

REPORT OF CABINET

(Meeting held on 7 August 2002)

1. HIGHWAYS AGENCY : MANAGEMENT OF TRAFFIC REGULATION (REPORT A) (MINUTE NO. 42)

Hampshire County Council's (HCC) "Blueprint" for the delivery of Highways Network Management proposed that District Councils would deliver locally those aspects of the service relating to the regulation of traffic. The Cabinet has now accepted an offer from HCC that the service currently provided by NFDC and HCC should continue at the same level of funding.

HCC have calculated their current level of expenditure on the regulation of traffic element of network management at £83,451 in the non-agency area. The current level of reimbursement by the County for the agency area is £25,400. The total budget for the service will be £101,951 for the whole of the New Forest District Council area which also includes an element of income/additional funding from NFDC for the processing of Temporary Traffic Management Orders.

NFDC by taking on the function, will provide an in-house response to traffic issues giving a consistent, accessible service. In operational terms there will be a benefit to the Council by virtue of the links to other Council services.

The Cabinet noted that in providing this service there could be constraints on actions and decisions in terms of acting as an agent for the County. The level of service provided will be fairly basic and any higher level activity will have to be referred to the County. However, on balance the Cabinet agreed that the benefits to the Council would outweigh the disadvantages.

2. SOUTH EAST REGIONAL COASTAL MONITORING PROGRAMME – RESOURCE PLAN (REPORT B) (MINUTE NO. 43)

The Cabinet has agreed, subject to DEFRA approval and funding, to detailed proposals for the management and resourcing of the South East Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme (SESRCMP).

As previously indicated the Cabinet noted that there will be significant staffing, accommodation and equipment implications but these will all be financed directly via the programme.

The SESRCMP Project Board has agreed that a regional data centre should be established to service the programme and the most suitable location for this would be the University of Southampton. The University is central to the region and currently hosts the National Oceanographic library. There is suitable computing infrastructure already in place and a good history of successful long term partnership working. The centre, to be known as the Channel Coastal Observatory, will be part of the Coastal Group in Environment Services.

Some of the monitoring work currently carried out by the Coastal Group will become integrated within the new regional programme. The same staff will continue to do the work but the costs will be met by the regional programme. The Programme will require a total of five additional staff for the Coastal Observatory and three additional support staff, all the costs of which will be met by the regional programme capital budget. The recruitment of the new staff will begin in September/October. They will be employed on appropriate fixed term contracts in case the programme is terminated at the end of the five year period.

3. ALLOCATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY SOCIAL HOUSING GRANT – ELM AVENUE, NEW MILTON (REPORT C) (MINUTE NO. 44)

The Cabinet has agreed to the principle of funding totalling £480,520 to be allocated in 2003/04 to Swaythling Housing Society to enable affordable housing to be developed in Elm Avenue New Milton. The Cabinet has agreed the funding subject to Local Authority Social Housing Grant being available in 2003/04 and to no Housing Corporation funding being allocated through 2002/03 pre-allocations or the 2003/04 approved development Programme.

Swaythling Housing Society has been working closely with the Council and the site owner/developer for some time. In the absence of LASHG in 2002/03 they have offered to provide the funding for the scheme from their own resources on the understanding that grant will be available for them in 2003/04. This will allow the scheme to commence in 2002/03. While the Council cannot formally commit funding for a future year, the Cabinet has agreed the principle subject to there being sufficient resources available.

The scheme will provide 14 dwellings for affordable rent. Currently there are over 2,500 households on the Joint Housing Register, including over 700 in New Milton. With the scheme being started in 2002/03 this will mean that not only will people with housing needs be able to be accommodated earlier but cost savings can also be made.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2002 – JUNE 2002 (REPORT E) (MINUTE NO. 46)

The Cabinet has considered the forecast budget variations of all Portfolios and Committees from the approved original estimates for 2002/03. They have agreed the revised General Fund Budget and the Revised Capital Expenditure subject to those items reserved to Council as set out below.

The new variations in the General Fund result in an overall increase in the net budget of £5,000. In relation to capital expenditure for Other Services the new variations show a net increase in 2002/03 expenditure of £1,528,000.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) That approval be given to capital expenditure of £22,000 for Lymington Quay Wall and surfaces; both of which will be covered by additional external resources; and**
- (b) That approval be given to additional capital expenditure of £42,000 for Principal Environmental Enhancements to Lymington Quay.**

5. ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN AND CAPITAL STRATEGY – SUBMISSION OF PLANS FOR 2002/03 (REPORT F) (MINUTE NO. 47)

The Cabinet has considered the Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan for 2002/03. Copies were circulated to all members of the Council with the Cabinet agenda dated 7 August 2002.

The Council is required to submit its Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy to GOSE by 31 July 2002. The Government has implemented a new approach to the allocation of resources in the form of “the single capital pot”. The intention is to allow local authorities to make some decisions about their own priorities whilst still allowing the Government to achieve national priorities.

It is currently proposed that 95% of the 2003 Single Capital Pot allocations will be made on a “needs” basis and the remaining 5% at the discretion of the Government but based on a local authority’s Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan. The documents will be assessed against pre-set criteria, split into primary and secondary categories and graded as good, satisfactory or poor. A score of less than 100% in the primary category will attain a poor rating. To attain a good rating there must be a score of 100% in the primary category and at least 75% in the secondary category. Additional credit approvals, likely to be £25,000 and £50,000 respectively, will be awarded for satisfactory or good assessments.

The Council’s Capital Strategy will also be taken into account in the next year’s Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan as circulated to all members of the Council be approved.

6. COUNCILLOR NOTIFICATION UNDER THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998 (REPORT G) (MINUTE NO. 48)

All individuals and organisations that hold and process personal data are required to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. This includes the need to notify the Information Commissioner. All notifications are then included on a public register.

All NFDC members will have to review what personal data they hold in relation to constituency casework and decide whether notification is required within the meaning of the Act. There is a £35 annual charge for notification. The Cabinet has agreed that this cost should be reimbursed to members.

The requirements apply to all members at County, District and Parish level. There are 6 District Council members who are also County Council members and their costs will be reimbursed by the County.

**Cllr S A Hayes
CHAIRMAN**

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