

## **REPORT OF CABINET**

(Meeting held on 6 November)

### **1. EXTRA CARE SHELTERED HOUSING (REPORT B) (MINUTE NO. 80)**

The Cabinet has agreed to enter into a partnership with Hampshire County Council Social Services to provide extra care provision for tenants living in NFDC sheltered housing schemes.

Sheltered Housing traditionally straddles the boundary between housing and care provision. Extra care is seen as being the vehicle for the future provision of care services to tenants in Sheltered Housing. It will provide a level of support normally only available in residential care with the older person being able to retain their independence by remaining a tenant with their own front door.

Other Registered Social Landlords and District Councils both locally and nationally are taking similar steps and providing extra care in Sheltered Housing. They are also involved in intermediate care, which is helping to ease the problems within hospitals due to long stay wards/beds.

Tenants would be identified by Social Services as requiring "extra care" and would have their own care package, which would be designed to meet their individual needs and wishes. Nominated and separately employed care staff would provide this extra care. Initially it is proposed that care would be provided 2 hours a day each for 10 people, within 2 Sheltered Housing schemes, Gore Grange and Winfrid House, with another 3 schemes being introduced in 2003/2004. The care would be provided by a chosen care provider between 7am and 10pm.

The support element would continue to be provided by the warden service. The warden would also act as an advocate for the tenant ensuring the "care and support" was provided according to the package of care.

The Cabinet has also agreed that the Council's warden service will also seek registration as a domiciliary care provider. This will involve the warden service registering with Social Services as a provider. The cost of this registration will be £1,500 which can be met from existing budget provision.

The costs of the proposed extra care service will be approximately £70,000 per annum. These costs will be fully funded by Hampshire County Council Social Services.

### **2. GREEN TRANSPORT PLAN (REPORT C) (MINUTE NO. 81)**

The Cabinet has agreed a Green Transport Plan (GTP) to be published shortly which builds upon the results of the Employee Travel Survey. The Plan offers practical alternatives to reduce "driver only" car journeys and to achieve realistic, measurable targets. It addresses the need for everyone to consider alternative means of transport other than the car and the proposals enable the Council to take a lead in promoting a healthier lifestyle.

A Bike User Group (BUG) has been set up so that the needs of cyclists are identified and prioritised. The measures that are included in the GTP are supported by the BUG. A trial "Car Share Scheme" has also been prepared. A GTP should result in fewer car journeys and there is therefore the potential for reducing transport related pollution.

The final version of the Green Transport Plan will be available on ForestNet rather than sent to all employees. Printed versions will only be available on request to reduce waste. A "Flyer" will be sent out with payslips when the full version is available.

### **3. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY (REPORT D) (MINUTE NO. 82)**

Earlier this year a joint DTLR/LGA review of procurement skills and practice in local government called "Delivering Better Services for Citizens" was published. Following consideration of this report officers identified the current level of NFDC activity against the areas of good practice highlighted in the report. Whilst many key areas of good practice were already considered to be in place, one key area that needed specific attention was the development of a high level corporate procurement strategy.

The Cabinet has now considered and agreed a Procurement Strategy for the Council.

The existence of a corporate procurement strategy is seen as an important policy document that all local authorities should possess. The strategy brings together the various policies, codes of practice and activities into a single overarching document that sets out the Council's approach to procurement across its whole range of services. Whilst it is not possible to quantify the immediate or future financial implications of adopting a strategy, it will help to ensure the best use of the limited resources available to the Council.

### **4. IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT STATEMENT# 2 (REPORT E) (MINUTE NO. 83)**

In July 2002 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister invited local authorities to provide a statement detailing progress with their plans to implement electronic service delivery across the range of its services and in partnership with other service providers by 2005. The Cabinet has now agreed this second Implementing Electronic Government Statement, which sets out New Forest District Council's progress in delivering its stated vision.

The Electronic Governance Strategy is an integral part of the Council's overall policy framework. The Council's stated vision for Electronic Governance is to:-

"Modernise the Council's service provision by fully utilising information and communication technologies (ICT) to enable joined up working with partners and internally to provide seamless services to customers when and where they are required to a consistently high standard".

The Statement gives a vision for 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006 that will bring significant and tangible benefits to our customers including:

- Speeding up key processes and the ease with which customers can engage Council services.

- Encouraging more people of the New Forest and the wider community, including the business community, to interact more frequently with the Council.
- Improving the first line response to customers (by developing more joined-up working).
- Extending opening hours.
- Providing more information to customers and other stakeholders.
- Recognising the importance of diversity in the ways that customers wish to contact the Council

Good progress is being made towards implementing this vision. There is a great deal more to do to ensure that there is true integration within the Council's services and between the Council and other service providers.

A key stage in developing the Council's Community Strategy has involved the formation of a local strategic partnership. The New Forest Local Strategic Partnership (NFLSP) brings together for the first time high-level key players from the public, private and voluntary sectors. Their role is to work together to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the district for the benefit of present and future generations. Proposals contained in the E-Governance Strategy will address issues raised in that forum.

The draft consultation paper *e-gov@local* clearly identifies the requirement for local authorities to focus on supporting the key cross cutting objectives of customer services, social inclusion and democracy and accountability. The Council's E-Governance Work Programme comprises a number of different ICT projects supporting these key objectives.

The Council has made good progress in all areas since the last IEG statement. The E-Governance strategy has been aligned towards the priorities and issues that have been identified and many positive changes have been introduced. This has been largely on the back of the culture of good corporate working that exists in the authority.

## **5. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT – PUBLICATION SCHEME (REPORT F) (MINUTE NO. 84)**

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (The Act) introduced the requirement for all local authorities to adopt, maintain and review publication schemes from February 2003. The Information Commissioner must formally approve these schemes. The Cabinet has now agreed a scheme which has been submitted for approval.

A publication scheme is essentially a guide to information that is routinely published or is intended to be published. The meaning of published should not be limited to information contained in bound or printed form but could include many different forms of information such as printouts, photographs, material available for inspection or available electronically.

It is expected that there will be many benefits to be gained in the adoption of the scheme, not least that central resource of information will be formed as a demonstration of the Council's commitment to openness. Once completed all the information will be available on the Council's website.

## 6. COUNCIL CONSTITUTION – OPERATIONAL RIGHTS OF REVIEW PANELS (REPORT H) (MINUTE NO. 86)

At present, the Council's Constitution permits a Review Panel to require a Portfolio Holder to attend a Panel meeting only where the Panel is reviewing a decision taken by the Executive. There is no general right to require the attendance of a Portfolio Holder in any other circumstance.

At its meeting on 14 October 2002, Council adopted the following recommendation of the Housing, Health and Social Exclusion Review Panel:

“That the Council consider amending the Constitution to enable any Review Panel to be empowered to request the appearance of the appropriate Cabinet member on any subject which it has raised with the Cabinet, and that the Cabinet be requested to make a recommendation on this issue to the Council”.

The reason for the Panel's recommendation was “in order to assist each Panel to pursue the scrutiny function and to ensure that it is fully briefed on recent developments”.

Chapter 10 of the Constitution sets out Review Panels' operational rights and rights of access to information. The current provision enabling Panels to require the attendance of Portfolio Holders for the purpose of reviewing actual decisions taken is at Section 5 of that Chapter. A proposed amendment, showing suggested new text in bold italics, is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

Rather than amending the existing paragraphs (which are complicated by references to decisions taken by the Cabinet, or an officer), the proposed amendment makes it clear, by inserting a sub-heading, that the existing paragraphs refer only to situations where a decision has been called in. New paragraphs 5.4 to 5.7, containing the Panels' right to require a Portfolio Holder to attend a Panel meeting for other purposes, have been added under another sub-heading.

The effect of the provisions is as follows:

- (a) If the Portfolio Holder is unable to attend the meeting at which the Panel plans to discuss the matter for which they have required his or her attendance, the Panel Chairman should be notified at least two days before the meeting.
- (b) The Panel Chairman will then consider whether he or she would be willing to postpone consideration of the item to the next (or a special) meeting.
- (c) If he/she will not, or if he/she will but the Portfolio Holder cannot attend the subsequent meeting either, the Portfolio Holder should brief another Cabinet member who will attend on his or her behalf.
- (d) If the Portfolio Holder neither attends the meeting (or either meeting, if the Panel Chairman decides to postpone the matter), nor arranges for a representative to attend on his or her behalf, the matter will be referred to the Standards Committee. (It should be noted the Standards Committee has no powers to impose any penalty on the Portfolio Holder, but may report on the matter to full Council).

**RECOMMENDED:**

***That the amendments to Chapter 10 of the Council's Constitution, as shown in bold italic script in Appendix 1 to this report be approved.***

**CLLR S A HAYES  
CHAIRMAN**

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**EXTRACT FROM CHAPTER 10 OF THE CONSTITUTION**

**5. ATTENDANCE OF EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AT PANEL MEETINGS**

**Call-in of Executive Decisions**

5.1 In consideration of any decision taken by the Executive, Panels shall have the absolute right to require the decision-maker, or a Member of the Cabinet where the decision was taken in a Cabinet meeting, to attend any meeting called to review the decision of the Executive. Where it is not reasonable to expect an individual decision-maker himself or herself to attend the meeting:

- (a) where the decision was made by a Portfolio Holder, another member of the Cabinet; or
- (b) where the decision was made by an officer, a member of the Cabinet or another officer to whom the decision-maker reports,

shall attend on the decision-maker's behalf.

5.2 A decision of the Executive shall not be implemented until such time as the Member of the Cabinet or its representative has attended a meeting of the Panel or the Panel has reported on the decision to the full Council at its next ordinary meeting.

5.3 A Panel may request copies of information or documents to enable it to review a decision of the Executive. If such papers have not been supplied at least two days prior to the meeting of the Panel, the Executive's decision shall stand deferred to a further meeting of the Panel which shall be arranged as soon as practicable.

**Other matters that are the responsibility of the Executive**

**5.4 *To enable them to undertake their duties effectively, Panels shall also have the absolute right to require the appropriate Portfolio Holder to attend any Panel meeting in order to discuss any subject the Panel has raised with the Executive, subject to a minimum of two calendar weeks' notice being given to the Portfolio Holder.***

**5.5 *Where the Portfolio Holder is unable to attend the meeting, the Panel Chairman may, at his or her discretion, decide to postpone consideration of the matter to a later programmed Panel meeting, or to a special Panel meeting.***

**5.6 *Where 5.5 applies, and the Portfolio Holder is also unable to attend the subsequent meeting, or the Panel Chairman decides that consideration of the issue should not be postponed, another Cabinet member shall attend the Panel meeting on the Portfolio Holder's behalf.***

**5.7 *A Portfolio Holder who is unable to attend a Panel meeting that he or she has been requested to attend must inform the Panel Chairman of this fact, and of his or her arrangements for alternative representation (if appropriate) no later than two days before the meeting.***

