

REPORT OF CABINET

(Meetings held on 5 March and 2 April 2008)

1. PROJECT INTEGRA ANNUAL ACTION PLAN (REPORT A – 5 MARCH 2008) (MINUTE NO. 95)

The Cabinet has considered and is recommending approval of the Project Integra Annual Action Plan for 2008/2013. Project Integra, the Waste Management Partnership for Hampshire, continues to stand out in the UK, not least by virtue of the high (84%) level of diversion from landfill now achieved, by far the highest of any County Grouping. Although there is a recycling/composting rate of around 40% and an energy recovery rate of around 44%, this still means that 16% of Municipal Household Waste continues to go to landfill, most of this being derived from the Household Waste Recycling Centres.

As the Action Plan indicates, there is still much to do. The cost of waste management is likely to significantly outstrip current levels of funding throughout the three year period of the Comprehensive Spending Review, so the impetus to seek more efficient ways of working is stronger than ever.

The Annual Action plan sets out the costs of running the Board and associated joint activities of the Partnership. Whilst the Action Plan does set challenging targets the Partnership produces an income for the Council. The financial implications for NFDC for 2008/09 are as follows:-

Expenditure

New Forest District Council Subscription to Project Integra	£ 14,674
New Forest District Council Project Fund contribution	£ 16,504
MAF Contribution	£ 3,791

Total Cost for 2008/09	£ 34,969
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Income

Glass recycling processed through Midland Glass	£ 16,250
Dry Mixed Cans, Plastics, paper processed through MRF.	£222,210

Total Project Integra Income for 2008/09	£238,460
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In discussing the detail of the Action Plan members agreed that waste minimisation is an important aspect however, they noted that all recycled materials form part of the energy from waste process and therefore play their own part. There are some issues at household waste recycling centres where monitoring shows that 17% of waste that goes through such centres is shown to be commercial. Waste recycling is an expensive operation and the changes to arrangements for acceptance of waste at household waste centres has proved necessary to ensure their continued appropriate use.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Project Integra Annual Action Plan 2008-2013 be approved.

**2. TRANSPORT CONTRIBUTION POLICY (REPORT B – 5 MARCH 2008)
(MINUTE NO. 96)**

The Cabinet has agreed that on all appropriate planning applications received after 1st April 2008 a transportation contribution will be sought, by means of a Section 106 agreement, in accordance with the Hampshire County Council policy as applied to Policy DW-T8 of the adopted New Forest District Council Local Plan, First Alteration 2005

Currently where developments necessitate improvements to transport infrastructure or services off-site, developers are required to contribute to the costs of those improvements with the contributions being directly related in scale and in kind to the proposed development. The transport contributions part of the New Forest District Local Plan (first alteration) until now has only been applied to larger developments on the specific advice of the Highway Authority. As most developments within NFDC are small scale no contributions have been made notwithstanding their cumulative impact on the transportation network.

In September 2007 Hampshire County Council adopted a policy which introduced a formulaic approach to calculating transport contributions to define how much each new development should contribute towards transportation improvements. The County Council has now requested that each District adopt the policy and collect the relevant contributions.

Members noted that the Government is committed to introducing a Community Infrastructure Levy on new developments early in 2009 which will provide funding for a wide range of public facilities. With this in mind, and in view of the huge demand for local transport and safety related initiatives, the Cabinet felt it appropriate to introduce a Transport Contribution Policy in the meantime. Such a policy may provide up to £500,000 to be spent locally on locally agreed transport priorities. The new arrangements will still enable the Council to retain discretion to waive the contribution if it is felt that the economic viability of the development might be prejudiced

3. ST GEORGES HALL, CALSHOT (REPORT C – 5 MARCH 2008) (MINUTE NO. 97)

The Cabinet has agreed new arrangements for the future management of St Georges Hall, Calshot that will see the Council take on full responsibility for the repairs and maintenance of the Hall with the day to day management being undertaken by a local residents' management committee.

The local area of Calshot is one of very high social need and St Georges Hall and the adjacent play area provide a well used important facility to local families. It is essential that the hall was maintained. There has been difficulty in establishing a properly constituted management committee in the past and the limited opportunity to raise revenue has placed a strain on the individuals concerned.

The Council taking on full responsibility for the repairs and maintenance of the hall is considered to be the most pragmatic approach to ensuring that the maximum community use of this essential facility continues.

**4. SENIOR MANAGEMENT REVIEW (REPORT D – 5 MARCH 2008)
(MINUTE NO. 98)**

The Cabinet has agreed a revised Senior Management Structure. The senior management structure has been reviewed in two stages. The first stage included the appointment of two executive directors with the second stage proposing a new structure at Heads of Service level.

Members agreed that the new structure will provide a more streamlined approach to the future work of the Council and will support members in their delivery of Council policy. The structure is now aligned to the Corporate Plan and mirrors the Cabinet Portfolios and review panels and will enable the Council to be more flexible and efficient. The proposals have also delivered some savings.

Under the new structure the executive directors will take a lead on key corporate themes and heads of service will continue to lead their individual service area and support the Executive Management Team in strategic decision making. This will provide a simplified and efficient approach to dealing with cross cutting tasks.

The new structure will be implemented with effect from 1 April 2008. However, some elements relating to property and financial services and the Test Valley Partnership will need further agreement of business cases.

5. ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT (REPORT A – 2 APRIL 2008) (MINUTE NO. 102)

The Cabinet has considered the Annual Audit and Inspection letter that summarises the work undertaken by the Audit Commission and the District Auditor for the preceding year.

In 2006/07 the Council made good progress in implementing its corporate improvement plan, with the majority of key objectives and milestones being achieved. Improvement planning has been implemented well and the Council has robust plans for improving further. The Council continued to demonstrate improvement through the effective delivery of its annual Performance Plan: 'Performance Matters'. The overall conclusion from the Audit Commission was that once again the Council was performing well against its own priorities and in comparison to other Councils.

There were four areas raised in the Inspection Letter where the Audit Commission felt that the Council should improve namely:-

- To reduce the time spent by homeless households in temporary accommodation through implementation of the Council's action plan;
- To keep under review the plans to achieve local and national recycling targets;
- To address the slippage and under spend against the capital budget. Having implemented the new capital programme processes and procedures, the Council should ensure that the planned improvements are realised; and
- To develop its corporate risks register, incorporate significant partnership risks in the risk register, and provide risk management training and guidance to appropriate staff.

In terms of Financial Management and Use of Resources, for the financial year 2006/07 the report concluded that the Council had prepared its final accounts on a timely basis and the Audit Commission provided an unqualified opinion on the Council's financial statements and commented that this was a commendable achievement by the Council. The Council met all the statutory deadlines for the approval of the accounts and the statements were well presented and supported by comprehensive working papers.

An unqualified Value for Money Conclusion was also issued. This conclusion was based upon 12 criteria set by the Audit Commission and placed reliance upon the Use of Resources Assessment. The Council met each of the criteria and had appropriate arrangements in place to secure value for money in its use of resources in 2006/07.

A third Use of Resources Assessment was carried out. The scoring was undertaken against five key themes with 1 being the lowest score and 4 being the highest. NFDC scored a 3 overall and a 3 for each of the five themes. The results are an important component of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment framework and the Council's achievement is commendable as the process continues to get tougher each year.

Members were mindful of the fact that the Annual Inspection letter is a snapshot of the position at a particular point in time and that the matters that had been raised for improvement are already being acted upon. Overall, the Audit Commission is pleased with the direction of travel of the Council and that the Council is continually improving.

6. THE CORPORATE PLAN – 2008/12 – LEADING OUR FOREST COMMUNITIES (REPORT B – 2 APRIL 2008) (MINUTE NO. 103)

The Cabinet has considered the Council's Corporate Plan for 2008/12 – Leading Our Forest Communities. The Plan sets out how the council will continue to engage with the people of the area to shape the future of the New Forest District.

The Corporate Plan is the most important Council Strategy as it needs to shape the way the Council works. To do this, it works at both a strategic and service level to help bring all members and services together to work towards the same goals.

It is an essential element of the Council's Performance Management System which will be the way to focus services and individuals on what is important to the Council. The Council produces numerous other strategies which should flow from and feed into the Corporate Plan. These include the annual performance plans and individual service plans. It is proposed that in future these are supplemented by annual Portfolio Plans. The majority of aims in the Plan also have individual strategies associated with them.

The new plan whilst retaining the vision and values of the previous corporate plan, builds on key themes and corporate aims. The title of the new plan reflects the fact that whilst many organisations have a valuable role to play in the New Forest, it is the democratically elected council that has the responsibility of providing leadership.

The Plan reflects a growing recognition of some major environmental issues to be tackled, particularly the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. The production process for the hard copy versions of the Plan will seek to minimise environmental impact by the products used and the numbers produced.

Consultation on the document will continue until the Council meeting on 21 April 2008 and some minor wording amendments will be made to simplify and clarify the text.

RECOMMENDED:

That, subject to minor wording amendments the Corporate Plan as attached at Appendix 1 to this report be approved.

7. FINANCIAL REPORT – FORECAST FULL YEAR AND ACTUAL FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2007 – FEBRUARY 2008 (REPORT C – 2 APRIL 2008) (MINUTE NO. 104)

The Cabinet has considered the forecast budget variations of all portfolios and committees from the approved original estimates. They have noted the items set out in the revised General Fund budget in Appendix 1 to Report C to them and agreed the transfer of £25,000 to revenue reserves in respect of planned street scene revenue expenditure delayed to 2008/09 on A31 litter clearance. The Cabinet has also noted revisions to capital expenditure and agreed a number of rephasings as set out in Appendix 2 to Report C to them.

In terms of the Housing Revenue Account the Cabinet has noted the detail of the expenditure as set out in Appendix 3 to Report C to them. They have also noted the actual expenditure to profiled budget positions of the General Fund, the Capital Programme and the Housing Revenue Account.

In discussing the detail members particularly noted additional income of £117,000 from interest earnings; £117,000 slippage in the coastal protection maintenance budget and approximately £100,000 reduction in revenue charges as a result of savings and rephasings of ICT capital expenditure. The forecast outturn for the year end at service level is currently above budget and the overall favourable position is being supported by items outside the direct control of the Council. This includes interest rate movements and additional Government grant notified to the Council after the budget had been set.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) That £117,000 be transferred from General Fund surpluses to revenue reserves in respect of planned coast protection maintenance delayed until 2008/09 due to outstanding planning approval (Appendix 7 & 3f of Appendix 1 to Report C to the Cabinet refer);***
- (b) That revenue budget provision of £60k be approved in place of the current capital estimate, to reflect the change in financing of Members ICT provision, following the option to move away from Council owned asset provision; and***
- (c) That £447,000 be transferred from General Fund surpluses to the Capital Programme Reserve, in accordance with the approved financial strategy;***

8. MANAGEMENT OF BLACKFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE (REPORT D – 2 APRIL 2008) (MINUTE NO. 105)

In February 2007 following problems with the previous arrangements for the Blackfield Neighbourhood Centre Committee, the Council agreed to Totton College taking over the day to day management of the Centre. Full responsibility for maintenance and repairs was retained by the Council. This arrangement has worked well and ensured that the Council protects its asset but at the same time encourages the community to use the Centre without undue financial pressures.

The Cabinet has now agreed, following a request from Totton College, to a longer term arrangement for the use of the Centre. This will give the College some certainty for the future and enable them to give a greater commitment to the local community regarding the longer term use of the building. It is understood that Totton College has also secured longer term funding for the Children's Centre which is the major user of the building however, the College will also ensure that general community use is encouraged and supported.

In view of the social and community benefits from the continuing use of this centre the Cabinet has agreed a nil rent. Any income received by Totton College will be used to pay the costs of all consumables and utilities together with the on-going costs of internal repairs and redecorations. The Council will remain responsible for the structure.

The proposals suggested will secure a sound future for the Centre for the next 6 years and enable the good work being done by Totton College and the Children's Centre to be continued. The community, which is recognised as being one of the most deprived in the New Forest, will continue to be supported by the Council and the excellent partnership that has been formed with Totton College.

9. FUNDAMENTAL SERVICE REVIEW – TOURISM SERVICE PROCUREMENT OPTIONS (REPORT E – 2 APRIL 2008) (MINUTE NO. 106)

The Cabinet has agreed a future direction for the Tourism Service, which places greater emphasis on partnership working and a closer alignment with other management and economic activities.

The Tourism Service has been assessed on a number of occasions. Under the Best Value regime it was externally inspected and achieved a 2* likely to improve rating – the highest score achieved by any Tourism Service. It was awarded Beacon Status for Sustainable Tourism and has been used in a number of national case studies. During the Review, the "Towards An Excellent Service" external accreditation rated the service highly. Most recently three awards were secured at the World Responsible Tourism Awards: Overall Winner, Best Personal Contribution and Best Destination - the first time this has been won by a British destination.

The recent Fundamental Service Review of the Leisure Service, which at that point included Tourism, concluded that the procurement of the Health and Leisure Centres and the Tourism Service should be tested. Whilst at the outset there were eight options considered for the future procurement of tourism, the Cabinet at their meeting in April 2007 agreed with the findings of the Review that only one route, that of in-house provision with an Improvement Plan building on the current levels of partnering and externalisation, was viable.

There is scope to increase the impact of the Service locally by moving in the direction of closer partnerships. Examples of the proposed direction are:

Visitor: To maintain the core function of producing tourism led publications, develop the official web site and related “e” products as the future focus of information services, whilst increasing the role for the New Forest Tourism Association in public relations and selling.

Industry: To maintain the core specialist support, whilst enabling closer ties to New Forest Business Partnership and the Economic Development Unit.

Community: To maintain support for Community Tourism groups and seek stronger engagement from Town and Parish Councils.

Environment: To maintain stewardship programmes whilst developing the role of the New Forest National Park Authority and the wider business sector.

To take forward the proposals the Cabinet has agreed to the creation of a single post to manage both the Tourism Service and the Economic Development Unit and to the examination of the future provision of information services alongside consideration of the future of other Council assets.

The Cabinet has also agreed to the adoption of a Partnership Agreement between the Council’s Tourism Service and the New Forest National Park Authority identifying underlying principles for Joint Working.

10. COMMUNITY MEALS (REPORT F -2 APRIL 2008) (MINUTE NO. 107)

Hampshire County Council has a statutory duty to ensure the provision of a meal to each person who meets the eligibility criteria under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. All Hampshire districts part fund the provision. The county council has set the ‘county meal price’ at £3.00 for 2008/09 and are now recommending that all Hampshire districts charge this price.

Hampshire County Council has also commissioned a review of the community meals service across the county. The overall aggregated cost of providing the service for Hampshire is £1.75 million. A total of approximately 372,000 meals per year are delivered across the county, 90% of these are delivered as hot meals and the remaining 10% are frozen meals for re-heating in the homes of the service users.

There is currently no consistency as to how the meals are commissioned or re-heated and whilst the service works well in some localities, in others, due to a shortfall in volunteers and the rural locations covered, the service is limited and inequitable.

Following previous work undertaken by this Council in this area, officers have been invited to join a steering group to provide information based on their experience. Formal consultation will take place as part of the review

RECOMMENDED:

That the price for community meals for 2008/09 be set at £3.00

11. FORMER ROYAL NAVY ARMAMENTS DEPOT, MARCHWOOD – COMPLETION OF FLOOD DEFENCES AND PUBLIC FOOTPATH (REPORT G – 2 APRIL 2008) (MINUTE NO. 108)

The Cabinet has agreed, subject to the Head of Planning and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services being satisfied as to the final agreement of details, and subject to costs being covered by finance available through developers' contributions, a scheme to complete the flood defences and public footpath at the former Royal Navy Armaments Depot, (RNAD) Marchwood.

The former RNAD is an important historic site. The area is designated as a Conservation Area and contains various listed buildings some of which are used by Marchwood Yacht Club. Much of the site has been developed for residential purposes and these last phases of the flood defences are needed to safeguard the area from future risk of tidal and wash flooding.

Since 2004, when the proposals were first considered, the scheme has evolved to reduce the costs by reviewing construction methods and material specifications, simplifying some of the detailing to the sea wall itself, and reusing materials where possible. Negotiations have also continued with Marchwood Yacht Club, who control most of the land across which the walls and path will run and Marchwood Parish Council in relation to the use of developer's contributions to fund the scheme. These have now reached a successful conclusion and the yacht club and the parish council are fully supportive of the scheme.

Whilst there can never be a guarantee against flooding, the proposed scheme will provide a long term solution for the area. It will also solve the problem of bypass flooding through sewerage systems that the current interim arrangements do not.

12. DELEGATIONS TO OFFICERS – TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ACT 2004 – CIVIL ENFORCEMENT OF PARKING (2 APRIL 2008) (MINUTE NO. 109)

Following the replacement of the Road Traffic Act 1991 by the Traffic Management Act 2004 as the legal basis for the civil enforcement of parking the Cabinet has agreed the following changes to officer delegations with immediate effect:

Source	Power Delegated	Delegation To
Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions General Regulations 2007, regulations 5, 12, 19 and 21	To serve notices and certificates, to consider representations, and to take all action on behalf of the Council	Parking Manager Parking Operations Manager Parking Administrator Senior Administration Assistant (Parking) Administration Assistants (Parking)
Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions General Regulations 2007, regulation 22	To recover the increased penalty charge provided for in the charge certificate	Executive Director Parking Manager Parking Administrator
Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions Representations and Appeals Regulations 2007, Schedule paragraphs 12-15	To take all action on behalf of the Council	Executive Director Parking Manager Parking Administrator

Source	Power Delegated	Delegation To
Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions Representations and Appeals Regulations 2007, regulation 7(5)	To consider the recommendations of an adjudicator and decide whether to accept those recommendations	Chief Executive Equalities and Corporate Complaints Manager

**Cllr M J Kendal
CHAIRMAN**

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