

15 OCTOBER 2018

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held in the Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 15 October 2018

* Cllr M J Kendal (Chairman)

* Cllr A T Glass (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- * A R Alvey
- * Mrs D E Andrews
- * W G Andrews
- * P J Armstrong
- * G C Beck
- * Mrs S M Bennison
- * J E Binns
- * G R Blunden
- * D A Britton
- * Mrs D M Brooks
- * Mrs F Carpenter
- * Mrs L D Cerasoli
- * S J Clarke
- * Mrs J L Cleary
- * I C Coombes
- * Ms K V Crisell
- * S P Davies
- * A H G Davis
- * W H Dow
- * Ms L C Ford
- * R L Frampton
- * A A Gossage
- * L E Harris
- * M R Harris
- * D Harrison
- * E J Heron
- * J D Heron
- * Mrs A J Hoare
- * Mrs M D Holding

Councillors:

- * Mrs C Hopkins
- * Mrs E L Lane
- M Langdale
- Mrs P J Lovelace
- * Mrs R Matcham
- Mrs A E McEvoy
- * A D O'Sullivan
- J M Olliff-Cooper
- * N S Penman
- * A K Penson
- * D M S Poole
- * L R Puttock
- * B Rickman
- * W S Rippon-Swaine
- * Mrs A M Rostand
- * D J Russell
- Miss A Sevier
- * M A Steele
- * M H Thierry
- * Mrs B J Thorne
- * D B Tipp
- * D N Tungate
- * A S Wade
- * Mrs C V Ward
- * J G Ward
- * M L White
- C A Wise
- * Mrs P A Wyeth

*Present

Officers Attending:

C Read, Mrs R Rutins, Mrs M Sandhu and Mrs K Wardle

Apologies:

Cllrs Mrs Lovelace, Mrs McEvoy, Miss Sevier and Wise.

34 MINUTES**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2018 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Kendal disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in minute no 42, Questions to Portfolio Holders Under Standing Order 22A (Question 2).

36 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported that he had attended a number of engagements including:

- Age Concern New Forest AGM
- Mayor of Christchurch's Civic Day: This would be the last Civic Day for the Borough of Christchurch as Christchurch was being amalgamated with other neighbouring authorities
- Christopher Tower Reference Library Open Day at New Forest Heritage Centre
- Minstead Trust AGM: The Trust worked with people with learning disabilities. He reported that statistics showed that those with learning disabilities had lower absentee rates at work. He urged Members who were employers to consider the Minstead Trust when fulfilling vacancies.

The Chairman's Charity dinner to raise funds for Oakhaven Hospice in Totton would be held on 8 December 2018 at Beaulieu Palace. The Chairman encouraged members to purchase one of the remaining seven tickets.

The Chairman invited Members to attend an Armistice Day Commemoration at Appletree Court on Monday, 12 November 2018 from 10.30 am.

37 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader reported that the British Construction Industry had awarded the beach huts at Milford on Sea the "Climate Resilience Project of the Year".

38 BY-ELECTION FOR DISTRICT COUNCIL'S PENNINGTON WARD - 13 SEPTEMBER 2018

The report of the Returning Officer on the by-election held on 13 September 2018 to fill the vacancy for the Pennington Ward, was noted. Cllr Andrew Gossage (Conservative) had been elected.

39 REPORT OF GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 7 September 2018.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendations be adopted.

40 REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Leader of the Council, as Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the report of the meeting held on 3 October 2018.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and noted.

41 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22

There were none.

42 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22A

Cllr Kendal disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Question 2, as a Member of Hampshire County Council, which had granted funding to the IncuHive business centre. He concluded that there were no grounds under common law to prevent him from remaining in the meeting and there was no discussion on this item.

Question 1

From Cllr Alex Wade to Cllr Jill Cleary, Portfolio Holder for Housing Services:

"Will she give reassurance that the tail-end of this administration and any future Conservative led administration won't borrow money to build much needed council housing only to see it lost under the "Right to Buy" scheme?"

Answer

The Portfolio Holder responded that the building of council housing was much needed. The current Administration was determined to do all it could to deliver new homes in light of the desperate need for affordable housing in the District. The Council would utilise its existing Housing Revenue Account reserves, capital receipts and prudent borrowing in order provide housing. The Council had committed to spend £19 million on the acquisition and building of much needed homes for social rent in the District in the current financial year.

The Right to Buy Scheme had been set through national legislation. The number of new homes that the Council planned to acquire and build in the future far outweighed those that would be lost through Right to Buy.

The Council would continue to accelerate the acquisition and new build programme to produce more affordable housing in order to meet the great need for affordable housing in the District.

Question 2**From Cllr Mark Steele to Cllr Michael Harris, Portfolio Holder for Local Economic Development, Property & Innovation**

When many think of economic development, they think of creating something new – new industrial sites, new marketing campaigns, new talent attraction, and new business recruitment. **But**, in many of our communities in the New Forest, the key to economic competitiveness in some instances I believe is repurposing and improving existing assets, indeed in some of the New Forest Communities, this could mean a shift from building a new business park to redeveloping existing real estate. Can the Portfolio Holder for Local Economic Development, Property and Innovation - Cllr Michael Harris please confirm, how are we maximizing our existing assets in the New Forest community?

Answer

The Portfolio Holder reported that the Economic Development Strategy recognised that there was an undersupply of suitable business units in the District, which restricted economic growth. The Council had disposed of land surplus to operational requirements, including a former car park sold for £1.95 million and land at Hardley Industrial Estate which had been sold for £675,000.

The Council held 23 commercial properties valued at approximately £9.6 million, providing an annual rental income of £673,000, a gross yield of 7%. The total income received from all non-housing leases was approximately £900,000 per annum.

The Portfolio Holder reported that the Council was helping to deliver repurposed modern business centres which would enable job creation, business growth and the development of local skills. He gave the example of the C4Si site on the former National Park Headquarters in Lymington, which had received seed funding from the District Council and Hampshire County Council and the former Advertiser and Times site in New Milton which would reopen as a modern IncuHive business centre.

The Portfolio Holder reported that the achievements would not have been possible without the hard work of staff. The Council's Economic Development Strategy set out ways to maximise assets in the District.

43 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

There were no changes.

CHAIRMAN