

**5 AUGUST 2020**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Wednesday, 5 August 2020

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

**Councillors:**

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

\*Present

**Councillors:**

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

**In attendance:**

**Councillors:**

Alan Alvey  
Sue Bennison  
Geoffrey Blunden  
Steve Clarke  
Anne Corbridge  
Keith Craze  
Jack Davies  
Steve Davies  
Jacqui England  
Allan Glass  
David Hawkins

**Councillors:**

Maureen Holding  
Christine Hopkins  
Martyn Levitt  
Alan O'Sullivan  
Neville Penman  
Alvin Reid  
Joe Reilly  
Steve Rippon-Swaine  
Derek Tipp  
Christine Ward

**Officers Attending:**

Bob Jackson, Grainne O'Rourke, Colin Read, Manjit Sandhu, Matt Wisdom and Sara Hamilton

**Apologies:**

There were no apologies for absence received from Cabinet Members.

**101 CHRISTINE FORD**

The Leader of the Council was sad to announce the death of Former Councillor Christine Ford, who sadly passed away on 1 August 2020.

Christine had a long and distinguished record of service to the community after being elected to the Council in February 2002 representing the Ringwood North ward. She served as consort to Chairman Former Councillor Michael Pemberton during 2004/05 and then served as Chairman herself in 2013/14, completing a highly successful year in the role.

Christine was a very much liked and respected Member of the Council, with a keen eye and a kind heart, only standing down last May.

Members recorded their sincere condolences to her family and friends.

## **102 MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2020, be confirmed and signed.

## **103 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

## **104 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no issues raised during the public participation period.

## **105 RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS - COVID-19 - UPDATE**

The Leader of the Council provided a verbal update on the Council's response to Coronavirus – COVID-19.

It was noted that on Monday 3 August 2020, the Council's Health and Leisure Centres began their re-opening on a phased basis. The Leader recorded his particular thanks to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Wellbeing and officers in this area for the efforts undertaken to allow this phased re-opening to happen.

The announcement from the Prime Minister last week of a pause in lockdown easing was noted as a reminder to be vigilant in the changes needed to everyone's lifestyles. Plans had started to carefully enable more Council staff to return to Appletree Court offices from September 2020.

The Leader remained pleased in the way the Council had responded in supporting the local community with the services they require and much often more during the "lockdown" period. The approval of the Fawley Waterside planning application was noted as a good example of business as usual being performed by the Planning Committee, albeit in a virtual way. The Council had recently implemented a new website as well as a new telephone system.

## **106 COVID-19 RECOVERY - REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

The Leader of the Council reported verbally on the progress of the Council's four COVID-19 Recovery Task and Finish Groups. It was expected that the Cabinet would finalise an Emergency Budget for recommendation to the Council in September 2020. He recorded his thanks to all Members who had contributed to this work which had encouraged lively and interesting discussions alongside local insights. Whilst some of the external impact assessment work would likely continue until later into the Autumn, it was anticipated that much of the internal recovery work would be picked up through the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panels as business as usual returned.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Services reported on the very recently held COVID-19 Recovery – Council Services Task and Finish Group on 29 July 2020, which studied the impact on Operations. The Portfolio Holder expressed her support for all of the services within the Portfolio that had responded to recent challenges, which in some cases had increased costs. Officers had already been asked following this meeting to begin working on mitigation measures to include a specific review of the Public Conveniences, including the ongoing viability of the two toilets (Calshot and Barton-on-Sea) that had remained closed. Furthermore, regular reviews on the number of hired vehicles required would also be undertaken.

#### **107 COVID-19 RECOVERY - COUNCIL SERVICES - HOMELESSNESS**

##### **RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet approve the following actions:-

- (a) To continue to accommodate those vulnerable people already placed into emergency accommodation during COVID-19;
- (b) To explore and support move on options for all of these vulnerable people to resolve their homelessness once and for all; and
- (c) To bring on board at the earliest opportunity existing projects to create further Council owned temporary accommodation and to seek new opportunities for further units.

##### **REASONS FOR DECISION:**

As set out in the report.

##### **KEY DECISION:**

No.

##### **PORTFOLIO:**

Housing Services

##### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:**

As set out in the report.

##### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):**

None.

##### **DISCUSSION:**

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report and highlighted the work of the recent COVID-19 Recovery – Council Services Task and Finish Group which studied the Council's response to homelessness at the height of the pandemic. It was noted that a proactive and organised approach had been fundamental to tackle the significant increase in homeless and rough sleeping cases that the Council was presented with. It was the previous work undertaken to adopt a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy that put the Council in a very good position to respond to what was a very challenging time.

Whilst there had been a financial impact arising from all the actions taken, these were clearly the right thing to do to manage the significant numbers of homeless households and individuals. Discussions would continue with Government over any available funding but regardless, the Council remained committed to delivering the vital services in this area.

## **108 COVID-19 RECOVERY - FINANCE & RESOURCES**

### **RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet approve the following actions:-

- (a) That NFDC maximise the support funding reimbursement available from the Income Support Scheme;
- (b) That Cabinet continue to plan its Emergency Budget based on the worst-case scenario but keep the plan fluid based on latest and most to date announcements on funding support;
- (c) That NFDC utilise the new allowances on Collection Fund deficits, and spread the financial burden out over the allowable period;
- (d) That Cabinet approve the adjustments to Asset Maintenance Budgets, resulting in savings to the 2020/21 budget totalling £212,000;
- (e) That Cabinet approve the adjustments to reserve transfers originally planned in 2020/21;
- (f) That Portfolio Holders carry out Fees and Charges reviews to ensure all fees are set in line with Council Policy, and to have regard to specific COVID-19 income losses in need of recovering; and
- (g) To progress Hardley Depot scheme through the ITT stage, to enable the full business case evaluation to take place later in 2020.

### **REASONS FOR DECISION:**

As set out in the report.

### **KEY DECISION:**

Yes.

### **PORTFOLIO:**

Finance, Investment and Corporate Services / All.

### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:**

As set out in the report.

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):**

None.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report and drew attention to the Portfolio Holder comments. Whilst the efforts to deliver a fully funded revised budget for 2020/21 were excellent, it would remain a challenge to revise the Medium Term Financial

Plan in the context of the longer term financial impact of COVID-19. However, the Council was well placed to meet the challenge.

**109 VISION FOR THE WATERSIDE****RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet endorses the approach to the consideration of the Vision for the Waterside document.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

As set out in the report.

**KEY DECISION:**

No.

**PORTFOLIO:**

Planning and Infrastructure

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:**

As set out in the report.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):**

None.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report and highlighted the upcoming consideration of the draft document at a Special Meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 13 August 2020. Town and Parish Councils on the Waterside would also be invited to this meeting. It was noted that the document was a draft overall strategy and prospectus that dealt with the aspirations for the Waterside rather than a comprehensive set of detailed plans for the area. Further relevant documents would provide this level of detail. Government and other partners could use the final document once adopted as an indicator of the vision as part of grant funding applications.

The Chairman of the Council placed on record his support for the draft document.

In response to questions relating to visions for other areas of the District, whilst there were no current plans for similar documents, if potential for funding bids became available, the Council would consider developing any appropriate documents to support this.

**110 ENJOY SUMMER SAFELY CAMPAIGN**

The Leader of the Council confirmed that the position relating to this item of business had moved on since the publication of the agenda and therefore the recommendations would not be considered by the Cabinet.

The Portfolio Holder reported that “Enjoy Summer Safely England” had been oversubscribed with £7.7m in bids received against an available award of £3.1m. Consequently, this meant that with some disappointment, the Go New Forest Bid had been unsuccessful, although it was considered to be a good bid.

Despite this set back, it was reported that the Visit Hampshire bid which promoted the whole of Hampshire through the campaign, including the New Forest, was successful. The focus of the Visit Hampshire bid was on driving demand to a broad range of visitor attractions, accommodation, retail and hospitality, and outdoor activity providers across the county from local residents and visitors within a 1-2 hour drivetime.

New Forest attractions and countryside would feature prominently in the Visit Hampshire campaign media (Print, Digital, Social & Out of Home) and it was anticipated that the local hospitality businesses would benefit from this award.

CHAIRMAN