

7 JANUARY 2015

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 7 January 2015.

- 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
Mrs S V Beeton
G C Beck
Mrs S Bennison
S Clarke
A T Glass
M R Harris
C J Harrison

Councillors:

Mrs A J Hoare
Mrs M E Lewis
J Penwarden
W S Rippon-Swaine
Mrs C Ward
J G Ward
P R Woods

Also In Attendance:

Mrs A Murphy, Housing Policy and Report Focus Group Representative.

Officers Attending:

D Yates, R Jackson, J Mascall, Miss J Debnam, C Elliott, Miss G O'Rourke and Mrs R Rutins

Also Attending:

Mr A Pope – for minute 53.

47. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2014 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllr E J Heron – Minute 52.

49. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

50. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT – FORECAST OUTTURN (REPORT A).

The Cabinet was advised that the net effect of further budget variations identified to date this financial year had reduced the General Fund Budget requirement by £210,000 to £18.439 million. A summary of the additional variations was set out in Appendix 1 to Report A to the Cabinet. In addition to savings against various budget heads there had been a welcome increase in some income streams. Additional expenditure had been approved for a number of projects, some of which had already been reported to the Cabinet. Supplementary budget approvals were requested to cover the cost of the 2014 pay award and to increase the funds available for housing improvement/disabled facility grants.

It was also proposed to make a contribution of £70,000 towards the cost of a new purpose-built centre for young people in Ringwood, called “The Place”. Funding was also being provided by Hampshire County Council, Ringwood Town Council and various other partners. Some £40,000 of this Council’s contribution would be needed in the current financial year.

The Housing Revenue Account budget remained unchanged as the anticipated overspend of £100,000 for repairs following the flooding last winter was balanced by some projects in the cyclical maintenance budget not being completed by the end of the year.

The Housing capital programme was expected to increase by a further £817,000, mainly through an increased allocation of £1 million to the new build/acquisitions budget for the year, to be funded from reserves. Variations to the other capital programmes were noted.

It was noted that £152,000 had been received from the Government, under the Bellwin Scheme, to meet the cost of storm damage last winter. In addition a grant of £132,000 had been received from the Environment Agency for coast protection works, with a further £148,000 expected by 31 March 2015.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a supplementary estimate of £45,000 be approved for implementation of the 2014 National Pay Award;
- (b) That a supplementary estimate of £40,000 be approved for Housing Improvement/Disabled Facilities Grants; and

- (c) That the revised outturn forecasts for the General Fund (para 3.2 of Report A to the Cabinet), Housing Revenue Account (para 4.1 of Report A to the Cabinet) and Capital expenditure (para 5.1 of Report A to the Cabinet) be noted.

Action: Bob Jackson/ Kevin Green

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) *That an increase of £1m in the Housing New Build/Acquisitions budget be approved; and*
- (b) *That expenditure of £70,000, of which £40,000 will be incurred in 2014/15, be approved as a contribution towards the cost of "The Place" Ringwood (para 3.6 of Report A to the Cabinet)*

51. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2014 TO 2018 (REPORT B).

The Cabinet was advised of the projected effect of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, the financial settlements that were now expected and other financial trends. The funding available for 2015/16 was expected to be £20.240 million, which was £750,000 less than in the current year, with a reduction of £1.518 million projected over the next 2 year period. This was in line with previous projections.

Work to develop the Council's budget requirements was continuing, in order to meet service priorities, as guided by the Corporate Plan. Allowances were being made for projected increases in costs, including increased fuel and energy costs, and anticipated increases in interest rates from the third quarter of 2015. Grants to town and parish councils continued to be paid in accordance with the agreed strategy.

On this basis, through prudent financial management, the Council would achieve a balanced budget, while continuing to freeze Council Tax for the sixth year in succession, to protect the interests of local council taxpayers.

The Portfolio Holders, the cross-party Task and Finish Working Group and the officers, who had participated in developing the budget proposals, were thanked for their work to achieve this position.

RESOLVED:

That the emerging draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2014 to 2018, as set out within Report B to the Cabinet, be approved and that it form the basis of the Council's 2015/16 General Fund Budget that will be reported in February 2015.

Action: Bob Jackson

52 RENEWAL OF JOINT FUNDING AGREEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY TRANSPORT (REPORT C).

Cllr E J Heron disclosed an interest as a Member of Hampshire County Council which was a party to the funding agreement. He referred to the dispensation that he had been granted with respect to Hampshire County Council and concluded that he was able to take part in the consideration and to vote.

The Cabinet considered proposals for contributing towards the costs of various community transport schemes operating in the District, in order to protect the current level of service following the expiration of three contract arrangements during 2015. The proposals maintained approximately the same contribution level by this Council as currently. It was proposed that the Council should enter into 2 year commitments, to obtain best value without losing essential flexibility in the medium term.

RESOLVED:

That the Council enter into new funding agreements with Hampshire County Council, as set out Report C to the Cabinet, for the period up to July 2017 to allow existing Call and Go, Community Transport Group Hire and Wheels to Work services to continue beyond March 2015

Action: Nick Hunt

53. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES – SCHEME TO APPLY FROM 1 APRIL 2015 (REPORT D).

The meeting was addressed by Mr A Pope who suggested that the Council should commit to paying all employees the living wage. He welcomed the proposal that the increase in Members' Allowances would be modest.

The Cabinet reviewed the Members' Allowances scheme, as required by legislation on an annual basis.

Of particular note was that the Government had announced that the Local Government Pension Scheme would close to elected members. The scheme of allowances payable after 1 April 2015 had to be amended to reflect this, as well as being adjusted in response to the scheme's linkage to the national pay award.

RECOMMENDED:

That the scheme of members' allowances, as attached at Appendix 1 to Report D to the Cabinet, be made with effect from 1 April 2015.

54. DELEGATION OF POWERS TO OFFICERS

RESOLVED:

That the following powers be delegated to the officers shown:

SOURCE	POWER DELEGATED	DELEGATION TO
Environment Act 1995 s108	To exercise the power of entry and related powers in s108(4) of the Environment Act 1995 for the purposes set out in s108(1) of the Act	Head of Public Health and Community Safety, or Environmental Health Manager, or Senior Environmental Health Officer, or Environmental Health Officer, or Environmental Health Technician

CHAIRMAN

(CB070115)