

28 JANUARY 2013

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a special meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 28 January 2013.

- p Cllr Mrs A E McEvoy – Chairman
- p Cllr Ms L C Ford – Vice-Chairman

**Councillors:**

- p A R Alvey
- p Mrs D E Andrews
- p G C Beck
- p Mrs S V Beeton
- ap 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
- 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 J Hickman
- p Mrs A J Hoare
- p Mrs M D Holding
- p Mrs P Jackman
- p M J Kendal
- p A N G Kilgour
- p C Lagdon
- p Mrs M E Lewis
- ap Mrs P J Lovelace

**Councillors:**

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

**Officers Attending:**

D Yates, R Jackson, J Mascal, Miss G O'Rourke, Mrs R Rutins and Ms M Stephens.

**56. MINUTES (PAPER A).**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2012 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were no declarations of interest made by any member in connection with an agenda item.

**58. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

There were none.

**59. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

The Leader of the Council announced that as part of the Brand New Forest Doing Better Business Programme, New Forest Business Partnership and the Council would be holding an Apprenticeship Evening at Careys Manor Hotel, Brockenhurst on Wednesday 13 February at 5.00pm.

Following the creation of the "Developing Young People" category at last year's New Forest Brilliance in Business Awards, the event aimed to promote the benefits of apprenticeships to students, young people and business within the New Forest.

By working with Totton and Brockenhurst Colleges, the New Forest Business Partnership and the National Apprenticeship Service, it was hoped that the event would highlight best practice amongst local businesses engaged with the apprenticeship schemes, provide support and promote access for both young people and businesses alike.

At the event, an existing apprentice would share how useful the scheme had been on a personal level. This would be followed by pre-planned one to one meetings with eight handpicked employers who provided local apprenticeship schemes. Invitations had been sent to Year 11 and Sixth Form students at Ringwood, Burgate and Priestlands Schools and Brockenhurst College. A similar event would follow for secondary schools in the east of the Forest.

**60. REPORT OF CABINET.**

Cllr Rickman, the Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the report of the Cabinet held on 16 January 2013. On the motion that the report be received and the recommendations adopted:

**(a) Item 1 – The Allocation of Developer Contributions**

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group welcomed the report and thanked officers involved for the progress being made. He queried whether, in the last ten years, the Council had returned any developers' contributions. The Leader replied that to his knowledge, no monies had been returned.

**(b) Item 3 – Review of Council Tax Discounts**

Some members queried why the Cabinet had not taken on board the recommendation of the Task and Finish Working Group that a premium of 50% on the Council tax should be imposed on properties that had been unoccupied for more than 2 years. They felt that it was important to

encourage home owners to bring properties back into use as quickly as possible, in the light of the shortage of housing in the New Forest.

In reply, the Leader of the Council said that the Cabinet, whilst agreeing with the concerns of the Task and Finish Working Group, felt that it was sensible to contact the owners of the properties concerned to establish the reason for their being unoccupied and to work with them to bring properties back into use. Other members spoke in support of the Leader and the approach taken by the Cabinet on this issue.

**(c) Item 5 – Business Rates – Approval of National Non-Domestic Rates Return NNDR1**

The Leader of the Council said that the deadline for the submission of the return was 31 January 2013. Unfortunately, the necessary details that would enable the completion of the NNDR1 form in its entirety were not yet available. An announcement was expected between 29 and 31 January. The Leader of the Council was therefore unable to advise the Council of the details of the NNDR1 form.

The Leader of the Council moved that the recommendation be amended to read as follows: -

“That, insofar as it is empowered to so by law, the Council agrees that the Executive Director (Section 151 Officer), in consultation with the Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder, be authorised to revise the calculations related to the NNDR1 form as appropriate for submission to the Government by 31 January 2013.”

The amendment was seconded.

A member expressed disappointment that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government had changed his approach on this issue and in doing so had caused difficulties for Council's in managing their finances. He suggested that this Council express its concerns via the Local Government Association and request that in future vital financial information be provided in good time.

Upon a vote the amendment was carried.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be received and the recommendations be adopted, subject to the recommendation at Item 5 (Business Rates – Approval of National Non-Domestic Rates) being amended to read as follows: -

“That, insofar as it is empowered to so by law, the Council agrees that the Executive Director (Section 151 Officer), in consultation with the Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder, be authorised to revise the calculations related to the NNDR1 form as appropriate for submission to the Government by 31 January 2013.”

CHAIRMAN