

REPORT OF POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

(Meeting held 17 January 2001)

1. DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY STRATEGIES (REPORT A) (MINUTE NO. 121)

The Committee has agreed the arrangements for preparing the Council's Community Strategy.

Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2000 places a duty on every local authority to prepare a Community Strategy for promoting the economic, environmental and social well-being of their area, and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom. This duty is supplemented (subject to certain limitations and the raising of finance) by a power to do anything that a local authority considers is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the whole or part of its area. This power provides an exciting opportunity for local authorities to deliver on issues that are identified as locally important. The challenge is, in conjunction with partners, to discover the wishes of communities, deliver their priorities, and monitor the effectiveness of that delivery. Members will have an important role in identifying and communicating local needs, and a seminar/workshop will be arranged for them on this subject in the near future.

The Committee welcomed the challenge of developing a Community Strategy that reflects local needs. It is felt important that proposals to be included in the Strategy are driven by the needs and priorities of local people. It is also hoped the process will provide a good opportunity for all members to enhance their role and responsibilities in their local communities.

Members have agreed the principle of establishing a New Forest District Alliance to develop the Strategy. The Chief Executive is authorised to put in place arrangements for an Alliance Steering Group comprising the Council and other bodies having a major contribution to the quality of people's lives in the District. The Alliance will comprise high level representation from many agencies, and representatives of various sections of the community.

The intention is for the Steering Group to be set up as soon as possible, and for the Alliance to be established in the spring of 2001. A year of community involvement in developing the Strategy will follow, and it is hoped to publish the Strategy, which has to be approved by the full Council, in the spring of 2002.

2. INTERIM REPORT ON FLOODING (REPORT D) (MINUTE NO. 124)

The Committee has noted a report on flooding in the District during the latter part of 2000.

It is proposed to include a sum in the 2001/02 expenditure plans to investigate the non-main river flooding incidents and enable steps to be taken to meet and work with partner organisations and local people to identify, and take action to resolve, particular problems. Emergency plans will also be examined to ensure they are fully effective, both internally and externally. Members of the public who were directly affected by the flooding will also be consulted.

A further report will be submitted to members in due course on the full financial implications of the flood damage, to include detail on the legal responsibility of landowners and householders in relation to drainage on their own land, and that of other relevant bodies.

RECOMMENDED:

That £25,000 be included in the revenue expenditure plans for 2001/02 for investigating the non-main river flooding incidents.

3. LEISURE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES: NEW ARRANGEMENTS (REPORT E) (MINUTE NO. 125)

The Committee has considered proposals for new consultative arrangements relating to the Council's Recreation facilities, within the modernisation framework.

At present, a Consultative Committee is in place at each of the five Recreation Centres, Dibden Golf Centre and Keyhaven River. They advise on the management of facilities, contain representatives of this and other Councils and of users, seek to operate by consensus to provide services to the community, and there is opportunity for direct dialogue between key stakeholders on potential development and matters of concern. It is intended that the new arrangements will maintain or even enhance these characteristics, while making the best use of time and resources.

The proposed new arrangements are summarised in Appendix 1 to this report.

Some members considered that, while it might be possible to improve their effectiveness, the existing Consultative Committees were an effective means of consulting and involving local communities and facility users. They considered that the views of the individuals and organisations involved in the current arrangements should be sought and a further report then be brought to members. However a majority of members favoured the recommendation set out below. They considered the current arrangements are not the most effective way of involving the community, and that member time will be used more effectively if the arrangements proposed are adopted. The views of those involved in the existing arrangements will be sought and taken into account.

RECOMMENDED:

That the suggested arrangements for consultation in Leisure, as summarised in Appendix 1 to this report, be implemented, subject to seeking the views of those organisations and individuals involved in the current Consultative Committee arrangements.

4. CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL SCHEME (REPORT G) (MINUTE NO. 127)

The Committee has approved changes to the Council's concessionary travel scheme from June 2001. The new scheme exceeds the minimum mandatory scheme required by the Transport Act 2000.

The main scheme is offered at no cost to applicants who fall within a target group. The target group has been amended, as shown in Appendix 2 to this report, in line with the definition of "disabled person" in the Transport Act.

The following new scheme will be offered to eligible residents:

- (i) All residents of pension age who do not fall within the target group will be eligible to apply for a free Farepass entitling them to half price single and return journeys with effect from 1 June 2001 (at present these residents are charged £25 for a Farepass);
- (ii) In addition, residents who fall within the new target group [see Appendix 2 to this report] will be offered tokens to the value of £38, or a voucher for a Disabled Railcard (£14) and tokens to the value of £24 as an alternative to a Farepass, when they apply for renewal of their concession in July 2001.

An additional £221,350 will be needed for the new scheme, and a bid for this is included in the draft expenditure plans for 2001/02.

5. GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2001/02 (REPORT H) (MINUTE NO. 128)

The Committee has considered the draft General Fund Revenue Budget for 2001/02. The proposals contained in the report are being considered, in addition to the draft Expenditure Plan proposals, by the Portfolio Performance and Review Panels during the current cycle of meetings. The final Revenue Support Grant settlement is not yet known, but this information will be available when the Advisory Cabinet and Policy and Resources Committee reconsider budget proposals in February. Further information will then also be given on latest forecasts for interest earnings.

Some members were concerned at the proposal to discontinue the practice of internally allocating interest to developers' contributions, other than those earmarked for transfer to Town and Parish Councils, considering that this would have the effect of devaluing the worth of these contributions. Members were advised that the level of unallocated developers' contributions was high, and it was not considered appropriate to continue adding yet more money to this fund. There is a general consensus that developers' contributions should be spent for the benefit of communities, and steps are being taken in consultation with the Town and Parish Councils to try to resolve some of the issues that currently make this difficult. Town and Parish Councils are aware of the proposal to cease allocating interest to this fund.

The General Fund Revenue Budget for 2001/02 will be set after consultation with the relevant Portfolio Performance and Review Panels, appropriate Committees and the business community. It was noted that a draft figure of £17.279 million would give a Council Tax of £108.71 on Band D properties, and a draft figure of £17.407 million (to include funding of redundancy costs) would give a Council Tax of £110.59 on a Band D property.

Appropriate Portfolio Performance and Review Panels are also being consulted on the transfer of £154,000, or £282,000 if the estimated additional redundancy costs are included, to the redundancy provision, and £144,000 to the Replacement and Renewals Fund, in 2001/02.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) ***That the Revised General Fund Revenue Budget for 2000/01 as shown in Appendix 3 to this report be approved in the sum of £15.997 million; and***
- (b) ***That approval be given to transfer £144,000 to the Replacement and Renewals Fund in 2000/01.***

6. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2001/02 (REPORT I) (MINUTE NO. 129)

The Committee has considered the Capital Programme for 2001 to 2005. This Programme is also being considered by the relevant Portfolio Performance and Review Panels and appropriate Committees during the current cycle of meetings, before the formal programme is considered by the Advisory Cabinet and Policy and Resources Committee in February 2001.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) That any capital item of less than £10,000 be declared de minimis and treated as revenue with effect from 2002/03;***
- (b) That any other items of Revenue Expenditure be included in the Revenue Budget with effect from 2002/03; and***
- (c) That £144,000 be transferred to the Replacement and Renewals Fund for each of the years 2000/01 and (subject to consultation with the relevant Portfolio and Performance Review Panels) 2001/02, to increase the level of balance within the fund, and that this be used wherever possible rather than a leasing facility.***

**Councillor S A Hayes
Chairman**

APPENDIX 1

PRINCIPLES OF SUGGESTED NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR LEISURE CONSULTATION

- a. An Annual Forum as the only formal meeting, chaired by the Leisure Portfolio Holder, and covering the subjects of fees and charges, expenditure plan items and proposals for the next year of the Business Plan. It would be advertised in the facility and people could attend if they wished.
- b. Minutes of the Forum would be circulated to those who attend, and internally to Cabinet.
- c. Focus Group meetings (informal officer meetings) would take place throughout the year, and convened to discuss specific issues.
- d. Representation at Focus Groups would be by invitation from an agreed list, together with additional invitations depending on the subject. (Proposed representatives are listed below).
- e. A report of the Focus Group meetings would be circulated after each meeting to those on the mailing list, and internally for information.
- f. Both the Focus and Forum meeting would be provided as a means of feedback, and operated so as to garner views. They would seek to gain consensus, rather than via a process of voting.
- g. Appropriate Council employees would support all meetings.

Representation at the Focus Groups

Invited to attend will be representatives of key stakeholders and an open invitation to local members of the District Council.

Recreation Centres:

Centre users by direct invitation (on rotation, so not standing members)
Staff, governors and LEA if appropriate, of the host education establishment for the facility
Local Sports Council
The Town/Parish Council where the facility is based
Hampshire County Council local member
Local members of the District Council

Dibden Golf Centre:

Centre users by direct invitation (on rotation, so not standing members)
Bramshott Hill Golf Club members
Hampshire County Council local member
Local Sports Council
Hythe and Dibden Parish Council
Local members of the District Council
Dibden Golf Centre professional staff representatives

Keyhaven River:

River users by direct invitation (on rotation, so not standing members)

Hurst Castle Sailing Club

Keyhaven Yacht Club

West Solent Boat Builders

Hurst Castle Ferries

Keyhaven Fishermen's Association

Hampshire Wildlife Trust

Milford-on-Sea Parish Council

Hampshire County Council local member

Local members of the District Council

APPENDIX 2

THE CURRENT TARGETED GROUP

All residents who are 80 years of age or over.

Those residents who are in receipt of a state retirement pension or equivalent pension **and** receive either:

Income Support, or
Housing Benefit and or Council Tax Benefit.

Residents of any age who;
are registered disabled, blind or partially sighted.

- or have a Social Services disabled badge.
- or are suffering from **severe** learning difficulties.
- or have had a driving licence refused or revoked on medical grounds (under Section 87 of the Road Traffic Act 1972.)
- or are deaf/ a sign language user.
- or are without the use of both arms and legs.
- or are resident in Part 111 accommodation run by Social Services.

REVISED TARGETED GROUP

All residents who are 80 years of age or over.

Those residents who are in receipt of a state retirement pension **and** receive either:

Income Support, **or**
Housing Benefit and or Council Tax Benefit.

A resident of any age who;

is blind or partially sighted,

is profoundly or severely deaf,

has a disability, or has suffered an injury, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to walk,

does not have arms or has long-term loss of the use of both arms,

has a learning difficulty, that is, a state of arrested or incomplete development of mind which includes significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning, or

would, if he applied for the grant of a licence to drive a motor vehicle under Part 111 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, have his application refused pursuant to section 92 of that Act (physical fitness) otherwise than on the grounds of persistent misuse of drugs or alcohol.

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCILGENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET SUMMARIESSUMMARY OF NET BUDGET REQUIREMENTS WITH FINANCE

	2000/01 Estimate	2000/01 Revised	2001/02 Gross Expenditure	2001/02 Income	2001/02 Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
GENERAL FUND BALANCE 1 APRIL	1,308	1,308			1,308
PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS					
Corporate & Finance	4,780	5,201	20,959	(15,522)	5,437
Crime & Disorder	221	198	181	0	181
Economy & Planning	3,315	3,200	5,625	(2,215)	3,410
Environment	6,580	6,548	8,363	(1,356)	7,007
Housing	1,218	1,338	1,622	(308)	1,314
Leisure	2,804	2,911	7,641	(4,554)	3,087
General Purposes & Licensing Committee	392	380	534	(126)	408
Planning Development Control Committee	1,031	972	1,614	(573)	1,041
Transfer to Provisions	400	544	298		298
Contingency Fund	14		90		90
	20,755	21,292	46,927	(24,654)	22,273
DEDUCT-Asset Rental Income	(3,046)	(3,253)	(3,362)		(3,362)
NET COMMITTEE REQUIREMENTS	17,709	18,039	43,565	(24,654)	18,911
ADD - Capital Financing Provision	250	250	250		250
	17,959	18,289	43,815	(24,654)	19,161
DEDUCT - Interest Earnings (Net)	(1,312)	(1,312)		(1,480)	(1,480)
	16,647	16,977	43,815	(26,134)	17,681
Transfer from DSO reserve	(250)	(250)		(250)	(250)
Transfer from Capital Financing Reserve		(144)		(144)	(144)
Transfer to/(from) General Reserve	(400)	(586)			0
GENERAL FUND NET BUDGET REQUIREMENTS	15,997	15,997	43,815	(26,528)	17,287