

REPORT OF CABINET

(Meetings held on 6 August and 3 September 2008)

1. FUTURE PARKING PROVISION IN LYMINGTON (REPORT A – 6 AUGUST 2008) (MINUTE NO. 30)

The Cabinet has agreed, in principle, to an expenditure plan bid of approximately £15,000 to enable a parking study to be undertaken for Lymington.

Whilst it is accepted that there are considerable parking problems in Lymington a properly constructed study is needed before any options for change can be considered. Local people and businesses have been kept fully informed of the proposal. The study will allow the Council to set out a long term strategy for dealing with the ever increasing demand for parking in Lymington with the benefit of specialist and expert advice.

Income from on-street parking is ring fenced, but income from off-street parking is able to be targeted to priority services and key local objectives. The Cabinet continue to support this approach.

The study will be carried out using independent expertise, the results of which could also provide a basis for further work in areas elsewhere in the district where there are parking issues.

2. ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENT – BACKWARD LOOK 2007/08 (REPORT B – 6 AUGUST 2008) (MINUTE NO. 31)

The Cabinet has agreed the 2007/08 'Backward Look' Efficiency Statement for submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government. The Council is required to submit two annual efficiency statements a year, one looking at proposed actions for the forthcoming year, the other looking back at what had been achieved in the previous year.

Members were pleased to note that the Council has so far achieved efficiencies of £2.311m which is £241,000 in excess of the target figure of £2.07m set in the Annual Efficiency Statement, largely by cashable savings.

The Cabinet expressed their thanks to Heads of Service for the work they had done to achieve those savings that enabled the Council to meet its objectives and fund priorities.

3. FINANCIAL REPORT – FORECAST FULL YEAR AND ACTUAL FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2008 – JUNE 2008 (REPORT C – 6 AUGUST 2008) (MINUTE NO. 32)

The Cabinet has considered the forecast budget variations of all Portfolios and Committees from the approved original estimates for 2008/09 and agreed revised General Fund, Capital Programme and Housing Revenue Account budgets. They have also noted the actual expenditure position after 3 months (25%) of the General Fund, Capital Programme and Housing Revenue Account budgets.

It is predicted that in terms of interest rates the Council will generate an additional £250,000 of income during the year. However, in view of the economic climate it is also predicted that the Council will have to fund additional fuel and associated costs of £102,000.

In the current economic difficulties a number of charitable organisations are under increasing pressure to assist the community. To aid these groups the Cabinet has agreed that some of the Council's reserves should be used to provide additional funding of £50,000 to be split between the Housing and Leisure, Culture & Youth Matters Portfolio Holders. This will enable those portfolio holders to grant aid associations and groups in the district who in turn can provide greater assistance to the most vulnerable members of the New Forest community.

RECOMMENDED:

That the following supplementary estimates be approved:

- (i) £102,000 in respect of additional fuel/fuel related General Fund revenue costs;***
- (ii) £57,000 in respect of temporary General Fund revenue staffing resources to update the asset management database; and***
- (iii) £79,000 in respect of Private Sector Disabled Facilities Capital Grants, financed by Council resources of £19,000 and Grant of £60,000.***

**4. AIR QUALITY ACTION PLANS (REPORT A – 3 SEPTEMBER 2008)
(MINUTE NO. 36)**

The Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of air quality action plans for three areas of the district namely Totton, Lyndhurst and Fawley. They have also supported a bid in the forthcoming expenditure plan process for £10,000 to facilitate modelling work and public consultation to progress the implementation of the Plans in line with the Council's statutory duty to review and assess the air quality in the district.

Local Authorities have a statutory duty under the Environment Act 1995 to review and assess the air quality in their district against objectives set by Government for 7 defined pollutants. If it is found through this process of continuous assessment that an air quality objective is exceeded or unlikely to be met, then an Air Quality Management Area must be declared (AQMA). It is then a duty to produce an Air Quality Action Plan. The Plan must include evidence that all available options have been considered and show how the local authority will use its powers and work in conjunction with other organisations in pursuit of the air quality objectives. Local Authorities are not obliged to meet the objectives but they must show that they are working towards them.

In June 2005 AQMA's were declared for Lyndhurst High Street and Junction Road, Totton as in each case the annual mean objective ($40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) for the transport related pollutant nitrogen dioxide was likely to be exceeded. In December 2005 a further AQMA was declared for Fawley village but in this case the objective related to the exceedance of the 15 minute mean for sulphur dioxide ($266\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year) which is associated with industrial activity on the Waterside.

All three Action Plans contain options which are specifically targeted, either individually or in combination, at the reduction of the required pollutant (i.e. traffic management schemes in respect of nitrogen dioxide, abatement measures in respect of sulphur dioxide etc) or designed to promote greater public awareness of air quality issues. In addition each Plan has been subject to an extensive consultation exercise.

Each Action Plan will become a working document and may involve further air quality modelling or feasibility studies with the aim of reducing pollutant levels in pursuit of the air quality objectives. In each case the pollutant of interest will continue to be monitored to assess any change in the situation and annual reports on the progression of the Action Plan submitted to Defra.

A key part of the Action Plan process is to engage with key stakeholders so that they are kept informed of progress and the intention is to set up a working group, to include local members, for each Plan.

5. HAMPSHIRE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (LAA) (REPORT B – 3 SEPTEMBER 2008) (MINUTE NO. 37)

The LAA priorities and targets for Hampshire have now been approved by the Secretary of State. The Cabinet has agreed to sign up to the delivery agreement element of the Hampshire LAA and give general support to the LAA in its totality.

The Council is a statutory partner under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and as such needs to have regard to the respective designated and local LAA targets. There are 19 statutory other partners actively involved in the New Forest district and the agreement will encourage greater joint working.

Being a statutory partner means that the Council agrees to:-

- (i) integrate the LAA targets within all relevant service plans, without prejudice to any other statutory requirements;
- (ii) integrate the targets within all relevant partnership plans which they lead or contribute towards;
- (iii) take all necessary steps to implement action to achieve the targets, including the alignment of resources;
- (iv) co-operate with LAA Theme Leads and their respective thematic or local partnerships in the management and co-ordination of actions to deliver the targets;
- (v) comply with the LAA data sharing and quality protocol and risk management protocol;
- (vi) integrate the targets in their internal monitoring, performance and risk management arrangements;
- (vii) co-operate fully in the Comprehensive Area Assessment annual judgement process which will focus on LAA targets and the wider national indicator set; and
- (viii) co-operate with Theme Leads to enable them to meet the monitoring and reporting requirements as determined by the LAA Executive.

The LEA has the following 8 themes, each with a lead officers appointed at both county and district levels, to progress the work across the County. Discussions will be held between all the leads for each theme at county and district level to identify where and how they may be involved in delivery against targets.

- Children and Young People
- Economy and Skills
- Accessibility
- Housing
- Community Safety
- Health and Well Being
- Environment
- Strong Communities

The Council will not be actively involved in every target but will be asked which of the targets are relevant to its work. Its own contribution towards the targets can then be properly reflected in the LEA delivery processes.

The Hampshire LAA provides a good mechanism for focussing resources towards the priorities for Hampshire. Many of these priorities are a key part of the District's Sustainable Community Strategy.

6. COUNTRYSIDE EDUCATION TRUST (REPORT C – 3 SEPTEMBER 2008) (MINUTE NO. 38)

The Cabinet has agreed that a loan of up to £30,000 be offered to the Countryside Education Trust towards the completion of its New Forest Tree House Study Centre Project in Beaulieu. This is in recognition of the contribution made to the Council's Corporate Aims and the particular circumstances of this scheme.

The Trust has approached the Council for support for this project which will provide two tree houses, a heating system, a toilet block and other related works at their site in Beaulieu.

The primary aim of the Countryside Education Trust, a registered charity, is to promote and deliver learning through activities and facilities that enable children and adults to learn about, understand and care for the countryside. The Trust operates from two sites in Beaulieu, the New Forest Study Centre (where this scheme is based) and the Out of Town Centre.

The Trust is well established and well supported by visits from young people. This scheme replaces and extends previous facilities to better meet demands. Officers will work with the Trust to develop the community use elements of their business plan.

7. GOVERNMENT FREE SWIMMING PROGRAMME FOR OVER 60'S AND UNDER 16'S (REPORT D – 3 SEPTEMBER 2008) (MINUTE NO. 39)

Earlier this year the Government announced its intentions to introduce a free swimming programme to encourage Local Authorities to provide free swimming for those aged 60 and over and 16 and under. Following receipt of the detail of that proposal the Cabinet has agreed that the Council should participate in the proposal to introduce a free swimming programme for those aged 60 and over on a pilot basis.

The proposal will give free swimming all year round for all adults over 60 in any public session to which they would normally have access.

The government has allocated £72,892 in both 2008/09 and 2009/10 to the Council for funding the 60+ scheme. Total funding is therefore £145,784. Further funding for 2011/12 and subsequent years will be subject to the outcome of the next government spending review and informed by evidence of the effect of the 2009/10 & 2010/11 schemes. The estimated loss of income across the service for the two years of the scheme is £182,848 which includes both casual income and swim memberships.

Overall it is estimated that the introduction of the scheme will cost the Council £37,064 over the 2 years of the scheme. The Cabinet has therefore agreed that the Council should fund any shortfall for the 60+ scheme. Members noted that there may be some potential for increased income from secondary spend on retail goods and vending.

The second part of the proposal will give free swimming for children Under 16 all year round in any public session to which they would normally have access. The allocation of funding for the Under 16's scheme is not yet known although the Council has to express an interest in the scheme by September 15th. The Cabinet has therefore done this but has agreed that a detailed evaluation of the under 16 scheme be undertaken once funding is known and then, subject to the outcome and to the Portfolio Holder's satisfaction, the Council will confirm its participation in the Under 16's scheme.

The Cabinet agreed that whilst the schemes will encourage more people to participate in exercise, they are concerned that the proposals are not fully funded by the Government on a permanent basis. Therefore any participation at this stage is on a two year "pilot basis" only pending a decision on future central government funding and a detailed evaluation of the outcomes from any scheme which is implemented.

**8. HYTHE PROMENADE ENVIRONMENT IMPROVEMENT SCHEME –
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE – URGENT DECISION BY AN EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR (REPORT E – 3 SEPTEMBER 2008)(MINUTE NO. 41)**

(Report E to the Cabinet is confidential on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.)

The Cabinet has noted, in accordance with Financial Regulation 2.4, that the Executive Director has agreed a payment of £20,000 to be made to Geoffrey Osborne Limited, the contractor for the Environmental Improvement Scheme at Hythe Promenade.

**Cllr M J Kendal
CHAIRMAN**