

6 NOVEMBER 2019

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Wednesday, 6 November 2019

- * Cllr Barry Rickman (Chairman)
- * Cllr Edward Heron (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- * Diane Andrews
- * Jill Cleary
- * Michael Harris

Councillors:

- * Jeremy Heron
- * Alison Hoare
- * Mark Steele

*Present

In attendance:

Councillors:

Sue Bennison
Steve Clarke
Anne Corbridge
Steve Davies
Jan Duke
Barry Dunning
Allan Glass
Andrew Gossage

Councillors:

David Hawkins
Christine Hopkins
Martyn Levitt
Alan O'Sullivan
Neville Penman
Joe Reilly
Steve Rippon-Swaine
Christine Ward

Officers attending:

Alan Bethune, Rebecca Drummond, Bob Jackson, Grainne O'Rourke, Colin Read, Manjit Sandhu, Claire Upton-Brown, Kate Williams and Matt Wisdom.

Apologies

There were no apologies for absence received from Cabinet Members.

37 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2019, be confirmed and signed.

38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests made by Cabinet Members.

Cllr E Heron, for transparency purposes, declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of item 4 on the agenda, Medium Term Financial Plan 2019 Onwards, at minute 42 below. The interest concerned his membership of Hampshire County

Council, which was the disposal authority in respect of the waste collection process. He concluded that there were no grounds under common law to prevent him from remaining in the meeting to speak and vote.

39 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no issues raised during the public participation period.

40 HYTHE AND DIBDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REFERENDUM

The Leader of the Council reported that on 29 October 2019, the first referendum on a Neighbourhood Plan within New Forest District took place in Hythe and Dibden Parish.

The plan was prepared by Hythe and Dibden Parish Council and had been the subject of an Examination by an independent planning inspector.

At the referendum voters were asked:

“Do you want New Forest District Council and New Forest National Park Authority to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Hythe and Dibden to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area?”

85% of voters answered ‘yes’ to the question. The turnout was 14.6%.

Having achieved majority support at the referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan will come into force as part of the statutory development plan for the area and is a material consideration in planning decisions within the Parish.

The Council will now proceed to formally adopt the plan at Cabinet and Full Council in December 2019.

41 THE CORPORATE PLAN 2020-2024 - 'COMMUNITY MATTERS' (CONSULTATION DRAFT)

RESOLVED:

That the draft corporate plan 2020-2024, ‘Community Matters’, be approved for consultation.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

No.

PORTFOLIOS:

Leader and Corporate Affairs/All.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:

As set out in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):

None.

DISCUSSION:

The Leader of the Council, on behalf of the Cabinet, placed on record its thanks to the Service Manager – Elections and Business Improvement, and all Portfolio Holders, for their work in bringing forward the various components of the draft Corporate Plan. He then invited Portfolio Holders to report on highlights within their areas of responsibility.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure drew particular attention to the third priority within the Portfolio, which was “using contributions to deliver projects that mitigate the impact of development on the natural environment.” A key measure of success within the Portfolio would be delivering development whilst protecting and enhancing the unique natural environment of the New Forest.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing Services drew particular attention to the third priority within the Portfolio, which was “improving the housing circumstances of those most in need.” The Council’s new Allocations Policy sought to allocate housing in a fairer way to those most in need. The ambition to bring as many empty homes back into use as possible would contribute towards the overall ambition of managing and reducing the costs of emergency bed and breakfast accommodation.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Affairs reported on the opportunities to modernise Customer Services, by responding to changing needs, alongside the ambition to ensure the New Forest remained a safe place to live and work.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Investment and Corporate Services highlighted the importance of delivering a balanced budget for the community of the New Forest, whilst modernising ICT across the organisation to deliver real savings and efficiencies, and enhance frontline services.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Wellbeing, in paying tribute to the Council’s Health and Leisure team, welcomed the opportunity to attract more funding to address health inequalities and promote sport.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Services highlighted the cross-cutting nature of the Portfolio, in dealing with the challenges such as Climate Change, pollution and air quality, and littering. The overriding ambition was to protect the people, wildlife and environment of the New Forest.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development welcomed the “Community Matters” theme of the draft Corporate Plan and highlighted that the business community was very much a key element of this. In encouraging the 8000 New Forest businesses to be vibrant and effective, the Council’s two sources of income in Council Tax and Business Rates could be protected and enhanced.

Members of the Council welcomed the new format of the draft Corporate Plan.

42 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2019 ONWARDS

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approve:-

- a) the emerging draft Medium Term Financial Plan to 2023/24 as set out within this report and that this forms the basis of the Council's 2020/21 budget that will be reported in February 2020;
- b) a strategy of contributing savings arising from the favourable 2019 valuation to the Budget Equalisation Reserve for the next three years; and
- c) that subject to Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel support for the Asset Maintenance and Replacement Programme for 2019/20, initial preparatory works can commence.

That Cabinet recommend to Full Council that:-

- d) delegated authority is given to the S151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Investment and Corporate Services, to make pre-payments of employer contributions to the Pension Fund.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

Report to Cabinet and Full Council.

PORTFOLIO:

Finance, Investment and Corporate Services.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:

As set out in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):

Cllr E Heron, for transparency purposes, declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item.

The interest concerned his membership of Hampshire County Council, which was the disposal authority in respect of the waste collection process. He concluded that there were no grounds under common law to prevent him from remaining in the meeting to speak and vote.

DISCUSSION:

The Portfolio Holder welcomed the clarity arising from the one year settlement but urged caution beyond this, particularly in respect of the investment returns seen within the pension fund which were always subject to any wider changes in the global economy.

43 COMPULSORY PURCHASE AND OVERRIDING EASEMENTS POLICY

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet recommends to Full Council that the draft Compulsory Purchase and Overriding Easements Policy is adopted, subject to a minor amendment to the bullet points in paragraph 6.1, as set out in Annex A of the report.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

Report to Cabinet and Full Council.

PORTFOLIO:

Planning and Infrastructure.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:

As set out in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):

None.

DISCUSSION:

The Portfolio Holder highlighted the responses received to the consultation and reminded Members that whilst it was always hoped that discussions with developers would bring about positive conclusions without the use of these powers, the policy was an important tool that the Council could use if absolutely necessary.

CHAIRMAN