

REPORT OF CABINET

(Meeting held on 3 September 2014)

1. ADDENDUM TO ITEM 2 OF THE REPORT TO CABINET OF 6 AUGUST 2014 - BEACH HUTS AT MILFORD ON SEA (WESTOVER) (REPORT B) (MINUTE NO. 19)

At the meeting of the Cabinet held on 3 September the Leader updated Members on the progress that had been made since the August meeting. The officers had met with Halcrow, the company that provided the draft design and costings for replacing the huts, and had identified a draft programme for the way forward. Discussions are continuing on the procurement options. If the recommendation is approved by the Council a project board will be established within 10 working days.

2. APPELMORE HEALTH AND LEISURE CENTRE (MINUTE NO. 24)

The Leader has advised Members that the new gym equipment has been installed successfully at Applemore Health and Leisure Centre and is attracting many positive comments from customers. All of the new cardiovascular equipment is state of the art, with touch screens and integrated internet connections that customers can use to browse the web, watch TV or access social media while exercising; and also synchronise their workouts with their smartphone. Other members have remarked on the quality of the new equipment and praised the way in which the centre staff handled the change.

Unfortunately there is a delay in re-opening the swimming pools as a number of issues have arisen during the course of works. The Council is working closely with the contractors to resolve the outstanding issues and on current available information it is expected that the pools will re-open at the end of October. In the meantime, customers' patience with the delay is much appreciated. The focus of the Council is on bringing the pools back into use as soon as possible. At the appropriate time there will be a full review that will involve the Members from the Waterside.

3. RECORDING OF MEETINGS (REPORT A) (MINUTE NO. 25)

The Cabinet is recommending the purchase of equipment to allow the audio recording of the main meetings that are held in the Council Chamber at Appletree Court. The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 came into force at the end of July and gives all members of the public the right to record Council meetings, both video and audio recordings. The Cabinet support the principle of transparency of the Council's business and have concluded that simple audio recording, which will be relatively quick and easy to install in the Council Chamber, should be progressed as soon as possible. Other options, such as webcasting, which has more significant cost implications and greater technical requirements, can be considered at a later date, as can the installation of recording equipment in other meeting rooms.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) That meetings of the Council, the Cabinet and the Planning Development Control Committee held in the Council Chamber be recorded and that expenditure of approximately £7,000 be authorised for this purpose;**
- (b) That further consideration be given at a later stage to webcasting meetings, and to recording meetings which the public are entitled to attend in other meeting rooms at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst.**

4. NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2014-16 (REPORT B) (MINUTE NO. 26)

The Cabinet are recommending the adoption of an updated Waste Management Strategy to guide activities in this key service area for the period 2014-2016. This is a shorter time period than previously, to allow the Waste Management Strategy to continue to be aligned with the Council's Corporate Plan, which will be reviewed in 2016. The Strategy now proposed has been linked to the current Corporate Plan "Delivering for our Communities".

The draft Strategy was reviewed by a working party of Members and officers, who also looked at performance against the current strategy action plan. Many of the short and medium term actions in the current Strategy have been achieved and have formed the basis for new actions, particularly in the areas of the kerbside collection of glass and waste minimisation.

The proposed Strategy has been the subject of consultations with a number of organisations, including Project Integra and the County Council, and has taken account of the responses received.

RECOMMENDED:

That the revised New Forest District Council Waste Management Strategy 2014 – 2016, as attached as Appendix 1 to Report B to the Cabinet, be approved and adopted

5. DEPOTS REVIEW PROPOSAL (REPORT C) (MINUTE NO. 27)

The Council currently has three depots, at Claymeadow, Totton; Marsh Lane, Lymington and Christchurch Road, Ringwood. As the operational requirements have changed considerably over recent years a review of the depots was included as a key objective for 2013/14.

The review has concluded that although the Christchurch Road, Ringwood depot is operating close to capacity, it will remain viable in the medium term, and no action needs to be taken at this stage.

The Claymeadow, Totton depot is in a residential area, close to a school and falls well below ideal operational requirements. The replacement of this depot is therefore a priority.

The Marsh Lane, Lymington depot is currently operating at around maximum capacity. One option to improve the situation is to relocate the Building Works, central purchasing and stores functions. The site is adequate to continue to provide an operational base for the Waste and Recycling and Street Scene services.

The conclusion therefore is that there is a need to provide new or additional depot space, with a minimum requirement of 2-3 acres. The current valuation of industrial land is between £450,000 and £600,000 per acre. The Council's Estates and Valuation team have been actively looking for suitable sites and have made contact with local commercial property and land agents. The Cabinet have authorised the officers to continue this search, recognising that it is important to continue to invest in these important services to maintain their operational efficiency as circumstances change.

Should a suitable site be found it will be necessary to respond quickly and flexibly. The first stage will be to seek an Operator's Licence from the Traffic Commissioner as this is a pre-requisite for purchase. A design brief for the optimal use of the site and planning consent will also be required. The Cabinet are satisfied that the officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for the Environment and Finance and Efficiency, should be delegated powers to allow them to progress this project. A budget should also be allowed to develop the proposals and for the seeking of the necessary consents.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) That delegated authority be given to the two Executive Directors, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Property Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency to acquire land suitable for a Depot Site (in the region of 2 or 3 acres) should it become available on terms acceptable to the Council; and**
- (b) That a budget of £50,000 be approved to progress the development of any identified site to enable an outline plan to be developed enabling an application to be made to the Traffic Commissioner. Any application made to be subject to prior consultation by the two Executive Directors with the Environment and Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holders.**

6. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT – FORECAST OUTFURN (BASED ON PERFORMANCE TO JULY 2014) (REPORT D) (MINUTE NO. 28)

The Cabinet has been updated on key variations to the Council's General Fund and Capital budgets that have been identified since last reported to them in June.

The projected outturn on the General fund has reduced by a net figure of £55,000, to £18.649 million. Full details of the variations are set out in paragraph 3.3 of Report D to the Cabinet. The Cabinet has welcomed increases to the projected income from the Council's cemeteries and from land charges searches. The Asset Management Group instigate and monitor a number of projects to ensure the best use of the Council's various assets. They have identified a number of changes that need to be made to their projects, but are satisfied that the costs can be met through virements within existing budgets.

This Council is now the only authority using an old windows-based system to administer National Non-Domestic Rates. The Members' ICT Investment Panel has approved the business case to migrate this system onto Northgate ICT's system, which has a large user base. This Council already uses the Northgate system for its Council Tax and Benefits administration and there is consequently already considerable expertise in-house. The projected cost of the change is £79,000, and will deliver savings of around £20,000 per annum.

The Capital programme is now estimated at £20.551 million, a reduction of £2.681 million since June. Full details of these variations are set out in paragraph 4.2 of Report D to the Cabinet. Significant items are the early completion of the loan to the Lymington Harbour Commissioners and the rephasing of expenditure for the rebuilding of Foxhills Cottage at Dibden Golf Centre. A number of expenditure items relating to the replacement of the concrete slab and beach huts at Milford on Sea were recommended at the last meeting of the Cabinet (Minute 19, 6 August 2014 refers).

RECOMMENDED:

That funding of £79,000 (£62,000 in 2014/15 and £17,000 in 2016/17) be approved to finance a change in the computer system used to administer National Non-Domestic Rates to that offered by Northgate ICT.

**Councillor B Rickman
CHAIRMAN**