Sea	2763.5
Minstead	368.4
Netley Marsh	834.5
New Milton	11015.5
Ringwood	5514.0
Rockbourne	167.7
Sandleheath	281.4
Sopley	306.7
Sway	1696.2
Totton & Eling	9888.6
Whitsbury	102.0
Woodgreen	254.4
Whole District	73047.6

Action: Glynne Miles

CHAIRMAN