

19 FEBRUARY 2020

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Wednesday, 19 February 2020

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

Councillors:

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

Councillors:

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

*Present

In attendance:

Councillors:

Sue Bennison
Geoffrey Blunden
Anne Corbridge
Keith Craze
Barry Dunning
Allan Glass
Andrew Gossage

Councillors:

Martyn Levitt
Alan O'Sullivan
Neville Penman
Alvin Reid
Joe Reilly
Christine Ward

Officers Attending:

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

Apologies:

There were no apologies for absence received from Cabinet Members.

66 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2020, be confirmed and signed.

67 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

68 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no issues raised during the public participation period.

69 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN / ANNUAL BUDGET 2020/21

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet recommend to Full Council that:-

- (a) there is a General Fund Net Budget Requirement in 2020/21 of £19,194,110 as set out in Appendix 5 to the report, including the transfers to and from reserves, as outlined in Appendix 5d to the report;
- (b) the Band D Council Tax for 2020/21 shall be £178.36;
- (c) the General Fund Capital Programme for 2020/21 of £9.894m, as set out in Appendix 6 to the report be approved; and
- (d) the site licence fees and service charges at Stillwater Park be increased by 2.4% in line with RPI inflation.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

Report to Cabinet and Full Council.

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 confirmed that the Council continued to maintain a robust financial position, despite the ever changing world of Local Government.

The Cabinet was pleased to note the continued priority placed on Smarter Working initiatives and the Council's ICT Infrastructure investment.

The Council's Chief Finance Officer commented on section 9 of the report, which highlighted the statutory requirement for a commentary on the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of reserves held. As the report confirmed, it was reported that the Chief Finance Officer was satisfied with the robustness of the process that had been followed in order to produce an accurate budget for 2020/21. The Cabinet noted the reviews and activities as outlined in paragraph 6.6 of the report, as each of these could have a significant weighting on the shape of the Council's finances extending over the medium term. Furthermore, the Chief Finance Officer,

having considered the Council's overall spending plans extending over the medium term, confirmed that he considered the adequacy of reserves to be suitable and appropriate based on the proportionality against the Council's budget.

70 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET AND HOUSING PUBLIC SECTOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PROGRAMME 2020/21

RESOLVED:

1. That the Cabinet approve the proposed planned maintenance and improvement works programme for 2020/21 – 2022/2023, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.
2. That the Cabinet recommend to Full Council that:-
 - a) the HRA budget as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed;
 - b) from 05 April 2020, an increase in rents of 2.7% from the 2019/20 weekly rent level, in accordance with Government guidelines, be agreed;
 - c) from 05 April 2020, an increase in service charges of 1.7% from the 2019/20 weekly service charge level, be agreed;
 - d) from 05 April 2020, an increase of 30p per week (plus VAT where applicable) in garage rents, be agreed; and
 - e) a Housing Capital Programme to 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 3, be agreed.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

Report to Cabinet and Full Council.

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 that the Council would continue to invest heavily in existing housing stock. Work had taken place to implement a suite of new policies and standards had been raised significantly across the housing portfolio.

The Cabinet welcomed the news that newly let void properties would have freshly painted walls which not only raised standards from previous arrangements but was not standard practice for many Housing Authorities.

Furthermore, a £45 million capital project budget over the next three years was highlighted, specifically for the delivery of new Council dwellings.

Cabinet noted the positive comments of the tenant representatives, at section 11 of the report.

The Leader of the Council, alongside Cabinet and other Council Members, placed on record their congratulations and pleasure at the positive work undertaken and planned for the future in this area.

71 ELECTORAL REVIEW OF NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL - WARDING PATTERN PROPOSALS

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet recommends to Full Council that:-

- (a) the Warding Pattern Proposal – Electoral Review (Appendix 1 to the report) be approved and submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) as the Council’s official response to the LGBCE consultation; and
- (b) authority be delegated to the Executive Head of Governance and Housing, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make further editing changes, corrections and updates to the document and maps prior to submission.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

Report to Cabinet and Full Council.

PORTFOLIO:

Leader and Corporate Affairs.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:

As set out in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):

None.

DISCUSSION:

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and placed on record his thanks, on behalf of the Cabinet, to the Task and Finish Group and all local ward councillors for their thorough work on this issue.

CHAIRMAN