

**6 AUGUST 2014**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 6 August 2014.

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:**

G C Beck  
Mrs S V Beeton  
Mrs S Bennison  
Ms L C Ford  
Mrs A J Hoare  
Mrs M E Lewis  
J Penwarden

**Councillors:**

L C Puttock  
A W Rice  
A J Swain  
R A Wappet  
Mrs C Ward  
J G Ward  
P R Woods

**Officers Attending:**

D Yates, R Jackson, J Mascal, S Cook, Miss J Debnam, C Elliott, Miss G O'Rourke and C Read.

**Also in Attendance:**

Ms Y Frost, C Holdsworth (New Forest Beach Hut Owners' Association) and T Simpson

**15. MINUTES.**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2014 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Cllr Brooks – Minute 18

**17. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

**18. ELING TIDE MILL AND LEARNING CENTRE (REPORT A)**

Cllr Brooks disclosed a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Totton and Eling Town Council which was a partner in the project. She concluded that there were no grounds under common law to prevent her from remaining in the meeting to speak and to vote.

The Cabinet was advised that the Council, together with Totton and Eling Town Council, had been successful in Round 2 of the bid for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, securing a grant of £1,379,300 for the Eling Tide Mill and Learning Centre project. In addition, volunteers and other external sources would be contributing, with the total budget for the project being £1,657,675. In order to secure the grant funding within the prescribed time limits the Executive Director (Finance), following consultation with the Health & Leisure and Finance & Efficiency Portfolio Holders, had formally accepted the grant on the Authority's behalf. The conditions attached to the grant were set out in the offer letter from the Heritage Lottery Fund which was attached as Appendix 1 to Report A. The conditions included the appointment of an accountable body and it was proposed that this Council should take on that role.

The Health and Leisure Portfolio Holder expressed her thanks to the officers who had undertaken a considerable amount of additional work to secure the grant and develop the project. The Cabinet welcomed the recognition that this grant gave to the Tide Mill as an important national asset and of the need to preserve and enhance it.

***RECOMMENDED:***

***That the Council act as the accountable body for the delivery of the Eling Tide Mill and Learning Centre project at an estimated total budget cost of £1,657,675 and acknowledges the grant conditions and responsibilities related to the award from the Heritage Lottery Fund of £1,379,300***

**19. BEACH HUTS AT MILFORD ON SEA (WESTOVER) (REPORT B)**

The Cabinet was addressed by Ms Frost, Mr Holdsworth (New Forest Beach Hut Owners' Association) and Mr Simpson. In addition, statements from the Beach Hut Owners' Association and Milford on Sea Parish Council had been circulated to Members of the Council, by e-mail, prior to the meeting. The speakers considered that, provided a representative of the beach hut owners was involved in developing the detailed design of the new huts and planning consent was obtained before any contract was let for site clearance, the course of action set out in the report was acceptable. Although it had been established that some of the huts could be repaired, for the greater overall good, the replacement of all the huts, with enhanced materials and design, was generally supported. One speaker expressed opposition to the principle of representatives of the wider community having any involvement in developing the design of the new huts. All of the speakers reiterated the rights of the current beach hut owners to have the beach huts replaced as the

huts had been in place for in excess of 90 years and also represented a significant investment for the current licence holders.

On behalf of Milford on Sea Parish Council, Cllr Beeton expressed broad support for the proposals set out in the report, but re-iterated their request that there should be a full consultation exercise that looked at wider options for the future of the sea front at Milford on Sea. The Parish Council also had a role to play in the development of the detailed design brief for the replacement huts, to represent the needs of the wider community.

The Cabinet recalled that on 4 June 2014 (Minute 4 refers), they had requested that further survey work should be carried out to establish the physical condition of individual beach huts at Westover, Milford on Sea, following the extensive damage caused by the storm on 14 February 2014. That survey work had now been completed and the surveyor's report received. A summary was attached as Appendix 1 to Report B. They had concluded that all the huts were beyond economic repair.

Separately, a company specialising in construction in coastal situations had been commissioned to develop conceptual designs and financial estimates for the replacement of the beach huts in this area. The design brief had included the requirements that the height of the beach huts should not be increased and that a minimum of 119 huts (the same as the original total on this site) would be needed.

Rather than replacing on a like for like basis in terms of construction methods and materials, it was proposed that a more robust construction, more resistant to potential storm conditions, should be used. There was no space to install a wave wall to dissipate the force of the wave action in this area. All the options under consideration included rebuilding the concrete slab on which the huts were placed to ensure the integrity of the slab foundations of the new huts.

The existing beach hut licence holders would be requested to enter into an agreement to contribute towards the cost of the replacement of their hut, with their contribution to be the cost that would have been incurred if their current hut had been repaired, up to a maximum of £3,832 plus VAT (currently 20%), which was also the sum that would be charged if the hut had already been removed, or lost, from the site. Should any of the current owners have difficulty in finding this money as a lump sum the Council would enter into a constructive dialogue with them to seek a way forwards. The estimated cost to this Council of pursuing the enhanced construction option was £375,000 for site clearance and coast protection works (some of which might be reclaimable from government); and £454,193 for the construction of the replacement huts, assuming a contribution of £429,877 from the beach hut owners.

The Cabinet was advised that, if it transpired that the course of action set out in the report could not be achieved the issue would have to be considered again, probably reverting to the option of repairing the remaining huts. The removal of the huts without replacement was not a legitimate starting point for the evaluation of options.

The Cabinet did not support the proposal that there should be a wider consultation on the future of the sea front area. There were currently no draft proposals that could form the basis of a consultation exercise, which would consequently be somewhat diffuse and inevitably protracted to resolve the diverse viewpoints that would emerge. There was some urgency to this process in order to meet the aspiration that the new huts would be operational for the summer of 2015.

The hut owners would be allowed access to retrieve private property prior to demolition.

The public speakers and members of the Cabinet expressed their thanks to the Head of Environment Services and other officers for the constructive approach that had been taken to developing the proposed way forwards, which represented the fairest course of action for all parties.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) ***That a project be developed for the replacement of the concrete slab of the existing promenade, as a coastal protection scheme, with a budget provision of £225,000;***
- (b) ***A project be developed for the rebuilding of all the beach huts using reinforced concrete and with a gross budget provision of £884,070 to include estimated contributions from the beach hut owners of £429,877;***
- (c) ***That following the gaining of planning permission for the replacement of the beach huts all remaining concrete huts at Milford on Sea be demolished, but not before that time, and a budget provision of £150,000 be provided for site clearance ; and***
- (d) ***That each beach hut licence holder be offered the opportunity to sign up to the Council rebuilding the huts as set out above, to include agreement on the individual contribution payable by them.***

**20. DELEGATION OF POWERS TO OFFICERS**

**RESOLVED:**

That the following delegation be updated as shown, so that it refers to post holders instead of named persons.

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| Cab<br>Auth 14<br>(old ref<br>569) | Housing Act 1985<br>(as amended) | To enter<br>premises for the<br>purpose of the<br>Act | Housing Grants and<br>Improvements Manager,<br>or Home Health and<br>Safety Officers |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|

CHAIRMAN