

6 OCTOBER 2021

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Wednesday, 6 October 2021

* Cllr Edward Heron (Chairman)

* Cllr Jill Cleary (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

* Diane Andrews
* Steve Davies
* Michael Harris

Councillors:

* Jeremy Heron
* David Russell
Mark Steele

*Present

In attendance:

Councillors:

Ann Bellows
Geoffrey Blunden
Anne Corbridge
Philip Dowd
Barry Dunning
Allan Glass

Councillors:

David Hawkins
Alan O'Sullivan
Stephanie Osborne
Steve Rippon-Swaine
Derek Tipp

Officers Attending:

Colin Read, Alan Bethune, Rebecca Drummond, Sara Hamilton, Chris Noble,
Iain Park, Verity Pillinger-Cork, Grainne O'Rourke, Manjit Sandhu,
Ritchie Thomson, Claire Upton-Brown and Matt Wisdom

Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Steele.

23 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2021, be confirmed and signed.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Cllr E Heron declared, for transparency purposes, that he was a Member of Hampshire County Council, the waste disposal authority in respect of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, considered at minute 29 below.

25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no issues raised during the public participation period.

26 CORPORATE PLAN 2020-2024 'COMMUNITY MATTERS'

RESOLVED:

That the revisions to the corporate plan 2020-2024, 'Community Matters' following changes in Portfolio responsibilities and taking into account the impact of Covid-19 on priorities, be endorsed.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

Yes.

PORTFOLIO:

Leader / All.

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 highlighted that although the review of the corporate plan had been intended as relatively light touch to reflect the new portfolio responsibilities, the review had brought forward a number of positive priorities following consideration by the Council's four Overview and Scrutiny Panels and with particular response to the recovery from coronavirus and the Council's priorities for sustainability.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal Services drew attention to the priority to reduce waste and increase recycling. With regard to the Council's Waste Strategy, it was noted that further clarity on the national position would come forward in early 2022 which would allow the strategy to progress to Cabinet thereafter.

27 CONTROL OF ASBESTOS POLICY AND CONTROL OF CONTRACTORS POLICY

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet recommends to Council that the Control of Asbestos Policy (Appendix 1 of the report) and Control of Contractors Policy (Appendix 2 of the report), be adopted.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

Report to Cabinet and Full Council.

PORTFOLIO:

Housing and Homelessness Services / Finance, Investment and Corporate Services.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:

As set out in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):

None.

DISCUSSION:

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness Services introduced the report and welcomed the consistent approach that would be implemented in bringing forward the policies, particularly with regard to managing asbestos in the Council's assets and corporate buildings.

In response to a question regarding privately owned buildings with asbestos, it was confirmed that the report dealt specifically with the Council's own assets and the Environment Agency was the appropriate body for guidance and enforcement in this area.

28 ICT OPERATIONS SYSTEM

RESOLVED:

That the funding for improvements to the ICT system(s) supporting Operations, be approved.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

Yes.

PORTFOLIO:

Environment and Coastal Services / People and Places / Finance, Investment and Corporate Services.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:

As set out in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):

None.

DISCUSSION:

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal Services introduced the report and welcomed the recommendations as a significant step on the journey to a more efficient ICT system for the Council's operational services and a much improved customer experience for residents.

29 JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

RESOLVED:

That the Project Integra Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) be approved and recommended to Council for adoption.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

Yes. Report to Cabinet and Full Council.

PORTFOLIO:

Environment and Coastal Services.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:

As set out in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):

Cllr E Heron declared, for transparency purposes, that he was a Member of Hampshire County Council, the waste disposal authority in respect of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

DISCUSSION:

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report and highlighted the significant work of Council officers and the 14 partner organisations through the Project Integra process. The key ambition was to reduce waste and increase recycling.

The Leader of the Council emphasised the importance of the strategy for the whole of the New Forest and was pleased to see it come forward ahead of the future consideration of the Council's own Waste Strategy. Waste continued to be a significant cost across the nation and Hampshire as a county, and improvements to the disposal process would bring about positive environmental and economic change.

In response to questions relating to the timescales for the Government's environment bill and the impact on progress with the Council's Waste Strategy, it was confirmed that further clarity was expected in early 2022 with regard to the timescales for implementing changes and the funding streams likely to be available to Councils. Although the Council was awaiting this clarity, the JMWMS identified the known direction of travel at a high level.

The Leader of the Council extended his thanks to the Portfolio Holder and officers for bringing this work forward.

30 CEMETERIES REGULATIONS REVIEW**RESOLVED:**

That the Cabinet recommend to Council that the revised Cemeteries Regulations, be approved in order to fulfil the obligations of the New Forest District Council with regard to the 1977 Cemeteries order.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

Report to Cabinet and Full Council.

PORTFOLIO:

People and Places.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:

As set out in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):

None.

DISCUSSION:

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report and placed on record his thanks to the Task and Finish Group for their work on the subject.

The Leader of the Council highlighted the importance of the document in informing and providing guidance to all who had an active interest within the Council's cemeteries in what would be very challenging times in their lives.

31 RESPONSE TO MOTION TO DECLARE A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet:

- (a) recommend to Council that a Climate Change and Nature Emergency be declared.
- (b) agree to bring a report to the February 2022 Cabinet meeting on the proposed action plan to deal with the Emergency, and the role the Council will play in reducing Carbon emissions.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

Report to Cabinet and Full Council.

PORTFOLIO:

Leader.

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 proposed an amendment to the recommendations to recommend the declaration of a climate change and nature emergency to the Council. Cllr Cleary seconded the amendment.

The Leader highlighted the apologies of Cllr M Wade who had proposed the original motion to Council in September 2021. The Leader welcomed Cllrs Dowd and Osborne to speak in Cllr Wade's absence.

Cllr Dowd spoke in support of the original motion and challenged Members to do everything to protect the natural environment by examining everything the Council does with regard to climate change. Cllr Osborne as seconder of the original motion also spoke in support of declaring a climate emergency.

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Tourism and High Streets highlighted his previous reluctance to use the word emergency when action plans targeted dates

many years into the future and an emergency inferred an immediate response. However, with many initiatives already being undertaken by the Council, the declaration of a climate and nature emergency allowed for a mutually supportive strategy to be developed with partners who had also made similar declarations. The Leader also highlighted the need to communicate the Council's achievements and future plans in this area, given the extensive progress already made, as outlined within the report.

A number of Members spoke in support of the Council declaring a climate emergency. Those speaking against highlighted the need to ensure the Council's sound financial management continued against the backdrop of very challenging targets and expectations such as making the New Forest District carbon neutral by 2030 or 2050.

The Leader of the Council responded to the questions and statements of Members and highlighted the benefit of considering an action plan in February 2022. This action plan would go a long way to setting the ambitious, but realistic and proportionate targets the Council could achieve in this area. A huge part of this would be to support residents through the sustainability agenda. Encouraging small changes to habits that could be afforded and embraced by individuals would play a key part in District's journey towards a more sustainable future climate and natural environment, particularly in an area as unique and special as the New Forest.

CHAIRMAN