

6 MARCH 2013

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 6 March 2013.

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:

Mrs D E Andrews
G C Beck
Mrs S Bennison
S Clarke
Ms L C Ford
A T Glass
C J Harrison
Mrs A J Hoare
Mrs P Jackman

Councillors:

Mrs M E Lewis
J Penwarden
L R Puttock
A W Rice
Mrs A M Rostand
Miss A Sevier
Mrs C Ward
P R Woods

Officers Attending:

D Yates, R Jackson, J Mascal, G Bettle, J Bull, Miss J Debnam, E Gerry and Miss G O'Rourke.

62. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2013 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

63. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllr Glass – Minute 66.

64. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

65. HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT REPORT 2013 (REPORT A).

In accordance with the guidance issued by the Department of Energy and Climate Change the Cabinet considered a report on how the Council would achieve improvements in energy efficiency in the residential housing stock in the District. The two principal priorities were to reduce domestic CO² emissions and to reduce the number of households in fuel poverty. It was proposed that there should be a 10% reduction in CO² emissions and 10% reduction in households in fuel poverty by 2020.

Members were aware that Insulate Hampshire, the partnership between the local authorities in Hampshire, had been very successful in encouraging local people to take advantage of Government initiatives, such as the Green Deal, to make their dwellings more energy efficient. It was proposed to build on the success of Insulate Hampshire in the delivery of the HECA report.

Members were advised that Insulate Hampshire had just been judged to be the "Best Local Initiative" in the prestigious national Climate Week awards.

RECOMMENDED

That the HECA report at Appendix 1 of Report A to the Cabinet be formally adopted by the Council

Action: Geoff Bettle

66. COUNCIL CAR PARKS – CONSIDERATION OF INTRODUCING CHARGES FOR BLUE BADGE HOLDERS (REPORT B).

Cllr Glass disclosed a pecuniary interest on the grounds that he had a Blue Badge. Having made a statement on the proposal he took no further part in the debate. He did not have a vote.

Following detailed investigation and evaluation by a task and finish working group established by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the Cabinet considered whether blue badge holders should pay to use the Council's car parks.

The Cabinet was satisfied that, subject to certain provisos, charges could be introduced without causing disadvantage or discrimination to persons who have a protected characteristic under the terms of the Equality Act 2010.

The Cabinet considered, therefore, that it would be fair and equitable for blue badge holders to pay for parking provided that they had easy access to methods of payment and also they were allowed a further hour's parking in addition to that paid for, in recognition that people with mobility problems might need more time to conduct their business or attend appointments. The Cabinet was mindful that research had established that 70% of parking acts in this District were covered by either a short or long stay parking clock, both of which offered good value for money, with a short stay clock costing 40 pence per week, and a long stay clock, covering also amenity car parks, £2 per week. It was noted that new pay and display parking meters, that complied with BS8300: 2009, would need to be installed to allow people in wheelchairs to gain access, however, the current pay and display meters were, in any event, coming towards the end of their useful life and would become due for replacement in the near future.

The Portfolio Holder thanked the Task and Finish Working Group, and the officers, for the meticulous and detailed research that they had undertaken to achieve soundly based and rational recommendations on an emotive issue.

Cllr Beck, Chairman of the Task and Finish Group, also thanked his fellow Group members and the Officers for their work on this issue and commended their recommendations to the Cabinet.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) That, having undertaken extensive research and consultation, and particularly in the light of the modest cost of parking clocks at 40 pence per week for short stay parking and £2 per week for long stay parking, it can be concluded that the introduction of car parking charges for the holders of Blue Badges would not disadvantage this group of the local population compared to the general population living in and visiting the District, and accordingly charges should be introduced;**
- (b) That an amendment to the District of New Forest Council (Off Street Parking Places) Order be advertised, proposing that Blue Badge Holders be charged for using New Forest District Council off street charged car parks, but on the basis of allowing them further time as explained in paragraph 5.2 of Report B to the Cabinet and exempting them from short stay waiting restrictions as set out in paragraph 7.1 of Report B to the Cabinet; and**
- (c) That if, after undertaking the statutory consultations and gaining the consent of the Highway Authority, the District of New Forest Council (Off Street Parking Places) Order 2005 is amended in due course to introduce charges for the holders of Blue Badges, then funding of £260,000 be sought, at an appropriate time, to provide the necessary equipment, signs and alterations.**

CHAIRMAN

(CB060313)