

**4 NOVEMBER 2015**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 4 November 2015

- \* Cllr B Rickman (Chairman)
- \* Cllr E J Heron (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

- \* Mrs S V Beeton
- \* J E Binns

**Councillors:**

- \* Mrs J L Cleary
- \* J D Heron

\*Present

**In attendance:**

**Councillors:**

Mrs D E Andrews  
W G Andrews  
P J Armstrong  
G C Beck  
Mrs S M Bennison  
Mrs F Carpenter  
S J Clarke  
Ms K V Crisell  
S P Davies  
Ms L C Ford  
A T Glass

**Councillors:**

L E Harris  
D Harrison  
Mrs A J Hoare  
A K Penson  
D M S Poole  
L R Puttock  
Mrs A M Rostand  
Mrs C V Ward  
C A Wise  
M L White

**Also In Attendance:**

Parish Cllr Mrs M McLean (Hythe and Dibden Parish Council) and G Waters (Tenant Cabinet Representative)

**Officers Attending:**

R Jackson, J Mascall, R Jackson, J Mascall, Miss J Debnam, Mrs R Drummond, K Green, A Groom, Mrs S Hamilton, Miss G O'Rourke and A Phipps

**Apologies**

None were received.

**28 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2015 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**29 MR R JACKSON**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Jackson to his first meeting of the Cabinet in the role of Chief Executive.

**30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**31 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No issues were raised under the public participation period.

**32 ST JOHN'S STREET CAR PARK, HYTHE: REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY AND DISPOSAL**

The meeting was addressed by Parish Cllr McLean of Hythe and Dibden Parish Council who presented the findings of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council to establish local views on the proposal. In the light of the consultation responses, with the majority of respondents supporting the disposal of the site for the construction of a supermarket by a discount food retailer, the Parish Council supported the principle of the disposal, but asked for the project to be held in abeyance to allow a community impact assessment to be prepared about the loss of parking and the measures necessary to mitigate any ill-effects.

In the light of this information the Cabinet considered whether to dispose of the St John's Street, Hythe car park to allow the construction of a supermarket on this and part of an adjoining site, in separate ownership. The terms of the proposed disposal, which was conditional upon the resolution of certain essential criteria, as set out in section 6 of the Report Item 4 considered by the Cabinet, were set out in detail.

It was noted that, in addition to the parish council, local District ward councillors supported the proposed disposal.

A marketing exercise had been undertaken to establish interest in the site. That exercise, together with additional advice from independent consultants, demonstrated that the proposed terms of the disposal, as set out in the report, fulfilled the Council's obligation under S123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to achieve the best possible price for the disposal of this asset.

The Cabinet was advised that the car park was currently under-used and that there was spare parking capacity across the village. Although 100 of the publicly available spaces in the village would, under this proposal, be under the ownership and control of the new supermarket, surveys of current car parking use demonstrated that the number of spaces provided should still be sufficient.

A retail impact assessment of the village in June 2015 had concluded that an additional supermarket would be of benefit to the majority of retail and service businesses in Hythe because the number of linked purpose shopping trips to the village centre should increase. An additional supermarket, as currently proposed, would strengthen rather than harm the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole.

The Cabinet considered that, as the majority of the concerns being raised would be addressed through the planning application process which would follow, delaying the project further, with the possibility that the supermarket operator would consequently withdraw, could not be justified. The benefits to Hythe and also to Fawley, where the building company that owned the adjoining site that was part of this proposal wished to relocate, outweighed the disbenefits that had been identified. The Cabinet was satisfied that this option would optimise the returns that could be gained from this asset, balanced with achieving significant benefits for the local community.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) ***That the St John's Street car park, Hythe, be declared surplus to direct operational requirements; and***
- (b) ***That the Executive Director and/or Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to finalise the terms and enter into all the necessary contracts to complete the sale of the Council's land at St John's Street, Hythe, to Lidl on the principles set out in Report Item 4 considered by the Cabinet.***

**33 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT - FORECAST OUTTURN BASED ON PERFORMANCE TO OCTOBER 2015**

The Cabinet considered the Council's financial performance for the period up to October 2015, including the key variations that had been identified since the last report in August.

The estimated outturn of the General Fund had reduced by £684,000 to £18.911 million, through a number of efficiencies and savings, including from delays in filling vacant posts.

It was proposed that savings currently identified against the General Fund should be set aside to cover part of the projected cost of the Local Plan Review and also as a contingency to meet the one-off costs of transitional arrangements to achieve future savings, without affecting reserves.

There was also a substantial reduction in the proposed Capital Programme, to £18.230 million, mainly from the rephasing of projects.

A further increase in the Housing Acquisitions and Development Budget of £2.492 million had been recommended by the Affordable Housing Project Board.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the revised outturn forecasts for the General Fund (paragraph 3.2 of Report Item 5 considered by the Cabinet). Capital (paragraph 4.1) and Housing Revenue Account (paragraph 5.1) be noted:

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (b) ***That additional expenditure of £2.492 million on Housing acquisitions and Developments be approved; and***

- (c) *That the Medium Term Financial Plan include provision for the transfer of £326,000 into the Local Plan Reserve and that £300,000 be set aside for any one-off costs required to support the delivery of future ongoing savings.*

**34 THE CORPORATE PLAN 2016-2020 -"OUR CORPORATE PLAN"**

The Cabinet considered the draft Corporate Plan to cover the period 2016-2020, entitled "Our corporate plan". A succinct format had been adopted, using graphics to emphasise the key points and ensure the plan was clear and accessible. The Plan emphasised the unique and special character of the Forest, including the practical constraints arising from the juxtaposition of internationally designated wildlife and landscape areas with significant conurbations in adjacent areas; and a relatively older resident population.

The Corporate Plan was a key strategy document that would be underpinned by a suitable and proportionate performance management framework that would set out how the Plan will be delivered and monitored.

The new Corporate Plan should be agreed before April 2016.

**RESOLVED:**

That the draft of the new Corporate Plan be approved to form the basis of further consideration by the overview and scrutiny panels and the Industrial Relations Committee.

CHAIRMAN