

**3 OCTOBER 2018**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 3 October 2018

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

**Councillors:**

- \* Mrs D E Andrews
- J E Binns
- \* Mrs J L Cleary

**Councillors:**

- \* M R Harris
- \* J D Heron
- \* Mrs A J Hoare

\*Present

**In attendance:**

**Councillors:**

W G Andrews  
Mrs S M Bennison  
S P Davies  
A T Glass  
A A Gossage  
Mrs M D Holding  
M Langdale

**Councillors:**

A D O'Sullivan  
A K Penson  
W S Rippon-Swaine  
Mrs A M Rostand  
Mrs C V Ward  
M L White  
C A Wise

**Officers Attending:**

R Jackson, Miss G O'Rourke, C Read, Mrs M Sandhu, A Bethune, Miss J Debnam, Mrs L Evans, Mrs S Hamilton, Miss J Moles and Mrs R Rutins

**Apologies:**

None were received.

**32 CLLR A A GOSSAGE**

The Chairman was pleased to welcome Cllr Gossage, the newly elected Councillor for Pennington, to his first meeting of the Cabinet.

**33 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2018 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**34 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**35 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No issues were raised in the public participation period.

**36 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES**

Members were advised that the Boundary Commission was recommending that the Test Valley wards of Blackwater and Dun Valley should become part of the New Forest East constituency, while the Boldre & Sway ward would be transferred from New Forest East to New Forest West. This was to achieve the necessary increase in the number of constituents represented by each MP while maintaining a degree of consistency in constituency size. The proposals would produce an electorate of 72,500 for New Forest East and 71,289 for New Forest West. Plans showing the existing and proposed constituency boundaries were displayed at the meeting.

The next and final stage of the review process was that the Government would introduce a Statutory Instrument to Parliament. This process was not open to local authorities or individuals to make further representations to the Commission.

**37 SMARTER WORKING - THE CASE FOR CHANGE**

The Cabinet considered a strategic approach to the introduction of “Smarter Working”, together with an implementation and budget plan for the period 2018 to 2021.

Members were advised that “Smarter Working” was essential for transforming and streamlining the Council to meet current financial pressures and to plan for the longer term. This strategic approach would be characterised by flexibility, with the processes that people were asked to work with continuously challenged to make sure they were fit for purpose. Performance management would focus on results and outcomes.

It was expected that this approach would achieve greater productivity. The cost and environmental impact of work would be reduced as space was shared and used more intensively. This would accord staff more choice about when, where and how they worked, supported and connected by effective and appropriate technology. It would also meet the public’s increasing expectation that they should be able to interact with the Council through technological means, such as smart phones. It was emphasised however, that the needs of older customers, who wanted to deal with the Council face to face, would continue to be met.

The business case in Section 4 of Report Item 4 to the Cabinet set out the anticipated financial and non-financial benefits.

The programme for implementing change was set out in Section 5 of Report Item 4 to the Cabinet. This recognised the constraints that applied to the process, including budgets, limitations on the investment in IT and the availability and suitability of accommodation. The timetable would continue to evolve however as opportunities arose to effect further change.

The budget investment plan was set out in Section 6 of Report Item 4 to the Cabinet. Effective use of new technologies, based upon the use of hybrid computers, was central to “Smarter Working”. With the right technology choices staff could work more effectively both in the office and away from it, using the internet, broadband and wireless communications to work at the most effective times and locations. The aim was also to create an attractive and inspiring working environment across the Council that supported the new work styles, increased the adaptability of space and enhanced performance. In future there would be a mix of work and meeting spaces where work could be carried out.

Budget provision for “Smarter Working” had been included in the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan capital programme for the period up to 2020/21 and totalled £3.5 million over 3 years. The investment programme included the replacement of the Meridio document filing system and the current telephone system with Office 365 and SharePoint for document management. The full implementation of Office 365 was estimated to cost £750,000 over the next 18 months, with an additional revenue cost of £200,000 per annum. A further £500,000 would be needed for the first stage of changes to accommodation at Appletree Court, on the ground floor of the South Wing.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the strategic approach to “Smarter Working”, as set out in Report Item 4 to the Cabinet, be endorsed; and
- (b) That the use of £1.25 million of the agreed Smarter Working Budget included in the Medium Term Financial Plan be approved for the period 2018 – 2020.

**38 REVIEW OF SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS WITH THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY RELATING TO THE PLANNING SERVICE**

The Cabinet considered how to achieve the future efficient and cost-effective delivery of 5 of the District Council’s service areas that were currently provided by the National Park Authority under service level agreements. The majority of these agreements expired on 31 March 2019. Two of these services were core to the delivery of the planning function and the context within which they would be provided was changing as the Council’s new Local Plan introduced much higher levels of development, that must be managed effectively to safeguard high quality environments. Currently, the separation of the sources of advice on trees and building conservation from the Council’s wider planning service was perceived to hinder taking a joined up approach.

Having considered the options available, the Cabinet concluded that the tree and building conservation services should be brought back in-house, while new arrangements should be sought for the provision of the specialist ecological and archaeological services. The transfer of the tree and conservation functions back in-house would involve the TUPE transfer of staff.

The Council also subscribed to a People and Ranger service, provided by the National Park Authority, and funded from developers’ contributions to meet part of the Council’s obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to mitigate the impact of recreational pressure on the New Forest Natura 2000 site. It was proposed that the current arrangements with the National Park Authority should be extended until March 2021, pending a further review in

about 18 months once changes to the Government's intentions on this issue became clearer.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That in relation to the Tree and Conservation Services:
  - i. Notice be given to the National Park Authority that New Forest District Council will not be seeking to continue with the Service Level Agreements regarding the provision of the Tree Service and the Conservation Service beyond 31 March 2019.
  - ii. Discussions be entered into with the New Forest National Park Authority to secure the transfer of records to this Council relating to the Tree and the Conservation Services during the life of the present SLA arrangements.
  - iii. Officers commence the process of TUPE transfers and recruitment of Conservation and Tree Service staff;
- (b) That in relation to Ecology and Archaeology Services both Hampshire County Council and the New Forest National Park Authority be invited to put forward proposals to this Council for the future provision of these services; and
- (c) That in relation to the People and Wildlife Ranger Service the current arrangements with the National Park Authority be extended until March 2021.

**39 COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY CONSULTATION**

The Cabinet considered the response to be made in respect of the consultation by Hampshire Fire and Rescue and the Isle of Wight Council on the proposed creation of a combined fire authority for Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. All members of the Council and members of the public were encouraged to respond to the consultation on an individual basis, and details of the routes through which responses could be submitted were set out in the report.

The rationale and background to the proposed new arrangements were set out in detail in Appendix 1 to Report Item 6 to the Cabinet.

**RESOLVED:**

That the following response be provided to the consultation on the proposed creation of a new combined Fire Authority for Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

“That the District Council recognises the pressure on all public bodies to deliver services in the most efficient way, in the face of financial and other challenges. Having examined the proposals and the expected outcomes, the District Council supports them, whilst emphasising the need for a smooth transition, and for the local service to be protected so there is no detrimental effect on public safety.”

**40 DATES OF MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED:**

That the following dates of meetings of the Cabinet be approved (All Wednesdays starting at 10.00 a.m.)

5 June 2019  
3 July 2019  
7 August 2019  
4 September 2019  
2 October 2019  
6 November 2019

4 December 2019  
No meeting in January 2020  
5 February 2020  
4 March 2020  
1 April 2020  
6 May 2020

CHAIRMAN