

23RD MARCH 1990

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Friday, 23rd March 1990.

p Cllr. D.S. Burdle - Chairman  
p Cllr. J.A.G. Hutchins, JP - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

p Mrs. N.E. Alldridge  
p A.E. Avery  
p Mrs. O.A.M. Badland  
Mrs. M.J. Bannister  
p Wg. Cdr. H.E. Bennett, MBE  
W.E.B. Boothby  
E.R. Bowring  
p P. Brown  
R.J. Burnett  
p Miss M.A. Clarke  
J.E. Coles  
M.R. Cox  
p J.G. Craig  
p B.A. Cullers  
p G. Dawson  
p J.J. Dawson  
p Miss P.A. Drake  
p Major S.S. Elvery  
Mrs. L.K. Errington  
p M.G. Galpin  
p L.P. Gibbs  
A.D. Goodall  
p A.J.C. Griffiths  
p S.A. Hayes  
p Group Capt. M. Hermiston, MBE  
p J.M. Hoy

Councillors:

A.A. Joyce  
J.D. Keating  
p D.W. Killen  
p Mrs. M.C. King  
p M.J. Knill  
p A. Lee  
p J. Lovering  
p Mrs. P.J. Marlow  
p J. Maynard  
p R.F. Orton  
p Mrs. S. Paton  
p R.A. Penny  
R.E. Podesta  
p Mrs. E.I. Pugh  
p C.G. Ramsden  
p Mrs. E.M.F. Randall  
p A.W. Rice, TD  
M.H.G. Richards  
W.S. Rippon-Swaine  
p Mrs. M.J. Robinson  
p Mrs. J.C. Safe  
p Mrs. J.K. Vernon-Jackson, JP  
p S.S. Wade  
p G.H. Wales  
p J.C. Webb, DFC  
p Mrs. D. Wilson  
p Mrs. P.A. Wyeth

Apologies:

were received from Cllrs. Mrs. Bannister, Boothby, Burnett, Coles, Mrs. Errington, Goodall and Podesta.

Officers Attending:

P.A.D. Hyde, R. Carver, N.J. Gibbs, D. Gurney, E.W. Hughes, E.S. Johnson, G. Ashworth, N. Cross, Miss L. Glover, J. Rainbow, C. Schuman, P. Springham, P. Turner, J. Ward and Mrs. D. Wyatt.

81. DISTRICT STRATEGY ADVISORY STEERING GROUP (REPORT A).

Cllr. Miss Drake presented the notes of the District Strategy Advisory Steering Group meeting held on 30th January 1990.

On the motion that the notes be received:-

RESOLVED:

That the notes be received.

82. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

It was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That in view of the nature of the business to be discussed at this special meeting of the Council paragraphs 14(4) and 14(6) of Standing Order 50 be suspended in so far as they relate to the length of speeches and the number of times that a member might speak in debate to enable members to discuss the matter more fully.

83. NEW FOREST 2000.

The Chairman of the Council (Cllr. Burdle) welcomed Michael Colvin, M.P. and Sir Patrick McNair-Wilson, M.P. to this special Council meeting for the formal adoption of New Forest 2000. The Chairman welcomed representatives from adjoining authorities and organisations concerned with the District.

Cllr. Miss Drake (Chairman of District Strategy Advisory Steering Group) stated the launch of the document New Forest 2000 marked the culmination of months of work of the Steering Group and emphasised that this was not the end of the task but the beginning. During the coming year important decisions would be made by the County Council and similar bodies which would influence future planning of this area and the rest of the County into the next century.

Protection of the New Forest was of prime importance. The Council had actively supported the work of the New Forest Review Group and had been instrumental in the designation of the New Forest Heritage Area. Cllr. Miss Drake expressed disappointment that the Government's announcements earlier in the week on "The Future of the New Forest", although generally supportive of the New Forest Review and the designation of the New Forest Heritage Area, had not taken the opportunity to give the New Forest the national recognition it deserved. The Council would continue to press Ministers for national recognition of the Forest.

New directions and initiatives were needed for the Council to respond in an effective and positive way to the challenges of the 1990's. In preparing New Forest 2000, members had looked at a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues which faced the District in the 1990's.

Since the Council's establishment in 1974 the population in the District had risen from 132,000 to 164,000 a 24% increase. The pressure on the District and on the New Forest, in particular from development, visitors and tourists affected the quality of life and environment of the District and its residents.

Cllr. Miss Drake referred to the significant pressure development outside the area had on the District. The Council had no direct influence on decisions by other authorities which gave rise to these pressures but would continue to make representations. Ultimately the Authority must rely on the understanding and support of neighbouring Councils and central Government.

The pressure which the Council had most control over was development within the District. Cllr. Miss Drake affirmed that the rate of development must slow down. It was incongruous that an area of such outstanding environmental quality had in the 1980's one of the highest levels of new house building in the Country. Since 1974 over 19,000 houses had been built. The Steering Group came to the firm conclusion that the District could not continue at the present rate of growth without harm.

Despite all the development the needs of the residents were not being wholly met. Finding affordable housing was a particular problem. The Council was particularly concerned over the increasing number of homeless households. The Authority must ensure that where new housing development took place it was directed towards meeting local needs.

Local businesses had also found it increasingly difficult to attract suitable labour and compete for industrial land in the District on which to expand their business.

The County Council in the next few months would be publishing a new draft County Structure Plan for public consultation. It was vital that the County Council's policies in the new structure plan reflected the need to severely restrain further growth in this precious part of Hampshire.

The District Strategy Advisory Steering Group had identified immediate and long term responsibilities that the Council should have to the District. These were:-

A local responsibility to those the Council directly serves, to protect and improve the quality of life of residents and to try and cater for local needs.

A national and international responsibility to protect and enhance the District's unique New Forest environment.

Cllr. Miss Drake again emphasised that to meet these responsibilities severe restraint would need to be put on further development. The scarce development opportunities that still remained must be retained to meet genuine local needs.

New Forest 2000 had already been called a "Green Print" for the future of the New Forest District. The Council had always been one that cares for its District, its residents and its environment: Support of local people, groups and organisations was vital to make New Forest 2000 a success.

Cllr. Miss Drake thanked all Councillors and the Members of the Steering Group, other Councillors who had attended and Officers who attended the meetings and advised the Group. Cllr. Miss Drake commended the Strategy to the Council as a well founded, co-ordinated and forward looking brief for the 1990's and formally moved that the "New Forest 2000 - A strategy for the New Forest District" be adopted by the Council together with the action planned for 1990/91.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Webb.

Cllr. Hutchins, JP, Vice-Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee stated that the District had 10,000,000 day visitors a year, this put a great deal of pressure on the New Forest. The tourist industry contributed to the economy of the District. The

Council needed to maintain leisure facilities for its residents and its visitors. Improving the quality of leisure facilities and open space and increasing the provision where possible. There may need to be greater expenditure on recreation and tourism in the future but the Council would resist tourist related development which would harm the unique environment.

Cllr. Griffiths (Vice-Chairman of Housing Committee) pointed out that the District housing needs were mainly met by owner occupation. The Council had an on-going commitment to provide housing for local needs. In 1988/89 242 families were located in bed and breakfast accommodation.

To reduce this problem the Council had provided hostels and leased property. The Council's role was changing to one of "enabling"; identifying and assessing local needs and enabling other bodies (Housing Associations and private sector) to provide necessary housing services. There was a continuing need to provide special accommodation for the elderly and disabled and new housing stock would be suitable for disabled and elderly occupants.

Tenants' interests were of first consideration. Existing housing stock would continue to be maintained and improved. The Council would also continue its policy of providing private sector repair and improvement grants.

The Authority would continue to monitor and assess local housing needs.

Cllr. Mrs. King (Vice-Chairman of Planning Committee) expressed the view that fundamental to the strategy of New Forest 2000, was the planning policy to apply restraint on development. However, even with the restraint strategy some 6,000 homes were likely to be built in the District in the 1990's. The Council would continue to resist development, particularly on sites at Dibden Bay and to the north of Totton.

The Authority wished to maintain current levels of economic activity and would give general support to new small firms and firms already in the District.

The Planning Committee would continue its objectives of protecting the countryside conserving the historic environment, and preserving buildings and trees.

The effectiveness of the Authority's policies depended on the reasoning behind them being understood and upon people being involved.

Cllr. Group Capt. Hermiston (Chairman of Environmental Services Committee) stated that the Council would continue to provide a quality service; one that meets the needs of its customers at a price that they can afford.

Over the years there had been an increase in traffic. Although funding of major road schemes had been limited, there were a wide range of minor works that would be carried out to alleviate problems. The Council would also continue where possible to provide additional car parking.

The protection of the coast, its ecology and character was of great importance; carrying out necessary protection works would continue.

Pollution was another area in which the Council would continue to be actively involved, reducing pollution in the District and reacting quickly where problems arise.

Cllr. Webb (Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee) stated that the New Forest 2000 document was welcome. The contents gave straightforward strategic aims. An action plan for 1990/91 had been prepared.

The strategy set out in the document highlighted the Council's priorities for the future of the New Forest District. These priorities would be reflected in the Council's more detailed plans and programmes and in the Council's allocation of resources.

The aims of the District Strategy could not be achieved by the New Forest District Council on its own. The support of other organisations and of the public was needed if the aims were to be achieved.

Cllr. J. Dawson welcomed and endorsed the report, Totton was the exit and gateway to the Forest. These strategies would bring a reprieve to the area.

Cllr. Mrs. Safe stated that the Council must continue to pursue its policy of restraint. Pressures were being put on the District by other authorities, not only Southampton City Council but the Counties of Dorset and Wiltshire. These policies contrasted with what this Council was trying to achieve.

Members discussed the document and its action programme. Reference was made to a number of highway matters, including the A338 and at Lyndhurst. Protecting the Solent from pollution was very important. The document was welcomed. It was noted that the strategy would be reviewed annually.

Sir Patrick McNair-Wilson, MP, was invited to address the Council. He congratulated the Authority on the production of the documents and on its excellent aims and objectives. The New Forest already enjoyed a great deal of legislative protection. He assured members that he would continue to make clear to the Secretary of State that the Council needed to run its planning here and not have it run by other agencies. Working together with other statutory bodies, (the County Council, Forestry Commission and the Verderers), the aims set out in the documents would be achieved.

Michael Colvin, MP, congratulated the Council. The document outlined a strategy for sympathetic change. The strategy brought together both Town and Country. He gave his support and suggested that the Council should ask for his assistance if needed.

Cllr. Miss Drake thanked the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees, Members, Sir Patrick McNair-Wilson, MP and Michael Colvin, MP for their support.

Cllr. Burdle thanked Cllr. Miss Drake for her Chairmanship of the Steering Group and congratulated the Officers who had been involved in producing the New Forest 2000 and for arranging a successful launch.

Cllr. Burdle hoped that Mr. Yokota and Mr. Hamagami from the Japanese Local Government Centre had found the meeting interesting.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED:

That New Forest 2000 - A Strategy for New Forest District be

adopted together with the action plan for 1990/91.

84. COMMON SEAL.

RESOLVED:

That the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to any orders, deeds or documents necessary to give effect to any decision made at this meeting.

CHAIRMAN