



**Cabinet recommendations for consideration by Council
at the Council Meeting on Wednesday, 26 September 2007**

Cabinet – 11 September 2007

78 Clean and Green Team - Future Service Provision

The Cabinet considered Report No 165/07 relating to proposals for the substantiation of the Clean & Green Team, including appropriate future service provision and associated resource requirement.

The establishment of the Team was funded in 2006 through the allocation of a one-off service improvement budget of £200,000 and the provision of a recurring revenue budget of £38,700. In addition, a recurring budget of £15,000 was made available from funds set aside for a new client management role in respect of the new Leisure Trust. The arrangements recognised that the client manager for the Leisure Trust would also have managerial responsibilities for the Clean and Green Team.

At its meeting in March 2006, the Cabinet had approved detailed proposals for the operation of the Team, which included the permanent appointment of a Senior Customer Services Assistant and two Street Wardens on two-year fixed term contracts. Such proposals required the use of £91,400 of the £200,000 service improvement budget and committed almost all of the recurring revenue budgets. At that time, no estimates of income generated from Fixed Penalty fines were included within the budgets. However, it was noted that if the service was to generate sufficient income in the future, the Cabinet could consider extending the appointment of the two fixed term Street Warden posts.

At its meeting in June 2006, the Cabinet had received an update Report which allocated a further £103,491 from the service improvement budget. Such sum included £48,491 towards a two-year fixed term Legal Support Officer to provide additional legal support for Clean and Green related prosecutions and the commitment of £40,000 towards the capital purchase of an additional street sweeping vehicle.

The total cost of the Clean and Green Team over the current two year programme of work was £353,440. That took into account expenditure incurred to date as well as those amounts committed to fund the fixed term posts through until the end of the contracts in 2008.

The resources which were needed to extend the service beyond July 2008 at the previously approved level, and the funding which was currently provided within the existing base budget, was set out in paragraph 4.1 of the Report. The amounts shown did not include inflation.

Additional resources of £107,360 would be required to fund the Team through to 31 March 2011. The additional annual recurring budget from then on would be £49,550 which included estimates relating to income that would be generated from Fixed Penalty Notices and recovered Court costs. Further details relating to the proposed funding package were set out in the Report.

Recommended:

78.1 That the resource requirement to substantiate the Clean and Green Team to 31 March 2011, as set out in paragraph 4.1 of Report No 165/07, be approved.

Reasons for the Decision:

The Clean and Green Team has been successful in demonstrating the Council's commitment towards its stated objective of protecting the local environment.

The Cabinet established a new Team from August 2006 to take advantage of opportunities afforded by new legislation. In doing so, the Cabinet has provided additional funding to support the new service until 2008 and Report No 165/07 explores how the service might be sustained in the medium term.

† *Councillors are requested to bring with them to the meeting Report No 165/07 which was circulated with the agenda papers for the meeting of the Cabinet on 11 September 2007. If you require a further copy of the document please contact Trevor Hayward, Committee Officer, on e-mail trevor.hayward@lewes.gov.uk or telephone 01273 484122.*

79 Homelessness Prevention

The Cabinet considered Report No 166/07 relating to a proposal to enhance the budgetary provision for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP).

The introduction of the Homeless Persons Act 1977 had resulted in Local Housing Authorities having the major responsibility for providing housing and/or assistance to households who were homeless or faced with homelessness. That had inevitably been a drain on resources, even more so following the introduction of the Right to Buy Scheme in November 1980 which had effectively taken many thousands of homes out of the social housing sector. In the case of the District, there had been some 2,500 sales since 1980, most of which were of larger family houses.

Until fairly recently, local authorities had made use of bed and breakfast accommodation in which families were forced to spend increasing periods in what proved to be, in many cases, inappropriate accommodation which was also an expensive temporary solution.

Various amendments had been made to the legislation and local authorities were charged with finding other more acceptable solutions in relation to both social and financial costs.

One solution that had proved to be successful was the Council's Private Sector Leasing Scheme which had been introduced, in its present form, in 2002. The Government provided financial incentives via the Housing Benefit Subsidy system to encourage use of leasing for homeless families. Consequently, leases of up to three years had been arranged with property owners with properties being let to homeless families on a temporary basis, which had been a better alternative to bed and breakfast accommodation.

Over the last four years, the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister had made grants available to Local Authorities through the Homelessness Directorate (HD) to assist in tackling the problem of homelessness for which the Council had received £43,000 each year.

Officers had met with a representative of the HD, which was currently part of the Department of Communities and Local Government, in order to seek further funding for initiatives in the current financial year. The Council's bid had been successful and a further sum of £20,000 would be awarded. A condition of the grant was that the Council needed to work more closely with the private sector and that it needed to invest more of its own resources into the homelessness service.

The Council currently allocated some funds under the Discretionary Housing Payments scheme but, the Report suggested, such allocation could be increased. Such funds were intended to help people on a one-off temporary basis only, in order to meet the shortfall of their housing costs after housing benefits. Further details relating to the scheme, including the eligibility criteria, were set out in the Report.

Recommended:

- 79.1** That the Discretionary Housing Payments budget be increased by £52,215, such sum to be met from the balance on the Private Sector Leasing account and vacancy savings in the Housing Strategy Division; and

It was further

Resolved:

- 79.2** That the additional sum of £20,000 grant from the Government, to assist with tackling homelessness in the District, be accepted.

Reasons for the Decisions:

The Council, along with other local housing authorities, is being encouraged to concentrate its efforts on homelessness prevention. This can be achieved, in part, by ensuring that the Council make best use of the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) budget.

The Homelessness Directorate of the Department of Communities and Local Government recently agreed to the Council's request for a further grant of £20,000 to tackle homelessness on the condition that the Council make greater use of DHP whenever possible to stave off homelessness.

† *The Recommendation, and not the Resolution, in the above Minute is for consideration by Council.*

Councillors are requested to bring with them to the meeting Report No 166/07 which was circulated with the agenda papers for the meeting of the Cabinet on 11 September 2007. If you require a further copy of the document please contact Trevor Hayward, Committee Officer, on e-mail trevor.hayward@lewes.gov.uk or telephone 01273 484122.