

12 OCTOBER 2020

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held on Monday,
12 October 2020

- * Cllr Allan Glass (Chairman)
- * Cllr Derek Tipp (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- * Alan Alvey
- * Diane Andrews
- * Ann Bellows
- * Sue Bennison
- * Geoffrey Blunden
- * Hilary Brand
- * Alex Brunsdon
- * Fran Carpenter
- * Louise Cerasoli
- * Mark Clark
- * Rebecca Clark
- * Steve Clarke
- * Jill Cleary
- * Anne Corbridge
- * Keith Craze
- * Kate Crisell
- * Jack Davies
- * Steve Davies
- * Arthur Davis
- * Sandra Delemare
- * Philip Dowd
- * Jan Duke
- * Barry Dunning
- * Jacqui England
- * Andrew Gossage
- * Michael Harris
- * David Harrison
- * David Hawkins
- * Edward Heron

Councillors:

- * Jeremy Heron
- * Alison Hoare
- * Maureen Holding
- Christine Hopkins
- * Mahmoud Kangarani
- * Joshua Kidd
- * Emma Lane
- * Martyn Levitt
- * Alexis McEvoy
- * Ian Murray
- * Alan O'Sullivan
- * Stephanie Osborne
- * Neville Penman
- * Caroline Rackham
- * Alvin Reid
- * Joe Reilly
- * Barry Rickman
- * Tony Ring
- * Steve Rippon-Swaine
- * David Russell
- Ann Sevier
- * Mark Steele
- * Michael Thierry
- * Beverley Thorne
- * Neil Tungate
- * Alex Wade
- * Malcolm Wade
- * Christine Ward
- John Ward

*Present

Officers Attending:

Bob Jackson, Sara Hamilton, Grainne O'Rourke, Colin Read, Daniel Reynafarje,
Andy Rogers, Claire Upton-Brown, Karen Wardle and Matt Wisdom

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Hopkins and Sevier.

97 MINUTES**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2020, be confirmed.

98 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Cllr E Heron declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 9 – Urgent Business – Supplementary Report – Update on Seawall Urgent Works – Milford-On-Sea, Westover, considered at minute 105 below.

The interest concerned his membership of the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. 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.

99 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**Remembrance**

The Chairman reported that he would in due course inform all councillors of the arrangements for marking Remembrance, appropriate to any restrictions that might be in place at that time.

100 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**Cllr Michael Harris OBE**

The Leader, on behalf of the Council, passed on his congratulations to Cllr Michael Harris on his OBE, announced in the Queen's Birthday Honours. This recognition was well deserved for all his work for Comic Relief.

COVID-19

The Leader referred to the recent updates at Cabinet on the role the Council will play in supporting the Government's latest approach to the pandemic. The role was to EDUCATE on the importance of self isolation, to SUPPORT both residents and businesses in need and to ENCOURAGE all to follow guidance and regulations.

The Leader reported on the allocation of £71,278 from the Government to deliver the role of COVID-19 Marshals over the next four months. Their role would be to engage, explain and encourage best practice and national guidance. The Portfolio Holder for Community Affairs would in due course consider how best to support the initiative.

Milford-On-Sea – Sea Wall

The Council was informed that the works to the coast at Milford-on-Sea continued to be affected by the adverse weather and work continued to protect the coast and limit the cost to local taxpayers. Thanks were expressed to the Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Environment and Finance and their respective teams for their efforts on this.

Employee Forum

The Leader reported on his recent attendance at an Employee Forum and was pleased to hear both of the positives of homeworking and the desires of some to return to the office. Staff were responding positively to the current circumstances, as work continued to ensure the working environment was a safe one for all employees.

101 REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Cabinet meeting held on 7 October 2020 and moved the adoption of the recommendations.

Cllr E Heron seconded the motion.

Item 7 – Planning for the Future – Reform of the Planning System

Members of the opposition spoke in support of the Cabinet report and consultation response, whilst concerns were raised that the proposed Government reforms of the planning system would result in a loss of local influence on appropriate conditions for the New Forest area. Particularly in relation to the impact on affordable housing and required infrastructure which were already local challenges. The offer to write to the Government on a cross-party basis was suggested.

Further to the views expressed above, emphasis was given by other Members in particular relation to the appropriate influence a local planning authority should have on the conditions suitable for its local area.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure responded to the debate and highlighted that any cross-party offer would have been welcomed prior to the Cabinet decision on this issue. Therefore, opposition Members were encouraged to write to MPs in support of the consultation response agreed by the Cabinet. Furthermore, attention was drawn to the previous consultation responses made by the Council on changes to the current planning system, particularly on affordable housing requirements in the area which addressed some of the specific concerns raised by Members.

In relation to this item, the Portfolio Holder welcomed some of the Government proposals for the future planning system, particularly on simplification and reduction of costs. However, there remained much to be concerned about and it was hoped that MPs would continue to keep the matter under review.

The Leader of the Council responded to the debate in looking ahead to further engagement on the outcomes of the Government consultation.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendations, be adopted.

102 QUESTIONS

There were none.

103 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22A

Questions were put and answered under Standing Order 22A as follows:-

- Cllr Bennison to the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services, Cllr Cleary, on Government funding for Housing Services.
- Cllr Brand to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Cllr Harris, on grants to support the high street.
- Cllr A Wade to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure, Cllr E Heron, on the Statement of Community Involvement.
- Cllr Rackham to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure, Cllr E Heron, on car parking in Totton.
- Cllr M Clark to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Rickman, on Devolution.
- Cllr Kangarani to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure, Cllr E Heron, on car parking in Totton.
- Cllr J Davies to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Services, Cllr Hoare, on the redevelopment of Lymington Quay.
- Cllr Corbridge to the Portfolio Holder for Community Affairs, Cllr Andrews, on local lockdown measures.

Note – a copy of the full questions and replies are attached to these minutes.

104 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

There were no changes.

105 SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT - UPDATE ON SEAWALL URGENT WORKS MILFORD-ON-SEA, WESTOVER

Cllr Hoare moved the adoption of the recommendations in the urgent report circulated with the Supplementary Council agenda, concerning urgent works to the Seawall at Milford-On-Sea, Westover.

Cllr J Heron seconded the motion.

A number of Members spoke in support of the necessary action to address the latest storm damage due to the recent poor weather conditions. In response to requests for guidance and understanding for Members on responsibilities, land ownership and associated issues with coastline protection, it was highlighted that the Council had Shoreline Management Plans which outlined the various strategies in this area.

Some Members highlighted the role of climate change on these type of unexpected funding pressures, caused by the natural environment.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Investment and Corporate Services, in response to questions relating to the funding of the works, confirmed that successful funding approval from the Environment Agency would reduce the impact on the Council's own capital funding requirements or use of Reserves.

In responding to the debate, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Services highlighted that new Council policies put climate change and carbon reduction at the heart of their ambitions. It was hoped that by working with the Environment Agency, neighbouring local authorities and other partner

organisations, progress would continue. Members were urged to support the recommendations as a particular urgent priority in view of the storm damage suffered.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That additional supplementary expenditure of £325,000 to fund the additional urgent works required as a result of storm events that have impacted the site since works commenced, be approved;
- (b) That a new contingency of £300,000 to be held by the Council's Section 151 Officer, be approved; and
- (c) That all opportunities for third party funding be maximised to minimise the Council's residual financing requirement, be noted.

CHAIRMAN