

4 JANUARY 2012

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 4 January 2012.

- 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 Mrs S Bennison
- p C J Harrison
- p Ms L C Ford
- p A T Glass
- p A N G Kilgour
- p J Penwarden
- p L R Puttock

**Councillors:**

- p A W Rice TD
- p Mrs A M Rostand
- p R A Wappet
- p Mrs C Ward
- p J G Ward
- p P R Woods

**Also In Attendance:**

G Waters, Housing Policy and Report Focus Group Representative.

**Officers Attending:**

D Yates, R Jackson, J Mascal, D Brunton, D Brown, J Bull, Miss J Debnam, J Ditta, C Elliott, Miss G O'Rourke, Mrs P Smith and Ms D Staples

**52. MINUTES.**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2011 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Cllr Brooks, Rostand and Wise declared personal interests in minute 57.

**54. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

There were no issues raised during the public participation period.

**55. EMPTY HOMES LOAN SCHEME (REPORT A).**

The Government's targets to bring empty homes back into use provided an additional incentive for this Council to establish a scheme whereby empty homes were repaired, or sub-divided, then let to families in need of urgent short term accommodation through the Council's Private Sector Leasing Scheme.

Members were aware that the cost to this Council of putting homeless households into Bed and Breakfast accommodation was rising. The Empty Homes Loan Scheme would provide additional, good quality, short term accommodation as an alternative to Bed and Breakfast. Under the terms of the proposed Agreements, the initial cost of repairing or converting the property and bringing it back into use was recovered through the rent paid, before the owner of the property realised any return. The scheme was therefore self-financing. The proposed loan and lease agreements were produced as Appendices 1 and 2 to Report A. The focus would be on securing properties that would provide suitable, modest, accommodation for families and this Council would have 100% nomination rights on the properties under this scheme.

The Cabinet, and other Members of the Council, warmly welcomed this proposal which would bring many benefits for local people. The Cabinet agreed that the sum allocated to the project should be increased from the £50,000 recommended in the report in order to allow greater flexibility and to bring additional properties back into use.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That a pilot project be established to evaluate an empty homes loan scheme;
- (b) That up to £75,000 be allocated from capital resources, enhanced by the New Homes Bonus, to fund the pilot project; and
- (c) That a review of the pilot scheme be carried out after 12 months and the results presented to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel for assessment prior to further consideration by Cabinet.

Action: Pam Smith and Javed Ditta

**56. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2011-2014 (REPORT B).**

The Cabinet noted that the Government's provisional finance settlement had confirmed that there would be a further reduction of £1,151,000 (12.9%) for the 2012-13 grant settlement. A grant of £284,477 had been incorporated into the revenue support grant to compensate for loss of income through freezing the council tax, while the Council would also receive £719,978 under the New Homes Bonus payment scheme. The use of the New Homes Bonus would be considered by the Cabinet as part of its budget preparation.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the details of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement be noted; and
- (b) That a further report on the draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2012-13 be submitted to the February meeting of the Cabinet, enabling the setting of the Council Budget and Council Tax in February.

Action: Bob Jackson

**57. WITHDRAWAL OF AMENITY PARKING PERMITS (REPORT C).**

Cllr Brooks and Wise declared personal interests on the grounds that they both purchased amenity parking permits. Cllr Wise declared a further personal interest on the grounds that he was a member of the Royal Lymington Yacht Club which had objected to the proposal. They concluded that such interests were not prejudicial and remained in the meeting to speak and to vote.

Cllr Rostand declared an interest as a member of the Royal Lymington Yacht Club which had objected to the proposal. She concluded that such interest was not prejudicial and remained in the meeting to speak. She did not have a vote.

On 5 October 2011 (Minute 33 refers) the Cabinet had resolved to advertise a draft amendment to the District of New Forest (Off Street Parking Places ) Order 2005 to the effect that amenity parking permits should be withdrawn. The representations received in response to the advertisement were set out in Appendix 1 to Report C, together with comments on the points made.

The Cabinet noted that the withdrawal of the amenity permits would not alter the periods for which people could park in any of the Council's car parks, which was one of the concerns raised by respondents. The main issue was therefore one of cost. It was recognised that there must be suitable transitional arrangements to ensure that people buying short stay clock in January could trade them in against the cost of a long stay clock once the current amenity permits expired at the end of March 2012. In addition, people would be able to buy a long stay clock covering the period 1 April to 31 December 2012. These arrangements would ensure that nobody was disadvantaged by the phasing out of the amenity permits.

It was recognised that the cost of a long stay clock was greater than the cost of an amenity parking permit. The long stay clock did however allow parking in all the Council's car parks, including short stay parking. The long stay clock represented extremely good value for money, at less than £2 per week, particularly when compared with the cost of parking in neighbouring authorities.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That having fully considered the representations received, the District of New Forest (Off-Street Parking Places Order) 2005 be amended to the effect that Amenity Permits will no longer be a valid method of payment for parking in a New Forest District Council amenity car park as from 1 March 2011 (31 March for existing permit holders); and

- (b) That the transitional arrangements set out in section 3 of Report C to the meeting of the Cabinet be adopted.

Action: Glynne Miles/John Bull

#### 58. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (REPORT D).

The Cabinet considered the draft Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule which would form the basis for the Council to collect contributions to the cost of infrastructure requirements associated with new development. This would be the only mechanism to secure such contributions once the scope of Agreements under the S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 was reduced after April 2014. The monies collected must be directed towards new infrastructure, unless the refurbishment of existing infrastructure was directly required to service the new development.

The CIL charges would be based on the square meterage of the development. The CIL charges would be fixed, and not subject to negotiation, as now. This meant that the costs faced by developers would be clear and transparent from the outset, which should prevent delays in the decision making process. It was proposed that the charges would apply where there was a net increase in floorspace of more than 100 sq metres. Charities and affordable housing were exempt from the charges. In developing the charging regime the Council must take account of the financial viability of each type of development. The charging schedule could be adjusted, as the economic climate changed, but it was incumbent on the Council to set the correct level of charge from the outset. The scheme currently being developed took account of the current economic climate and it was only intended to charge for housing and larger retail developments at this time. The proposed charges were directly comparable to existing payments through developers' contributions and it was not expected that any additional income would be raised as a result of the change. The charges should not therefore prejudice the viability of schemes. It was also agreed that there should be a single charging area for the District, with no geographical variation.

The proposed draft charging schedule was attached as Appendix 1 to Report D, with a summary at Appendix 2. Once approved, the draft schedule would be subject to a 6 week public consultation period.

#### RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed Community Infrastructure Level preliminary draft charging schedule, as set out in Appendix 1 to Report D to the Cabinet, be approved to form the basis for consultations to be carried out in January/February 2012; and
- (b) That the Planning Policy Manager in conjunction with the Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder, be authorised to make editing and clarification changes to the documents attached as Appendices 1 and 2 to Report D to the Cabinet to prepare them for publication.

Action: Dean Brunton

**59. COMMUNITY GRANTS.**

In the light of the recommendation of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel it was

**RESOLVED:**

That a pool of Members be appointed, from which Members will be drawn to serve on Community Grants Advisory Panels to support the Portfolio Holder's decision-making on individual grant applications by regularly reviewing levels of financial support and performance of organisations in receipt of Council Grant funding.

Action: Bob Jackson

CHAIRMAN

(CB040112)