

12 DECEMBER 2011

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 12 December 2011

- p Cllr J Penwarden – Chairman
- p Cllr Mrs A E McEvoy – Vice-Chairman

**Councillors:**

- p A R Alvey
- p Mrs D E Andrews
- p G C Beck
- p Ms R Bellows
- p Mrs S M Bennison
- p J E Binns
- p D A Britton
- p Mrs D M Brooks
- p S J Clarke
- p Mrs J L Cleary
- p G F Dart
- p S P Davies
- p W H Dow
- ap Ms L C Ford
- p A T Glass
- p M R Harris
- p C J Harrison
- p D Harrison
- p E J Heron
- p J D Heron
- p Miss A Hickman
- p Mrs A J Hoare
- p Mrs M D Holding
- p Mrs P Jackman
- p M J Kendal
- ap A N G Kilgour
- ap C Lagdon
- p Mrs M E Lewis
- p Mrs P J Lovelace

**Councillors:**

- p B D Lucas
- p Mrs M McLean
- p A D O'Sullivan
- p Sqn Ldr B M F Pemberton
- p N S Penman
- p L R Puttock
- p A W Rice
- p B Rickman
- p W S Rippon-Swaine
- p Mrs M J Robinson
- p Mrs A M Rostand
- p D J Russell
- p R F Scrivens
- ap Miss A Sevier
- p M D Southgate
- p A J Swain
- ap M H Thierry
- p A R Tinsley
- p D B Tipp
- p F P Vickers
- p M S Wade
- p S S Wade
- ap R A Wappet
- p Mrs C V Ward
- p J G Ward
- p C A Wise
- p Mrs B M Woodfield
- p P R Woods
- p Mrs P A Wyeth

**Officers Attending:**

D Yates, R Jackson, J Mascal, Mrs R Rutins and Ms M Stephens.

**30. MINUTES (REPORT A).**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2011 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Cllrs Britton, Brooks, Dart, C Harrison, D Harrison, Lucas, Penman, Rice, Russell, Scrivens, Southgate, M S Wade and S S Wade declared interests in Minute 34.

Cllr Kendal declared an interest in Minute 35.

**32. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

The Chairman's engagements undertaken since the last meeting of the Council were listed in the latest Information Bulletin published on the Council's website.

The Chairman would be hosting the annual Volunteers' Reception on Wednesday 14 December. The event would provide an opportunity to thank the volunteers for all their good work.

On Friday 16 December, the Chairman would be hosting the annual Veterans' Party at Dibden Golf Centre.

**33. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

There were none.

**34. REPORTS OF CABINET.**

Cllrs Britton, Mrs Brooks, Dart, D Harrison, Lucas, Penman, Russell, Scrivens and Southgate declared personal and prejudicial interests in item 3 of the report of Cabinet dated 7 December 2011 on the grounds that they were members of Totton and Eling Town Council which was negotiating with the Council. They left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Cllr C Harrison declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 3 of the report of Cabinet dated 7 December 2011 as a member of Hythe and Dibden Parish Council which was engaged in negotiations with this Council with regard to the Oak Road, car park. He left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Cllrs M S Wade and S S Wade declared personal and prejudicial interests in item 5 of the report of Cabinet dated 7 December 2011 as a family member worked for the tourism service. They left the meeting during consideration of this item.

The Leader of the Council, as Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the reports of the Cabinet held on 2 November and 7 December 2011.

**Item 3 (meeting held on 2 November 2011) - Medium Term Financial Plan 2011 – 2014 and 2011/12 Budget Update**

A member asked whether NFDC had any exposure to the European banks which had recently been downgraded and if the Council's funds and reserves were secure.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency reassured members that the Council's funds had not been invested with the relevant European banks and were in a stable position.

**Item 3 (meeting held on 7 December 2011) - Review of Car Parks Where Charges Do Not Currently Apply**

A member requested that the Cabinet reconsider their decision in respect of Oak Road car park, Dibden Purlieu. The Cabinet had been presented with a petition containing 1,715 signatures of local residents who wished the car park to remain open and free for all. The member expressed the view that the strength of feeling demonstrated by local residents should have been given due consideration and the status quo maintained.

The Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder pointed out that the matter had been referred to the Asset Management Group which would consider all options, including the status quo.

On the motion that the reports be received, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

That the reports be received.

**35. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22.**

Cllr Kendal declared a personal interest in this item as the Environment Portfolio Holder for Hampshire County Council. He did not consider his interest to be prejudicial and remained in the meeting.

Cllr C Harrison asked the Leader of the Council the following question:-

“New Forest District Council has decided to withdraw from the support given to the older people in sheltered housing in our area. In the face of financial cuts applied by Hampshire County Council across the whole of its area, I have been informed that NFDC is the only provider who has decided to withdraw from giving support to its local residents. These older people, some of whom are the most vulnerable people in our community, will in future not have their support package delivered by the Council that it voted for, but by one of NFDC’s neighbours.

As far as I am aware, this major decision to withdraw has not been through any Panel or full Council or Cabinet and so, as the basic information that I have received from NFDC does not seem to correlate with that I have seen from HCC, will you furnish members with all the detailed costings and information that were used to bring about this regrettable decision?”

The Leader of the Council responded that the responsibility for providing support to older people within the New Forest was Hampshire County Council’s (HCC). This responsibility would continue post 2012.

HCC had notified NFDC that following their review of the older people’s budget they would be making reductions of an average 17.5% across the County.

Since 2003 the HCC service had been supplied by NFDC management under contract.

Across Hampshire the service was provided predominantly by organisations other than district councils, predominantly housing associations. In 2011 the only district councils providing this service under contract were Winchester, Gosport and New Forest.

HCC was responsible for supporting people and received funds from Government and tax payers accordingly. Since 2003 the service had been provided under contract and this was due for renewal in April 2012.

The Council had been asked if it wished to bid again for the older person's contract for the next 3 years on the basis of a significantly reduced budget.

This followed on from an earlier decision not to provide the extra care contract from April 2012. This decision represented a loss to NFDC of over £100,000 of funding. While this was partially offset by some transfer of staff there remained a significant residual net cost to this Council that would have been compounded by the new older persons' contract.

The implications for NFDC of meeting this revised contract would be significant with existing staffing levels having to be reduced by approximately 50% (5 staff+) with all reduction related costs being met by NFDC council taxpayers and tenants.

This opportunity for a new provider to be brought in and for staff to transfer provided the fairest opportunity to provide a continuity of service to users.

Although disappointing it was not right for NFDC to bid for this new contract".

The Leader of the Council circulated to all members the financial position that faced the Council, namely: -

Current HCC Older Person's Funding to NFDC	£290,000
Proposed HCC Older Person's Funding to NFDC from 2012+	£218,000
Annual Reduction in Funding to NFDC	£72,000
% Reduction	25%
Total HCC Funding to NFDC 2011/12 (inc. Extra Care)	£398,500
Total HCC Funding Proposed to NFDC 2012/13	£218,000
Total Annual Reduction in Funding to NFDC	£180,500
% Total Annual Reduction in Funding	45%

Cllr C Harrison asked as a supplementary question why both Councils could not agree upon a level of funding which would continue to support the most vulnerable members of society and why this Council had not discussed this issue at a formal meeting of the Authority.

The Leader of the Council said that the decision had been based purely on the Council's future funding position.

### 36. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' QUESTIONS.

There were none.

**37. THE COUNCIL TAX 2012/2013 – SETTING THE BASE (REPORT B).**

The Council considered the proposed tax base for 2012/13.

A member commented that there were approximately 633 long term empty properties within the District. She was aware that officers were currently working with private owners to bring these properties back into use to let to those on the housing waiting list. If successful, this could reduce the pressure on the housing budget. She asked how members could assist with this initiative.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities replied that funding would shortly be sought to finance a project to bring empty properties in the New Forest back in to use. It was hoped that the scheme would reduce the housing waiting list.

Members could assist in this initiative by informing the housing department of long-term empty properties that they were aware of within their wards. This would help give the authority a comprehensive overview of the numbers of empty properties within the District.

**RESOLVED:**

That, in so far as the Council is empowered to do so by law:

- (a) The calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2012/13 be approved; and
- (b) Pursuant to the report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (Amendment) Regulations 2003, the amount calculated by this Council as its council tax base for the year 2012/13 be as follows, and as detailed in Appendix 1 to Report B.

<b>PARISH/TOWN</b>	<b>TAX BASE</b>
	<b>12/13</b>
Ashurst & Colbury	926.2
Beaulieu	508.7
Boldre	1059.1
Bramshaw	347.5
Bransgore	1881.1
Breamore	182.8
Brockenhurst	1846.5
Burley	791.0
Copythorne	1247.1
Damerham	241.0
Denny Lodge	156.5
East Boldre	398.3
Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley	596.7
Exbury & Lepe	114.7
Fawley	4942.1
Fordingbridge	2398.4
Godshill	228.5
Hale	267.5
Hordle	2473.8
Hyde	512.6
Hythe & Dibden	7854.2
Lymington & Pennington	7299.7
Lyndhurst	1410.2

Marchwood	2146.0
Martin	193.6
Milford on Sea	2763.9
Minstead	367.1
Netley Marsh	824.8
New Milton	11054.0
Ringwood	5526.1
Rockbourne	166.7
Sandleheath	283.1
Sopley	308.8
Sway	1690.9
Totton & Eling	9916.1
Whitsbury	98.7
Woodgreen	250.3
<b>Whole District</b>	<b>73274.3</b>

**38. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS.**

No changes to committees and panels were proposed by the political groups.

**39. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT**

The Chairman wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

CHAIRMAN