

**7 DECEMBER 2011**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 7 December 2011.

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

**Councillors:**

- p Mrs D M Brooks
- p Mrs J L Cleary

**Councillors:**

- p F P Vickers
- p C A Wise

**In Attendance:**

**Councillors:**

- p G C Beck
- p Mrs S Bennison
- p J E Binns
- p C J Harrison
- p D Harrison
- p Miss A Hickman
- p Mrs A J Hoare
- p Mrs P Jackman
- p Mrs M E Lewis

**Councillors:**

- p J Penwarden
- p L R Puttock
- p A W Rice TD
- p Mrs A M Rostand
- p R A Wappet
- p Mrs C Ward
- p J G Ward
- p Mrs B M Woodifield
- p P R Woods

**Also In Attendance:**

Ms K Lee, Audit Commission  
Mrs A Murphy, Housing Policy and Report Focus Group Representative.

**Officers Attending:**

D Yates, R Jackson, G Ashworth, J Bull, Miss J Debnam, M Devine, Mrs L Evans, R Millard and G Miles

**42. MINUTES.**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2011 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Cllrs Brooks, C Harrison, D Harrison, Hickman, Penwarden and Wise declared a personal interest in Minute 46

**44. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

Mrs P McRae addressed the Cabinet to oppose the introduction of any charges for the use of the Oak Road Car Park in Dibden Purlieu and presented a petition containing 1715 signatures to demonstrate local aspirations for the car park to be remain open and free for all.

Mr M Steele addressed the Cabinet to oppose the introduction of any charges for the use of the car park in Bransgore and presented a petition drawn from local objectors.

**45. 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.

Ms K Lee from the Audit Commission presented the report and commented on the key messages set out in the report.

The 2010/11 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 recognised that the preparation of the 2010/11 statements had been more challenging than normal because of the transition to International Financial Reporting Standards, and that the Council's approved statements met the new requirements.

The Audit Commission had also issued an unqualified Value for Money conclusion stating that the Council had been successful in facing another challenging year, responding to the continuing financial pressures while seeking to preserve essential services.

Members noted the current and future challenges that the Audit Commission had set out for the Council. The Auditor recognised that the Council clearly understood the significant risks it faced and was taking appropriate action to secure a stable financial position over the medium term.

The Chairman thanked members and officers for the work they had undertaken to maintain the Council's position and to achieve such a favourable report in the current climate.

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 2010/11 be noted.

Action: Bob Jackson

**46. SITES AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PLAN PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT (REPORT B)**

Members recalled that the Sites and Development Management Development Plan Document had been subject to extensive public consultation earlier in the year. The current draft took account of the representations that had been received. The Sites and Development Management Development Plan Document had been prepared within the context of the Core Strategy for the New Forest which had completed its formal procedures and been adopted in October 2009. The next stage for the Sites and Development Management Development Plan Document, following approval by the Cabinet, was publication for a further 6 week statutory consultation period. The Council would then need to consider whether, in the light of the representations made, the Document should be formally submitted for Public Examination to the Secretary of State.

The pre-submission draft had been discussed at a special joint meeting of the Planning Development Control Committee and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 2 December 2011, to which all Members of the Council had been invited. Their comments were reported to the Cabinet. The Joint meeting had approved the pre-submission document subject to amendment to take account of a number of changes and errata, as set out in Appendix 1 to the minutes of that meeting. They had also asked the Cabinet to consider amending the allocation of land at Little Testwood Farm, Totton from employment, as currently set out in Policy TOT12, to public open space.

The Portfolio Holder advised the Cabinet that, while he supported the various changes and errata set out in the Appendix, he was concerned about changing the allocation of Little Testwood Farm in advance of the public consultation exercise. The concerns of the local ward councillors, and their aspiration to secure essential recreational space for local residents, were recognised. However, the Council was obliged to try to develop proposals within the framework established through the adoption of the Core Strategy, which included a requirement for the allocation of new land for employment purposes at Totton. Little Testwood Farm was the only site that had been identified through the earlier consultation processes. The Joint meeting had believed that intensification of the use of the Eling Wharf site would provide sufficient additional employment opportunities, but that was an existing allocation and would not meet the requirement of the Core Strategy to provide a new allocation. In addition there were a number of planning and legal issues that needed to be investigated and explored fully, before any decision could be taken. The Cabinet considered that this process should take place in conjunction with the planned public consultation exercise, which would also allow the opportunity to have a proper dialogue with local ward councillors and the Town Council.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That having taken account of the views of the Planning Development Control Committee and the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel as set out in the minutes of the special joint meeting held on 2 December 2011

- (i) The Document be amended to take account of the changes and errata set out in Appendix 1 to those minutes;
  - (ii) The Document be not amended to change the land allocation of Little Testwood Farm in policy TOT12 to recreational open space instead of employment land; but this issue be explored in greater depth in conjunction with the statutory consultation exercise; and
  - (iii) The Document be published in January for a 6 week statutory period.
- (b) That the Planning Policy Manager, in consultation with the Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder, be authorised to make editing changes in preparing the document for publication.

Action: Graham Ashworth and Louise Evans

**47. REVIEW OF CAR PARKS WHERE CHARGES DO NOT CURRENTLY APPLY (REPORT C)**

Cllr Brooks declared a personal interest on the grounds that she was a member of Totton and Eling Town Council which had expressed a strong view on the proposals. She concluded that such interest was prejudicial and left the meeting for the consideration and voting.

Cllr Wise declared a personal interest as a member of the Royal Lyminster Yacht Club which had submitted a representation on this issue. He concluded that such interest was prejudicial and left the meeting for the consideration and voting.

Cllr D Harrison declared a personal interest on the grounds that he was a member of Totton and Eling Town Council which had expressed a strong view on the proposals. He concluded that such interest was prejudicial and, having made a statement on the proposal, he left the meeting for the consideration. He did not have a vote.

Cllr C Harrison declared a personal interest as a member of Hythe and Dibden Parish Council, and Cllr Hickman declared a personal interest as a member of Bransgore Parish Council as in each case the Parish Council was engaged in negotiations with this Council. Cllr Penwarden declared a personal interest as one of the local ward councillors for Bransgore. In each case they concluded that such interest was not prejudicial and remained in the meeting for the consideration. They did not have a vote.

The Cabinet considered recommendations from the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel following a review, undertaken by a task and finish working group, of options for the future management of 9 car parks where charges were not currently levied. The Cabinet also took account of petitions received during the public participation period at the meeting which opposed the introduction of car parking charges in Bransgore and for the Oak Road Car Park in Dibden Purlieu. The Cabinet noted, however, that the recommendations for the Bransgore and Oak Road car parks did not propose the introduction of car park charges, but sought alternative solutions.

The Panel had wished to ensure that there was fairness throughout the District and that all motorists paid for the use of parking facilities. The task and finish group undertook extensive research and where they considered that it would not be appropriate to introduce charges, they had developed suggestions of alternative courses of action with a view to reducing the costs falling on the general tax payer. This Council was liable for the payment of business rates on each of the car parks that were currently free of charge.

It was noted that the outcomes from the review should produce additional income and savings to the value of £57,000 per annum

**RESOLVED:**

That the following course of action be adopted in respect of each of the following car parks

- i) **Ashurst car park** – That charges for parking be not introduced because of the small size of the car park, the likelihood of displacement to adjacent free car parks, the low and volatile anticipated net income and the likelihood the rent payable by the Council to the Forestry Commission would increase if charges were introduced.
- ii) **Bransgore car park** – That charges be not introduced at this time, as it may be uneconomic because of the surrounding free on street parking, but alternative solutions be progressed by the Asset Management Group, working in conjunction with Bransgore Parish Council.
- iii) **Oak Road car park, Dibden Purlieu** – That the Asset Management Group review the site as a whole to consider alternatives, including leasing/licensing the site to the Church or the Parish Council and considering all or part of the site for alternative uses.
- iv) **Eling Cemetery car park** – That charging be not introduced given the sensitivities of the use of the car park and the support given by this Council to maintaining the viability of the Tide Mill.
- v) **Hordle Village car park** - That the lease not be renewed and the area returned to the Parish Council.
- vi) **Pennington Bank car park** – That this very small car park be retained but charging not introduced as it would be uneconomic to do so.
- vii) **Totton car parks** – That charges be levied in the Rumbridge, Westfield and the Civic Centre car parks for the reasons set out in Report C to the Cabinet unless a four-year agreement can be reached for the Town Council to pay this Council an appropriate sum in lieu of the anticipated parking charges for the respective car parks.

That the Asset Management Group consider using some of the Westfield site for alternative use, such as affordable housing.

Action: Glynne Miles/John Bull

**48. THE COUNCIL TAX 2012/2013 – SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX BASE (REPORT D)**

The Cabinet considered the detail of the proposed tax base for 2012/13. This 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.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That, in so far as it is empowered to do so by law, the calculation of the Council Tax Base for the year 2012/13 as set out below be approved
- (b) That 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 2012/13 be as follows and as detailed in Appendix 1 to Report D to the Cabinet.

<b>PARISH/TOWN</b>	<b>TAX BASE 2012/13</b>
Ashurst & Colbury	926.2
Beaulieu	508.7
Boldre	1059.1
Bramshaw	347.5
Bransgore	1881.1
Breamore	182.8
Brockenhurst	1846.5
Burley	791.0
Copythorne	1247.1
Damerham	241.0
Denny Lodge	156.5
East Boldre	398.3
Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley	596.7
Exbury & Lepe	114.7
Fawley	4942.1
Fordingbridge	2398.4
Godshill	228.5
Hale	267.5
Hordle	2473.8
Hyde	512.6
Hythe & Dibden	7854.2
Lymington & Pennington	7299.7
Lyndhurst	1410.2
Marchwood	2146.0
Martin	193.6
Milford on Sea	2763.9
Minstead	367.1
Netley Marsh	824.8
New Milton	11054.0
Ringwood	5526.1
Rockbourne	166.7
Sandleheath	283.1
Sopley	308.8
Sway	1690.9

Totton & Eling	9916.1
Whitsbury	98.7
Woodgreen	250.3
<b>Whole District</b>	<b>73274.3</b>

Action: Bob Jackson/Glynne Miles

#### 49. **DIBDEN GOLF CENTRE PROCUREMENT PROCESS UPDATE (REPORT E)**

The Cabinet was advised of progress in developing proposals for the future management of Dibden Golf Centre. Under the process interested parties had been invited to take part in a formal tendering process, starting with the submission of technical and financial Pre Qualification Questionnaires. Four companies had been eligible to continue the process, starting with a series of competitive dialogue meetings and subsequent submission of Outline Solutions which had now been scored

The companies would be giving presentations on their proposals on 13 December 2011, and members of the Task and Finish Working Group, the Cabinet and stakeholders had been invited to attend. There would be a further meeting of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 26 January 2012, and in the meantime references would be sought, and site visits held to evaluate the bids further. A final decision would be made by the Council in February 2012.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

Action: Bob Millard and Bob Jackson

#### 50. **EMPLOYMENT AND TOURISM REVIEW - CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL TASK AND FINISH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS (REPORT F)**

The Cabinet considered the recommendations developed by the task and finish working group that was established by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel to review the operation of the employment and tourism service. The terms of reference of the review were attached as Appendix 1 to Report F.

The recommendations had been developed following research which included meetings with the New Forest National Park Authority, New Forest Business Partnership and New Forest Tourism Association. It was clear that the employment and tourism service was held in high regard, and had been producing good outcomes, whilst also achieving useful savings over the years. However further significant savings could be made, while re-focussing the service to support employment more generally, with tourism as a part of the wider economic development role. A two phase approach was suggested. In Phase 1, the service would move towards a core team delivering the key functions of business support, web development and income generation. One focal point visitor information centre would be retained, with a network of subsidiary low cost outlets across the District; and there would be greater coordination with the New Forest National Park Authority. There would also be a review of the current Agreement which identified which authority would lead on each function and how.

In Phase 2, work would continue with the National Park Authority and also the Ninth Centenary Trust to seek to gain efficiencies in operational arrangements for the visitor information service; and in addition there would be greater emphasis on the use of electronic media to raise net income across all business sectors, to reduce the net operating costs of the Service.

The Cabinet agreed with the analysis of each of the functions set out in Appendix 2 to Report F. This established those functions that should form the focus in the use of resources, those where there was merit but which were not a key priority, and those where the emphasis should be moved to partner organisations.

It was expected that savings of £57,000 could be achieved in the delivery of core services and £46,000 from the operation of visitor information centres in 2012/13, with additional savings of £20,000 in 2013/14.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the revisions to the Employment and Tourism Service, as identified in Report F, together with the consequential savings, be agreed; and
- (b) That the same task and finish group be requested to make recommendations, through the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel on any further proposals for the future management of the Employment and Tourism Service.

Action: Martin Devine.

**51. OUTSIDE BODY APPOINTMENT**

**RESOLVED:**

That Cllr Mrs Andrews be appointed as a Council representative on Community First - New Forest in place of Ms A Righton

Action: Jan Debnam

CHAIRMAN

(CB071211)