

1 MAY 2024

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Wednesday, 1 May 2024

\* Cllr Jill Cleary (Chairman)

\* Cllr Steve Davies (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

\* Geoffrey Blunden  
\* Jeremy Heron

**Councillors:**

\* Dan Poole  
\* Derek Tipp

\*Present

**In attendance:**

**Councillors:**

Alan Alvey  
Peter Armstrong  
Steve Clarke  
Philip Dowd  
Barry Dunning  
Allan Glass  
David Hawkins  
John Haywood  
Alan O'Sullivan

**Councillors:**

Neville Penman  
Alvin Reid  
Joe Reilly  
Steve Rippon-Swaine  
John Sleep  
Neil Tungate  
Malcolm Wade  
Christine Ward  
Richard Young

**Officers Attending:**

Kate Ryan, Alan Bethune, James Carpenter, Richard Knott, Tanya Coulter, Tim Guymer, Andrew Herring, Peter McGowan, James Smith and Joe Tyler

**Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence received from any Cabinet members.

**79 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader reported that last week, the Council received notification that it had been awarded £131,000 from the UK governments Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. A bid was submitted into the competitive fund by officers in the autumn, and the confirmed award was a significant contribution towards a scheme to replace two end of life gas boilers at Appletree Court with far more efficient and environmentally friendly Air Source Heat Pumps. The project would save approximately 15 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually once fully commissioned later in the year. This would be a 60% reduction on the Council's current East Wing emissions. This and the £112,000 the Council successfully bid for from Sport England toward additional Solar PV at the Leisure centres, further affirmed the Council's commitment to tackle climate change, in line with the adopted strategy and action plan.

The Leader thanked the Civic Buildings and Facilities Manager and the Contract Relationship Officer for their efforts in applying for the funds.

In addition, as a member of the Warmer Homes Consortium of southern local authorities, the Council had secured £41 million for the region, providing access to funding to improve the energy efficiency of New Forest homes. New Forest residents can apply for grants to install energy saving measures, depending on their income and current EPC rating of their home, with funding of up to £25,000 available.

The Leader also thanked the Private Sector Housing Manager and their team for helping secure the funding and working with New Forest residents to apply for grants.

**80 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2024 be confirmed and signed.

**81 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**82 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were members of Ringwood Town Council in attendance in relation to agenda item 6 – the Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan. The Leader invited them to speak at the relevant time, at minute 85 below.

**83 HOUSING DELIVERY ACTION PLAN**

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet agreed to publish the Housing Delivery Action Plan (HDAP) for 2024, attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

**KEY DECISION:**

Yes.

**PORTFOLIO:**

Planning and Economy.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:**

As set out in report.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

None.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy introduced the Housing Delivery Action Plan report. He referred to the complexity and widespread, national

challenges surrounding the issue of housing supply, highlighting the factors beyond the control of the Local Authority. The review of the Local Plan would seek to address many of the issues facing housing supply in the District and the Council's proactive approach to development in the area would be supported by the Action Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness spoke to the report and made reference to the affordable housing target. Given the challenges facing the Council, the expected 500 affordable homes would be a very good achievement and future opportunities were in the pipeline to add to this.

The Planning Policy Officer summarised the Action Plan and explained that the plan was a response to the national policy requirements and would work to mitigate the macro-economic conditions and environmental challenges facing the District. The Plan would be reviewed on an annual basis in order to monitor the progress.

A member of the Council asked what the impact of the Action Plan would be on planning applications received by the Council, particularly given how developers cite lack of housing delivery as part of their pitch. The Acting Assistant Director for Place Development recognised the significant challenges facing the Council and explained that this Action Plan would not lend weight to the determination of planning applications but would instead give the Council a framework to proceed toward the overall housing target.

Another member of the Council stated that sewage and green/sustainable energy were two major factors that needed to be considered when building houses for the future. The Acting Assistant Director for Place Development reassured Cabinet that these matters would be considered and feature in some way in the Local Plan review. The Council were working currently with providers at local sites on energy supply and would continue to work to address infrastructure capacity issues in the areas going forward.

A further member referred to the unique nature of the District, its geography and the fact that most residential areas were small villages. The local amenities and facilities must be accounted for when considering strategic sites and areas for development. The Acting Assistant Director for Place Development explained that the Council, and its Planning Committee, must be mindful to ensure that sites are suitable and deliverable within the local setting. Although not all of the desires and priorities may be achieved when developing sites, the planning process was very much about weighing up priorities and balancing the material aspects of each application. It was reiterated how the Action Plan before Cabinet had no bearing on how the Council would assess applications and that the planning system gives priority to the Local Plan.

Cabinet were informed that the Housing Delivery Action Plan would seek to resolve the various stalled sites across the planning area and work to promote the completion of those sites that had already received planning consent but were yet to finalise the development.

**84 BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE REGULATION 19 DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION**

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet agree the response, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, as the New Forest District Council's representations to Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council's Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan consultation.

**KEY DECISION:**

No.

**PORTFOLIO:**

Planning and Economy.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:**

As set out in report.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

None.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy introduced the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan Consultation report and emphasised that the New Forest District Council sympathised with BCP Council in the constraints they faced with development across the conurbation.

The Portfolio Holder explained the one amendment that NFDC requested BCP Council make to their Local Plan. This was to require BCP Council to specifically consider the need to commence a review of its Local Plan if a quantified unmet need is established and confirmed through the New Forest District (outside the National Park) Local Plan Review. This would ensure that appropriate mechanisms were provided for within the Local Plan to enable BCP Council to respond positively to considering how unmet needs should be addressed.

The Acting Assistant Director - Place Development summarised the report and informed Cabinet that this was the final stage of planning preparation of BCP Council's Local Plan review. The plan had taken 5 years to prepare and it highlighted the significant challenges that officers had faced to plan for the next 15-20 years in the conurbation. With a similar coastal geography to the New Forest, the Council recognised the constraints facing BCP Council in their Local Plan. With housing likely to be a priority to the New Forest, the requested amendment to the BCP Local Plan would give regard to the adjoining areas between BCP and the New Forest and would enable earlier review if wider, unmet housing occurred. The consultation response also highlighted the need to work with BCP on future highways and cycle path schemes where there are cross-boundary implications and potential impacts.

Following a question from a non-Cabinet member, the acting Assistant Director for Place Development explained that the issues facing BCP were also the issues faced by many, if not all, coastal Local Authorities along the south coast and that the NFDC Local Plan would continue to review where BCP Council were with their housing supply and work proactively to address and reconcile this in both a developmental and economic sense across the District.

**85 RINGWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN - EXAMINER'S REPORT****RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet recommend that Council:

- i. note the recommendations made in the Examiner's Report (Appendix 1) into the Ringwood Neighbourhood Development Plan (Appendix 2 shows the submission plan);
- ii. agree the Examiner's proposed modifications and the NFDC responses to them as set out in the Decision Statement (Appendix 3);
- iii. agree to make the necessary arrangements for the Ringwood Neighbourhood Development Plan to proceed to referendum (the date of the referendum is anticipated to be mid-July 2024).

**KEY DECISION:**

Report to Cabinet and Council.

**PORTFOLIO:**

Planning and Economy.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:**

As set out in report.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

None

**DISCUSSION:**

The Leader invited Ringwood Town Councillor Gareth DeBoos to speak on the item. Councillor DeBoos thanked Town Councillors, ex District Councillors, NFDC officers, planning consultants, volunteers and the Local Planning Authorities for their assistance and support on developing a robust and positive plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy introduced the Ringwood Neighbourhood Development Plan - Examiner's Report. The Portfolio Holder highlighted the robustness of the plan and thanked all those involved in its development.

The Senior Policy Planner summarised the report and explained that the plan was a community-lead document which would become part of the District Council's statutory development plan alongside the Local Plan. It was explained that work was overseen by a steering group of Town Councillors and community representatives, alongside support from planning consultants and NFDC and National Park officers.

The process began in February 2021 and underwent a number of consultations and surveys held by the Town Council. This culminated in the formal consultation that

took place between August and September 2023, followed by the independent examination which was set out in the report attached as Appendix 1. Reference was made to section 5 of the report and how it laid out the steps on how the referendum would be held by the Council's electoral team and would follow the national requirements necessary for such a process.

Many Cabinet and non-Cabinet members thanked all those involved in the development of the plan and congratulations were given on how robust and thorough the plan was. It was acknowledged how few and mild the examiner's modifications were and it was hoped that the people of Ringwood would support the plan. Encouragement was given to all residents of Ringwood to engage with the referendum and make their thoughts and feelings known through their vote.

A request was made by a non-Cabinet member for collaboration between the New Forest National Park Authority and NFDC to create a combined, local heritage list. The acting Assistant Director for Place Development confirmed that local heritage lists allowed Local Authorities to note the buildings and features that should be designated as local heritage assets. It was explained that these heritage assets should be taken into consideration when weighing up planning applications in the District. The Assistant Director for Place Development explained that a combined list would be looked at through the Local Plan review or an equivalent process.

CHAIRMAN