

9 JULY 2018

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held in the Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 9 July 2018

\* Cllr M J Kendal (Chairman)

\* Cllr A T Glass (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

A R Alvey  
\* Mrs D E Andrews  
\* W G Andrews  
\* P J Armstrong  
\* G C Beck  
Mrs S M Bennison  
\* J E Binns  
\* G R Blunden  
\* D A Britton  
\* Mrs D M Brooks  
\* Mrs F Carpenter  
\* Mrs L D Cerasoli  
\* S J Clarke  
\* Mrs J L Cleary  
\* I C Coombes  
\* Ms K V Crisell  
\* S P Davies  
\* A H G Davis  
\* W H Dow  
Ms L C Ford  
R L Frampton  
\* L E Harris  
\* M R Harris  
\* D Harrison  
\* E J Heron  
\* J D Heron  
\* Mrs A J Hoare  
\* Mrs M D Holding  
\* Mrs C Hopkins

**Councillors:**

Mrs P Jackman  
\* Mrs E L Lane  
Mrs P J Lovelace  
B D Lucas  
Mrs R Matcham  
\* Mrs A E McEvoy  
\* A D O'Sullivan  
\* J M Olliff-Cooper  
\* N S Penman  
\* A K Penson  
\* D M S Poole  
\* L R Puttock  
\* B Rickman  
W S Rippon-Swaine  
\* Mrs A M Rostand  
\* D J Russell  
\* Miss A Sevier  
M A Steele  
M H Thierry  
\* Mrs B J Thorne  
D B Tipp  
\* D N Tungate  
\* A S Wade  
\* Mrs C V Ward  
J G Ward  
\* M L White  
\* C A Wise  
\* Mrs P A Wyeth

\*Present

**Officers Attending:**

R Jackson, C Read, Miss G O'Rourke, Mrs R Rutins, Mrs M Sandhu and Mrs K Wardle

**Apologies:**

Cllrs Alvey, Mrs Bennison, Ms Ford, Mrs Jackman, Mrs Lovelace, Lucas, Mrs Matcham, Steele, Thierry, Tipp and J Ward.

**14 MINUTES****RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2018 and the special meeting held on 6 June 2018 be signed by the Chairman as correct records.

**15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by any member in connection with an agenda item.

**16 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman reported that he and the Vice-Chairman had represented the Council at a total of 24 functions since their inauguration. These included:

- An Age Concern Annual Volunteer Party. Certificates were presented to those who had volunteered for 25 years or more. It was humbling to see the commitment of some of the volunteers.
- The New Forest Children's University Graduation at the University of Winchester for children aged 5-14 years.
- The Duke of Edinburgh's Award reception for Gold Award Holders.
- His Civic Day, attended by the Chairmen and Mayors of surrounding authorities on 4 July. This had been a successful day with lunch at Bucklers Hard. £115 had been raised for the Chairman's charity in a raffle. The prizes had been kindly donated by local businesses in Totton.

**17 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader was pleased to note England's progress in the World Cup so far and wished them continued success in the rest of the tournament.

**18 REPORT OF AUDIT COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18**

Cllr O'Sullivan, Chairman of the Audit Committee, presented the Annual report 2017/18.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**19 REPORTS OF THE CABINET**

The Leader of the Council, as Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the reports of the meetings held on 2 May and 4 July 2018. The Leader reported that just over three years ago, it was recognised that the challenges ahead were significant. Financial resources would become more limited and the demand for services was expected to grow. Housing was a particular priority which was recognised for families in the New Forest.

The most recent Cabinet meeting highlighted a sensible and planned approach on the use and management of the Council's finances. The Council were asked to approve an increased budget of £4.5 million in order to provide 16 extra affordable homes. Planning services had been reviewed and measures would be put in place to ensure the service would be able to deal with the additional demands, which had included the approval of an additional £300,000 per annum.

Efforts had been made to work with others to ensure that residents' money went further, although, as evidenced in the Cabinet reports, it had not always been possible to achieve this.

The new powers on litter enforcement were welcomed in order to protect the New Forest. Success would not be measured by the number of prosecutions but by the efforts made in the community to remove anti-social and potential dangerous behaviour.

Strategies on supporting economic growth and planning the future direction of the Council demonstrated the long term intentions.

On the motion that the reports be received and recommendations be adopted, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

That the reports be received and the recommendations be adopted.

**20 QUESTIONS**

There were none.

**21 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22A**

**Question 1**

**From Cllr David Harrison, to Cllr Jill Cleary, Portfolio Holder for Housing Services:**

"Whilst I applaud the collective efforts of staff and members of the authority in seeking to address the lack of affordable housing in the district, don't you agree that the policy of "Right to Buy" which means that we have effectively lost half our council housing in the last 20 years, coupled with the fact that most of the receipts go to central government for redistribution around the country, means that the prospects, especially for young people seeking local affordable rental accommodation are getting worse, not better?"

**Answer**

The Portfolio Holder agreed that right to buy had reduced Council housing stock. Providing more homes for local people was one of the Council's top priorities. The Council was actively pursuing a range of measures to create affordable homes for families and young people. The effect of right to buy had already been raised with Government Ministers. The Portfolio Holder read part of a response received from Dominic Raab MP, at the time Minister of State for Housing. This indicated that the Government appreciated that more needed to be done to help Council's deliver

replacement homes. The Government was looking at flexibilities that could be offered to local authorities in their use of right to buy receipts in order to increase build out. The Government would be consulting the sector later in the year.

### **Question 2**

**From Cllr Alan O'Sullivan, to Cllr James Binns, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Wellbeing:**

"Will the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing please update the Council on the progress of the New Milton Free-Weights Room and Applemore Studio Projects, the associated costs and payback time?"

### **Answer**

The Portfolio Holder said that excellent work had been carried out on both projects with tight budgets. The projects had been split into seven different elements, and a separate contract had been let for each. The Applemore Studio Project had cost £44,500 and had been delivered on budget. The Studio had opened and payback was expected in one year.

With regard to the free-weights room in New Milton Health & Leisure, initial tenders had come back too high, at £100,000. Unfortunately damp was discovered underneath the squash courts which needed to be resolved, however the final cost of the project, including this additional work was £34,000. It was expected that the payback time would be 1 year and 3 months. Safety and security had been improved with the free-weights room being re-located opposite main reception. A further benefit of moving the weights room from upstairs was that the maintenance of a ground floor weights room would be cheaper.

Cllr Binns congratulated the Council's Graphics Team on the promotional material produced for both projects and paid tribute to the Health and Leisure Teams for their commitment and determination to make both projects a success.

### **Question 3**

**From Cllr David Harrison, to Cllr Diane Andrews, Portfolio Holder for Community Affairs:**

"It has been reported that a suspected thief was caught by members of the public in Lyndhurst High Street and held onto for 40 minutes and yet the overstretched police force were unable to send somebody along to arrest the suspect, despite the fact that Lyndhurst police station is only located a few hundred yards away. The suspect got away. What does this tell you about the capacity of Hampshire Constabulary to fulfil their duty towards community safety?"

### **Answer**

The Portfolio Holder said that the fact the Police had been unable to respond in good time to the incident was regrettable. It was, however, a fact that Police resources were stretched and they had to prioritise incidents when they occurred. She understood that at the time of the incident referred to, the local Police were dealing with a number of Grade 1 incidents (Grade 1 being the highest priority rating attributed to reports of crime). No units had been available to deploy to

Lyndhurst High Street. The local people who took action were to be thanked for their community spirit. It was understood that an item stolen from premises in the village had been recovered and that the Police were investigating what was being treated as a burglary. The Police had very difficult and dangerous jobs to do and they should be praised for the way they went about their work. They were central to what Cllr Andrews believed was a very successful and influential Community Safety Partnership. However, their resources were limited. Hampshire's Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner were campaigning for improved national funding. Meanwhile, the Community Safety Partnership continued to work as a collective to address the concerns of the community by using combined resources to try to reduce crime and disorder in the District. The matter raised by Cllr Harrison was not one within the District Council's control.

Councillor Harrison asked a supplementary question regarding the long Police response times and whether the reduction in staffing would cause further problems. The Portfolio Holder hoped that the publicity over the issue both locally and nationally would help to bring about improved funding. The Portfolio Holder was very supportive of the excellent work the police carried out.

#### **Question 4**

**From Cllr David Harrison, to Cllr Alison Hoare, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Services:**

"How many successful prosecutions have there been against people dropping litter in the New Forest District in the years 2016, 2017 and 2018?"

#### **Answer**

The Portfolio Holder said that littering was a challenging problem. In order to achieve successful prosecutions enforcement officers needed to be in the right place at the right time but people were unlikely to drop litter in the presence of enforcement officers.

The Council in 2017 had reviewed how it enforced Environmental Crime. A review of the Enforcement Team had resulted in a team to pursue littering offences being set up within the existing Car Parking Enforcement Team. New legislation was also available to tackle fly tipping. There had been no prosecutions in 2016/17 but there had been 15 in 2017/18, and 2 so far this year, the latest having been reported in the Press the previous week.

The main problem with littering in the New Forest was rubbish thrown from vehicles. The Council had recently adopted new powers to tackle this issue, and a Multi-Agency Working Group would make recommendations on how these new powers could be enforced and publicised.

Cllr Harrison asked a supplementary question regarding the target for prosecutions for dropping litter in the next 12 months. The Portfolio Holder said that there was no target but that work to educate the public would continue, coupled with enforcement action in appropriate circumstances. A review would be carried in a year's time.

**Question 5**

**From Cllr David Harrison, to Cllr Alison Hoare, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Services:**

"How many successful prosecutions have there been against people who have allowed a dog to mess without clearing up on pavements, verges and other community spaces in the years 2016, 2017 and 2018?"

**Answer**

The Portfolio Holder reported that there had been no prosecutions over the last few years. However, successful campaigns with a high profile presence from the Dog Warden at known hot spots had been carried out, these included Calshot Beach and Fisherman's Walk at Barton. Although no penalty notices had been issued, the campaigns had dramatically reduced the amount of dog fouling in the areas concerned.

In response to a supplementary question from Cllr Harrison, the Portfolio Holder stated that there was no target for prosecutions but that anti-fouling campaigns would continue.

**Question 6**

**From Cllr David Harrison, to Cllr Alison Hoare, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Services:**

"New Forest District Council is near to bottom of the UK league in terms of recycling performance. What ambitious plans will be put in place to correct this?"

**Answer**

The Portfolio Holder reported that the recycling rate in the District had increased from 31% to just over 34% in 2017/18, which was very positive. Work was continuing to increase this further. A campaign called 'Six in the Sack' was to be launched at the New Forest Show to encourage households to recycle the right items. The Waste and Transport Service continued to try to reduce contamination in the clear sacks as a high priority.

Cllr Harrison followed up with a question comparing the recycling rate for NFDC with other nearby authorities, asking whether more steps should be taken to improve recycling rates. The Portfolio Holder responded that the Council was committed to improving recycling but items that could be accepted for recycling were limited by the commodities accepted by Project Integra. She applauded the rise in recycling for the last year and wished to see this continue.

**Question 7**

**From Cllr David Harrison, to Cllr Barry Rickman, Leader and Corporate Affairs:**

"What plan does he now have with regards to senior management of the planning function of New Forest District Council?"

**Answer**

The Leader responded stating that housing and planning were top priorities for the Council. Considerable investment had been made into these two priority services.

The Local Plan: Part 1: Planning Strategy had been agreed and was out for consultation. The Cabinet would review the planning function over the summer and report back to Members on progress.

### **Question 8**

**From Cllr David Harrison, to Cllr Alison Hoare, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Services:**

"A commercial company called Thelightsfest.com have announced their intention to hold a Chinese Lantern Festival in the Southampton area. This has undesirable consequences for property, public safety and wildlife, both in the City area and the New Forest district. Will she join me in trying to persuade the company to cancel the event and try to exercise as much influence as possible to stop them via the licensing regime?"

### **Answer**

The Portfolio Holder reported that the Company proposing the event appeared to hold events throughout the UK and also in the USA and Canada. They appeared to apply strict environmental, safety and sustainability controls which included clean-up crews. The event might not require a licence but if it did it would be a matter for Southampton City Council. The Portfolio Holder appreciated the concerns and said she would contact Southampton City Council to ascertain what measures they would seek to put in place to protect the environment if the event proceeded.

## **22 MEETING DATES FOR THE 2019/20 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

### **RESOLVED:**

That meetings be held on the following Mondays at 6.30 pm:-

20 May 2019 (Annual Meeting, already agreed)  
8 July 2019  
9 September 2019  
14 October 2019  
9 December 2019  
24 February 2020  
13 April 2020  
18 May 2020 (Annual Meeting)

## **23 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS**

No changes to Committees or Panels were proposed by the political groups.

CHAIRMAN