

REPORT OF CABINET

(Meeting held on 1 September 2010)

1. HOWARDS MEAD, PENNINGTON – AFFORDABLE HOUSING SCHEME (REPORT A) (MINUTE NO. 25)

The Cabinet is supporting a proposal to fund the development of an affordable housing scheme at Howards Mead from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital reserves rather than prudential borrowing.

In light of the new Government's agenda to reduce the national deficit, the original funding allocation for the Howards Mead project has now changed. The Council was informed in July that funding for the project from the Local Authority New Build programme had been withdrawn as the Government did not want to add to the deficit by making councils enter into prudential borrowing.

The new funding offer of £600,000 from the National Affordable Housing Programme is conditional on NFDC funding the remainder of the scheme (estimated at £800,000) through other means. As at 31 March 2010 the HRA balance is £7.810m. The 2010/11 budget together with these proposals will reduce the balance by £3m therefore still leaving a healthy balance for future years.

The tenants, through their Policy and Report Group, and the Housing Review Panel have been consulted and fully support this proposal.

RECOMMENDED:

That the proposal to build nine affordable council owned homes at Howards Mead, Pennington be agreed with £800,000 towards the initial scheme cost of £1.4m being funded from the Housing Revenue Account capital reserves.

2. LYMINGTON CAR PARKING STUDY (REPORT B) (MINUTE NO. 26)

The Cabinet has agreed an action plan, to be progressed within financial guidelines as set out in Report B to them, for the management of parking in Lymington.

A study has been undertaken to try to ascertain future parking pressures in Lymington and provide suggestions on how these can be met. The study has provided data and ideas and the Council now has an estimate of the additional parking demand until 2018 and suggested ways of coping with that demand. A number of stakeholder consultations have taken place and the ideas and views of groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, Lymington Society and local Members have been taken into account and form an integral part of the study itself.

The Cabinet has considered the various proposals to create additional parking opportunities at peak times without having a detrimental effect on the town's environment. Given the comments of stakeholders and the report findings, they are of the view that it would be better to concentrate on the short and medium term options that could be followed. These could include the use of privately owned parking areas through discussions with the Chamber of Commerce; the changing of the ratio of long and short stay places; an investigation of a Saturday park and ride scheme from the Ampress site; and the possible implementation of a coach parking drop off/pick up point with a longer term parking facility out of town.

The action plan gives a stepped approach to mitigating the ever increasing pressures to provide for those wishing to visit Lymington during the peak summer period, particularly on Saturday Market Days, whilst acknowledging the need to work within the context of available resources. Members agreed that easy access and parking were vital to the economy of market towns around the district. They did not discount the possibility of some funding arising from car park charges being used to achieve the best results.

3. OPEN SPACE SCHEME IN TOTTON (REPORT C) (MINUTE NO. 27)

The Cabinet has agreed to consider an offer from Linden Homes to agree a variation to the Unilateral Section 106 Obligation arising from the successful appeal by Linden Homes, which affects open space schemes in Totton. The sites concerned are Southern Gardens and Little Testwood Farm.

Members agreed it is essential to safeguard the Southern Gardens site in its entirety and that the proposals in Report C to them will do that. In relation to the Little Testwood Farm site, members agreed it was important to keep all options open at this stage and that included the possibility of the land being used for employment in the future. The Council's Core Strategy specified a deficit of formal open space in Totton however this particular site could only be classed as informal open space. The Core Strategy did however identify a shortage of employment land in Totton.

The proposals give the opportunity for negotiation to provide choices for the future. Linden Homes is required to carry out a contamination survey of the Little Testwood Farm site and whether the Council take on this land will be dependent on the outcome of that survey. This site provides savings for the developer in the proposals. Members agreed it will therefore be more appropriate to consider, should there be a development that released value accrued in future, the extent to which that might be shared. It is important that the maximum benefit to the community and the council is secured.

Subject to the Planning Development Control Committee concurring with the decision of the Cabinet, members have also agreed to grant authority to appropriate officers and portfolio holders to enter into all necessary legal documentation to give effect to the proposal and to enter into all other necessary contracts to ensure the sites at Southern Gardens and Little Testwood Farm are brought into effective use.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT – OUTTURN PROJECTION BASED ON PERFORMANCE TO JULY 2010 (REPORT D) (MINUTE NO. 28)

The Cabinet has considered the financial performance for the first 4 months of 2010/2011 and the potential implications and detailed variations on a portfolio and committee basis. They have noted the change in the financial context since the budget was set in March and the impact this has already had in 2010/11 and the indications announced by the Government for future years.

Overall the forecast outturn position to date indicates an additional requirement of £394,000 of commitments over resources. This includes budget adjustments to reflect the withdrawal of the Local Public Services Agreement (LPSA) 2 and the likely income loss of £30,000 in this financial year (£50,000 in a full year) from the amendment of the Local Land Charges Rules 1977 by the Local Land Charges (Amendment) Rules 2010.

Further work will need to be done once the outcome of the Government's spending review in October is known. Members noted a correction in relation to the variations reported which gave an increase in capital budgets of £475,000 resulting in a forecast outturn of £16.553m.

5. CEMETERY REGULATIONS (REPORT E) (MINUTE NO. 29)

The Cabinet has agreed revisions to the Cemetery Regulations as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of Report E to them. They have also agreed that Eling and Blackfield cemeteries will have separate regulations to reflect the specific nature of those areas.

The Council is responsible for 7 operational cemeteries within the boundary of the New Forest; these are located at Eling, Blackfield, Beaulieu, Lymington, Sway, New Milton and Milford Road. The Council is also responsible for 2 closed cemeteries which are located at Hythe and Hordle Cliff.

The Environment Review Panel have been working on revised regulations. The existing cemetery regulations going back to 1979 had been written with a clear policy of enforcing lawned areas in all 7 cemeteries. However, what was actually happening did not reflect the regulations and there was a significant issue at both Eling and Blackfield cemeteries relating to the types of tributes left on graves. Members of the gypsy and travelling community also had concerns about issues relating to their unique cultural practices that might be compromised if the changes went ahead.

Following wide consultation and consideration by an Environment Panel Working Party, revised regulations have now been produced that are more realistic and enforceable. Work has also been undertaken at both district and county level with the gypsy and travelling community to enable their requirements to be accommodated.

6. PUSH BUSINESS PLAN – 2010-2012 (REPORT F) (MINUTE NO. 30)

The Cabinet has considered the PUSH Business Plan for 2010 – 2012. PUSH is required to produce a business plan each year setting out its proposed actions and priorities. The Plan has to be approved by the eleven local authority partners.

As the Government is currently reviewing this and other partnership arrangements, the proposed fundamental review has not been undertaken. This year's Business Plan is a holding position in view of possible changes.

RECOMMENDED:

That the PUSH Business Plan 2010-12, as set out in the appendix to Report F to the Cabinet, be approved as a basis for the operations of the PUSH Joint Committee.

**7. PUSH – REVISIONS TO CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS (REPORT G)
(MINUTE NO. 31)**

The Cabinet has considered a change in the constitutional arrangements relating to PUSH and agreed a supplementary legal agreement, as detailed in Appendix A to Report G to them. The change relates to ensuring indemnification protection for the lead authority when entering into contractual arrangements.

**Cllr B Rickman
CHAIRMAN**

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