

2 NOVEMBER 2022

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Wednesday, 2 November 2022

- * Cllr Edward Heron (Chairman)
- * Cllr Jill Cleary (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- * Diane Andrews
- * Geoffrey Blunden
- * Steve Davies

Councillors:

- * Michael Harris
- * Jeremy Heron
- * David Russell

*Present

In attendance:

Councillors:

Ann Bellows
Sue Bennison
Anne Corbridge
Keith Craze
Philip Dowd
Barry Dunning
Richard Frampton
Allan Glass
David Hawkins
Alison Hoare

Councillors:

Christine Hopkins
Alexis McEvoy
Alan O'Sullivan
Alvin Reid
Joe Reilly
Ann Sevier
Derek Tipp
Malcolm Wade
Christine Ward
Steve Clarke

Officers Attending:

Kate Ryan, Alan Bethune, Roxanne King, Tim Guymer, Richard Knott,
Grainne O'Rourke, Manjit Sandhu, Claire Upton-Brown, Karen Wardle,
Amanda Wilson and Matt Wisdom

Apologies

There were no apologies for absence received from Cabinet Members.

42 LEADERS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader referred to the person injured in an accident along Southampton Road, Lyndhurst on 31 October 2022. He wanted to place on record that thoughts went to their family and friends at this difficult time.

Agreement had been reached with the Unions in relation to the Cost of Living Pay Award for the current financial year. This would give a flat rate increase of £1,925 to each of the spinal column points and from 1 April 2023, one additional day of annual leave. All members of staff would be in receipt of this increase with the backdated amount in their November pay. This meant the lowest paid spine point would be £10.70 per hour – above the National Living Wage of £10.50.

The Leader also announced that the Cabinet meeting would be his last meeting as Leader of the Council.

43 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2022 be confirmed and signed.

44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Jeremy Heron, declared that he was a member of Ringwood Town Council in respect of the Update on Community Infrastructure Levy item which recommended the allocation of funding towards The Football Foundation, Ringwood Project, supported by Ringwood Town Council. He concluded that there were no grounds under common law to prevent him from remaining in the meeting to speak and vote on this item. The Update on the Community Infrastructure Levy was considered at minute 49 below.

45 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following members of the public had registered to speak in accordance with the Council's Public Participation Scheme:-

Mrs Charlotte Lines
Mr Brian Tarnoff

Mrs Lines spoke in respect of The introduction of Public Space Protection Orders, at minute 47 below.

Mr Tarnoff, New Forest Association / Friends of the New Forest commended the Council for considering the introduction of PSPOs to address inappropriate interaction with livestock and banning the use of BBQs and fires in the New Forest. He suggested that a PSPO be introduced in relation to the control of dogs. He cited that East Hampshire District Council had successfully brought in a PSPO in relation to the controls on dogs and that an order could be brought forward in the New Forest District.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Infrastructure responded to Mr Tarnoff, thanking him for attending and presenting his views. This matter had been considered with partners, however, due to the need for a robust evidence base in order to demonstrate the detrimental effect the lack of control of dogs had on the community, it was felt there was not enough evidence at the current time to take this matter forward. However, it could be considered in the future. This approach had been accepted by partner organisations.

46 HOMELESSNESS - PLAN TO DEAL WITH AN INCREASE IN HOMELESSNESS PRESSURES

RESOLVED:

1. That the Cabinet approves and recommends to Council a supplementary budget of up to £1.3m for additional homelessness costs for 2022/23.

2. That the Cabinet approves the recruitment of 2 additional temporary homelessness posts at a maximum of £92,000 inc. on costs per annum.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

Report to Cabinet and Full Council.

PORTFOLIO:

Housing and Homelessness Services.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:

As set out in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):

None.

DISCUSSION:

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report and acknowledged the significant pressures being placed on homelessness services. This was both a local and national issue and the extra resources recommended in the report would be used to support vulnerable residents. A robust Action Plan had been developed to set out how the Council would tackle existing pressures, including the use of emergency accommodation, access to accommodation in the private rented sector, and early intervention to prevent homelessness.

The Service Manager - Housing Options, Rents, Support and Private Sector Housing reported that the demand for homelessness services had increased over the calendar year. In particular, there had been an increase in families being evicted from private rented housing, whilst there were increasing challenges to securing alternative accommodation in the private rented sector. The Action Plan proposed within the Cabinet report would address the current issues the homelessness team were facing as well as future demand.

Members spoke in support of the recommendations. The work of the Homelessness Task and Finish Group was cited in that significant progress had been made over the last few years, to provide additional temporary accommodation for vulnerable homeless people.

Members highlighted the need to secure more social housing properties, rather than relying on bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation.

In response to a question about the two additional temporary homelessness posts, it was confirmed that these positions would be reviewed, should they be required beyond the proposed two-year period.

It was recognised that the Homes for Ukraine Scheme had placed additional pressures on the District Council with the initial six-month placement coming to an

end and combined with the increase in homelessness, additional resources were required to meet this demand.

Members felt that in addition to the provision of accommodation, support was also required, such as counselling and liaison with other services, to address the problems associated with homelessness. Members praised the work of officers in the homelessness team and cited examples of the cases within their wards.

Finally, the Leader paid tribute to those in the Housing Development Team who had been looking at opportunities to provide more affordable housing in the District.

47 THE INTRODUCTION OF PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS

RESOLVED:

1. That in principle, the proposal to make two Public Spaces Protection Orders be approved in respect of the lighting of fires and the use of barbeques, and the feeding and petting of ponies, horses, mules and donkeys in the form set out at Appendix 1 and 2 respectively to this report.
2. That Officers be authorised to publicise the proposed Public Spaces Protection Orders and to carry out consultation as required by the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 ('the Act') and to report back to Cabinet with the outcome of the consultation.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

Yes

PORTFOLIO:

All Portfolios.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:

As set out in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):

None.

DISCUSSION:

The Cabinet heard from one member of the public, speaking in support of the recommendations in the report, in accordance with the Council's public participation scheme.

Mrs Lines, Chair of the New Forest Commoners Defence Association supported the proposal to introduce two PSPOs. She expressed particular support to PSPO 2 regarding the feeding and petting of ponies, horses, mules and donkeys recognising that that was an increasing problem and that education and signage

was not sufficient. There needed to be stronger measures in place to protect the animals and the New Forest.

The Leader introduced the report and supported the introduction of PSPOs as a tool to address the anti-social behaviour associated with the activities identified in the PSPOs and the effect the damaging behaviour it had on the community. He recognised the need to provide education, particularly in relation to the feeding and petting of ponies, whereby people were often unaware of the problems that could be caused.

The Strategic Director of Housing, Communities and Governance highlighted that the introduction of PSPOs had been brought forward as a result of months of working with partners.

It was reported that there had been discussion with the National Park Authority, Verderers and Forestry England and it had been accepted in principle that they would play a lead role in the enforcement of the PSPO activities, should they be introduced.

It was clarified that there was a minor typographical error within the Cabinet report, Appendix 2 and that Schedule 1 should read, sheets 1-22 (rather than 1-23).

The Leader confirmed that the proposed orders would apply only to land which the public had access to.

Members spoke in support of the principle of the introduction of two PSPOs. It was suggested that if PSPO 1 was implemented, that retailers in the District could be encouraged to stop selling disposable BBQs.

A view was expressed in relation the feeding and petting of ponies, horses, mules and donkeys that questioned whether there was an evidence base on the harm caused and noting that it was the feeding in particular which was the anti-social behaviour element. In response, the Leader reiterated the importance of educating people and that if the PSPO was introduced there would an option to issue Fixed Penalty Notices if there was a persistent problem. It was hoped that the consultation period would bring these and related issues to the Council's attention for further consideration.

Finally, the Leader encouraged as many people as possible to respond to the consultation, including those who supported the proposals, in order to express their views formally.

48 UPDATE ON S106 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted and that the allocation of £200,000 transport contribution to deliver a footpath to the northeast of the Linden Homes Development on Crow Lane Ringwood and £3,504.90 towards a bottle filling station at Bath Road Lyminster be approved.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

Yes.

PORTFOLIO:

Planning, Regeneration 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 endorsed the recommendation.

The Executive Head of Planning, Regeneration and Economy reported an amendment to the recommendation to also include the approval of £3,504.90 of unspent Lymington Open Space Monies to be allocated towards a bottle filling station at Bath Road in Lymington. A further report would be considered in due course regarding the allocation of the remaining transport contributions.

Members were reminded to encourage Town and Parish Councils to bring forward projects in local communities. Council officers would also pursue the raising of awareness in this area.

49 UPDATE ON COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report be noted and that £100k of CIL funds be approved, to be allocated towards The Football Foundation, Ringwood Project, as set out in section 4 of the Cabinet report.
2. That a delegation to an Executive Head or Strategic Director, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Infrastructure to commit CIL funds to approved mitigation and infrastructure projects within the confines of the overall agreed approved CIL budget as included within the Council's Capital Programme be approved.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

Yes.

PORTFOLIO:

Planning, Regeneration and Infrastructure.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:

As set out in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):

Cllr Jeremy Heron, declared, that he was a member of Ringwood Town Council and that the recommendation to allocate funding towards The Football Foundation, was a project which had been supported by Ringwood Town Council. He concluded that there were no grounds under common law to prevent him from remaining in the meeting to speak and vote on this item.

DISCUSSION:

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report and welcomed the use of CIL money to support the sports facility in Ringwood.

The Executive Head for Planning, Regeneration and Economy highlighted that there would be two further reports to be considered by the Cabinet in relation to a programme of off-site mitigation projects and the governance arrangements in relation to the approval of infrastructure project funding allocation.

It was recognised that the Football Foundation Project had received a significant amount of investment from other sources and that it would be a great asset for the community.

50 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT (BASED ON PERFORMANCE APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2022 INCLUSIVE)**RESOLVED:**

1. That the latest budget forecasts of the General Fund (section 4), Capital (section 5), and HRA (section 6) be noted.
2. That the additional budgetary provision of £100,000 for Housing Revenue Account Cyclical Maintenance External Decorating costs be approved.
3. That the Cabinet recommends to Council the approval of an additional budgetary provision of £330,000 for Housing Revenue Account voids and general reactive maintenance costs.
4. That the Cabinet recommends to Council the approval of a 25% uplift in Housing tenants domestic and communal electric and gas service charges element only, commencing from 2 January 2023, in line with the detail as outlined in appendix 5, and as unanimously supported by the Tenant Involvement Group on the 6th October.

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 supported the recommendations.

The Strategic Director of Corporate Resources, 151 and Transformation highlighted that the report was a six monthly update. This followed a previous report which had set out budget pressures of £0.5 m. The budget variations were detailed in the report, including the additional £1.3M of budget pressure in the homelessness service. Overall, there was an increase of £865,000 from the original budget. Officers would look to address this increase, and any remaining amount would be funded from reserves.

It was suggested by one Member that money from reserves be used to contribute towards the hardship fund to benefit those in need. The Leader responded and spoke of the importance of reserves and the need for careful planning in order to be able to respond to future pressures that might be unforeseen, such as the significant costs of the 22/23 pay award, and the significant increase in homelessness.

CHAIRMAN