

7 NOVEMBER 2012

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at The Town Hall, Lymington on Wednesday, 7 November 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:

ap F P Vickers
p C A Wise

In Attendance:

Councillors:

Mrs S V Beeton
Mrs S Bennison
S Clarke
A T Glass
C J Harrison

Councillors:

Mrs M E Lewis
J Penwarden
Mrs A M Rostand
Mrs C Ward
P R Woods

Also In Attendance:

Mr M Ackerman - Housing Policy and Report Focus Group Representative.

Officers Attending:

D Yates, R Jackson, J Mascal, G Ashworth, G Bettle, S Cook, Miss J Debnam, C Elliott, G Spawton and Miss G O'Rourke

31. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2012 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllrs Rickman and Rostand disclosed non-pecuniary interests in Minute 34

33. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

34. CAPITAL FUNDING FOR FLOOD AND COASTAL EROSION RISK MANAGEMENT – MEDIUM TERM PLAN SUBMISSION (REPORT A).

Cllrs Rickman and Rostand disclosed non-pecuniary interests on the grounds that they each owned beach huts. As these beach huts were not affected by the submitted proposals they concluded that there were no issues under common law to prevent them from taking part in the consideration, and in the case of Cllr Rickman, from voting.

The Cabinet was advised that the Government had changed the funding system for coastal and flood defence work so that 100% funding would no longer be available and the promoting authority would be expected to organise contributions if the scheme was to proceed. Members were advised of the implications for Christchurch Bay Beach Management, the Barton on Sea Coastal Defence Scheme, the Hurst Spit Beach Management Plan and the Milford on Sea scheme. These schemes had been included in the Medium Term Plan which had been submitted to Defra for consideration when determining national priorities and value for money in approving schemes. The Cabinet concurred with the proposal that the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel should be asked to establish a task and finish working group once there was greater clarity on the operation of the new funding scheme.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the issues created through the Government's changes to the funding system be noted; and
- (b) That the options for delivering schemes be considered in greater detail by the Portfolio Holder in conjunction with a Task and Finish Group, established through the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel, when further information is available.

Action: Steve Cook/Geoff Bettle

35. TENANCY STRATEGY (REPORT B).

The Cabinet considered the Tenancy Strategy which had been produced under the requirements of the Localism Act 2011. It was a regulatory requirement for all registered providers of social housing to publish a tenancy policy, which must have regard to the Tenancy Strategy. The Tenancy Strategy would allow the Council to take advantage of reforms that introduced greater flexibility in the management of its properties through the use of fixed term tenancies. Properties could also be let at an "affordable" rent, which was at a higher level than social rents.

The Cabinet was advised that the tenants supported the Tenancy Strategy.

The Cabinet thanked the officers and congratulated them on the production of the Tenancy Strategy and revised Homeseach Allocations Scheme.

RESOLVED:

That the Tenancy Strategy, as set out in Appendix One to Report B to the Cabinet, be adopted.

Action: Greg Spawton

36. NEW HOMESearch ALLOCATIONS SCHEME (REPORT C).

The Cabinet considered revisions to the Council's published scheme for allocating Council and housing association accommodation in the District. The revisions introduced greater local freedoms which were allowed under the Localism Act 2011. In particular the Council could exercise greater control over who was eligible to be included on the Homeseach waiting list. This allowed the removal of people from the list who, through lack of housing need or local connection, had no realistic chance of being allocated a home in the District. People who had demonstrated that they were unsuitable to be a tenant, for example through a history of anti-social behaviour, could also be removed from the list, which would strengthen this Council's ability to deal with problem tenants. The required residential connection with the District was also being increased to 2 years, from 12 months at present. Members particularly welcomed the introduction of a quota of housing that would be reserved for working households.

The Cabinet was advised of the outcome of the consultations that had taken place on the draft policy document.

The Cabinet was advised that the tenants supported the revised Homeseach allocations scheme.

RESOLVED:

That the new Homeseach allocations scheme, as set out in Appendix Two to Report C to the Cabinet, be adopted.

Action: Greg Spawton

37. LOCAL PLAN PART 2: SITES AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT – EXAMINATION (REPORT D).

The Cabinet considered the outcome of consultations requested by the Inspector for the Examination of the Sites and Development Plan Document, and were advised of the recommendations of the special joint meeting of the Planning Development Control Committee and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel who had considered this issue at a special meeting on 24 October 2012.

In answer to concerns raised by Cllr Mrs Beeton, the Cabinet welcomed the opportunity for this Council to work with Milford on Sea Parish Council to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. If well-developed proposals could be brought forwards for the provision of affordable housing and public open space in Milford before this Council adopted the Sites and Development Document, current Policy MoS1 could be superseded.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the proposed amendments to Policy MOS1 Ch4.1, Ch4.2, Ch4.3, Ch4.4 and Ch4.5 in the Local Plan Part 2 Examination Document NFDC2: NFDC Proposed Changes Schedule be withdrawn in favour of retaining Policy MoS1 and the supporting text (paragraphs 4.49 – 4.53) as in the Submitted Plan (Examination Document S1);

- (b) that the further Proposed Changes set out in Appendix B to Report D to the Cabinet be suggested to the Inspector; and
- (c) that Policy DM8 and the proposed Landscape Feature designations, as set out in Appendix A: Part E of the Local Plan Part 2 (Document S1), be withdrawn; and instead Policy DW-E12 and the Landscape Feature designations of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration (Document S21) be saved pending an early review of these designations.

Action: Graham Ashworth, Louise Evans

38. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2012 (REPORT E).

The Cabinet considered the Council's performance over the last year, monitoring performance against Key Targets and Key Performance Indicators, as set out in Appendices A and B to the report respectively. Of particular note was the setting of a balanced budget for 2012/13 despite the second year of major cuts in government funding and Council Tax not having been increased since 2010. The 5 workstreams established under the Medium Term Financial Plan had delivered savings of £3.5 million. Members were also pleased to note that the 2012/13 outturn was likely to be approximately £500,000 below budget, with the savings supporting future years' budgets. The quality and level of services had been maintained.

It was agreed that consideration would be given to including a local ward councillor in the regular three-monthly meetings between this Council and Mytime Active to monitor performance against the contract at the Dibden Golf Centre.

The Cabinet also welcomed the Council's successful engagement with the local community through the Jubilee Royal visit and the Olympic and Paralympic events, including the torch relay.

Members also welcomed the production of the new streamlined Corporate Plan 2012 to 2015 – "Delivering for Our Communities".

The Cabinet was pleased to note that the Audit Commission had issued an unqualified opinion on the Council's 2011/12 financial statements and had concluded that proper arrangements were in place to secure value for money.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the performance and achievements as set out within the Annual Report be noted; and
- (b) That the comments of the District Auditor, as set out in the Audit Letter 2011/12, attached as Appendix C to Report E to the Cabinet, be noted

Action: Martin Devine – for Dibden Golf Centre

CHAIRMAN