

NORTH DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2008 AT 10.00AM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, NORDON, SALISBURY ROAD, BLANDFORD FORUM

Present:

Councillor Peter Webb	Leader – Building Corporate Capacity (Chairman)
Councillor Michael Roake	Environment + Learning and Knowledge Member (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Graham Carr-Jones	Access and Affordable Housing Member
Councillor Deborah Croney	Economy Member
Councillor Richard Moyle	Community + Safety & Health

Also Present:

Councillor Michael Oliver
Councillor David Milsted
Councillor Steve Hitchings
Councillor Audrey Burch
Councillor Geoffrey Miller

174. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

175. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21 July 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

176. **URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

177. **FREE SWIMMING PROGRAMME FOR THOSE AGED 60 OR OVER AND THOSE AGED 16 OR UNDER**

The Report was introduced by Councillor Michael Roake and the Leisure Manager, who informed Members that support had been received from Blandford Forum Town Council, that Dorset County Council and the Primary Care Trust had indicated financial assistance would be provided if North Dorset went ahead with the schemes, and made a loss as a consequence. It was reported that East and West Dorset District Councils had expressed an interest in taking up the Government's offer.

Concerns were expressed about the increase in usage and costs if people from outside the District took advantage of free swimming in North Dorset. Members

noted that it would not be possible to restrict the scheme to persons with a North Dorset postcode.

Concerns were also expressed about what would happen after 2 years of free swimming, when the government funding expires. Members noted the importance of stressing to the public, that the scheme would only last for 2 years.

Members noted that at the time that the Council is supporting the Blandford Leisure Centre to obtain alternative funding there would be a negative reaction if it chose not to accept government funding and provide free swimming. They also noted that there were healthy living benefits in encouraging more people to swim. Members noted that the increased footfall in the leisure centre may increase use of other facilities in the centre.

Cabinet noted that both schemes would have to be pursued in order to receive capital reward funding (approx £14,000) and to bid for further capital.

Resolved

- 1) To agree to take part in offering free swimming to those aged 60 and over and to express an interest in offering free swimming to those aged 16 and under.
- 2) That the schemes be adopted for only the two years that are funded by the Government scheme and that this be made clear in the publicity for the scheme.

178. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2009/10 TO 2013/14

The Report was introduced by Councillor Peter Webb, the Financial Services Manager and the General Manager (Policy & Performance).

Members noted that the Council has reached a position whereby it will have a balanced budget a year ahead of schedule. There are however, a number of concerns about the state of the economy, which could have an impact on the budget. The Strategy requires large savings to be made in 2009/10. There is however, an opportunity to fund discretionary services or to undertake some capital investment as the targeted reductions are greater than the £600,000 required.

Resolved to recommend that the Council update the Medium Term Financial Strategy in light of the priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan and the projections for Council Tax and the revisions to the Tough Choices Programme.

179. THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE DRAFT REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE SOUTH WEST – IMPLICATIONS FOR NORTH DORSET AND SUGGESTED RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION

The Report was introduced by Councillor Deborah Croney and the Planning Policy Manager. The issues were discussed at a recent meeting of the Planning Policy Panel. Members noted that changes to the RSS reflect both the Examination In Public (EIP) Panel's findings and the views of the Secretary of State. Members also noted that there is likely to be a review of housing numbers across the region, that the Secretary of State had expressed concerns about infrastructure and that the new Core Strategy sets out the hierarchy of settlements in the Region.

A discussion took place about whether the word 'at' or the word 'in' should be used in relation to responses 1 & 2. It was felt that using the word 'at' would afford more scope for determination at a local level.

A discussion took place about the need to reinstate the A350/A36 and the A354/A37 corridors as of regional importance.

Members welcomed the affordable housing percentage (33%), as it should help North Dorset reach its priority targets.

Resolved

- 1) That response 14 (2nd para) be amended to read 'Policy RE5 should be amended to accord with the recommendations of the EiP Panel and, for larger scale developments, should establish a target that developers should be expected to provide 20% of energy to come from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources on site.
- 2) That response 15 be amended to read 'The sustainability appraisal of the RSS Proposed Changes outlines, in paragraphs 34 to 37 of the document, further changes that could make the document more sustainable. The RSS should be amended in line with the recommendations in the sustainability appraisal, if it is intended to achieve the most sustainable options for the future development of the region.
- 3) That subject to the changes outlined above, Cabinet agrees the suggested responses (set out in Appendix 1 of the Report) as the Council's formal response to public consultation on the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the RSS.

180. APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

The Report was introduced by Councillor Deborah Croney and the Planning Policy Manager. Members noted that Case Law has held that spatial plans should be the subject of Appropriate Assessment (AA) so that any potential impacts on European habitat designations can be assessed and appropriately mitigated. The screening assessment has indicated that there may be impacts upon the River Avon SAC and the Dorset Heathlands as a result of the implementation of the DPD produced by the District Council.

A discussion took place about the need to avoid duplication of work and to prevent the waste of resources. It was noted that there was provision in the budget for commissioning the work.

Resolved That Cabinet members note the screening for Appropriate Assessment of Forthcoming Local Development Documents and the need for AA to be undertaken for forthcoming Development Plan Documents.

181. REVIEW OF THE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) ON MANAGING HOUSING LAND SUPPLY IN NORTH DORSET

The Report was introduced by Councillor Deborah Croney and the Planning Policy Manager.

Members noted the additional information, circulated at the meeting, entitled 'Implications for Housing and Planning Delivery Grant'.

Resolved to note that the draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West will carry increased weight, following the publication of the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes and that as a consequence the Managing Housing Land Supply in North Dorset SPD will generally carry less weight when planning decisions are made.

The meeting closed at 12:51pm.

CHAIRMAN