

Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held in the **School Hall, Ringmer Community College, Lewes Road, Ringmer** on **Wednesday, 17 October 2007** at 9.05am.

Present:

Councillor A C De Vecchi (Chair)
Councillors E N Collict, J H Freeman, P F Gardiner, D M Gray, I A Nicholson,
S Saunders and I J White.

In Attendance:

Mr A Hill and Mr R Philp (Tenants' Representatives).

Apologies received:

Councillor J M Harrison-Hicks.

	Minutes	Action
100	Introductions and Welcome At the commencement of the meeting, the elected Members of the Cabinet, the Tenants' Representatives and the Officers attending the meeting, introduced themselves to the students from Ringmer Community College who were sitting in the public gallery. The Chair, on behalf of the Cabinet, welcomed to the meeting Mr A Hill and Mr R Philp who had recently been elected by the Tenants of Lewes District organisation to be its representatives on the Cabinet in place of Mr D Cannings and Ms D Twitchen. The organisation had elected Mr Cannings to be its Substitute Representative.	
101	Minutes The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	
102	Urgent Item The Chair advised that she had agreed, in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, that Appendix 2 to Report No 195/07 entitled "Fort Road Recreation Ground – Sports Park Project", which had been circulated to all Members of the Cabinet at the	

meeting, be considered as a matter of urgency in order that the Cabinet could take its decisions based on the most recent information which was available.

103 Denton Island Children and Family Centre

The Chair drew councillors attention to paragraph 2.1 of Report No 206/07 relating to an application by the Newhaven Community Development Association (NCDA) for a concession in respect of the rent due on the Denton Island Children and Family Centre, Newhaven, and reported that the NCDA had been asked to supply details of its recent financial performance and projections of income going forward. However, such information was not yet available and it was therefore suggested that the Report be withdrawn from consideration at this meeting as the Cabinet was unable to take its decisions in the absence of such important information.

Resolved:

103.1 That Report No 206/07 relating to an application by the Newhaven Community Development Association (NCDA) for a concession in respect of the rent due on the Denton Island Children and Family Centre, Newhaven, be withdrawn from consideration at this meeting as the Cabinet was unable to take its decisions in the absence of some important information relating to the Associations recent financial performance and projections of income.

CE (to note)

Reason for the Decision:

There was an absence of material information which was needed to enable the Cabinet to take its decisions.

104 Finance Update

The Cabinet considered Report No 194/07 which provided an update on financial matters affecting the General Fund Revenue Account, the Housing Revenue Account and the approved Capital Programme.

A separate Report (Report No 207/07) on the Agenda for the meeting set out details relating to the latest developments in respect of the concessionary bus pass scheme which the Council had a statutory duty to provide. That Report explained that the cost of the scheme in 2007/2008 was likely to exceed the estimate by up to £610,000.

In setting the budget for the year, a contingency of £50,000 had been included within the General Fund working balance to cover potential additional one-off costs arising from the scheme. However, that amount was not sufficient to cover the latest projected cost. In the interim, the

shortfall in the budget could be covered by the General Fund Working Balance (which was projected to total £1.37m at the year end).

At its next meeting of the Cabinet, the Officers would be giving a mid-year update on the position of each of the Council's earmarked reserves as well as those key budget items which were underspent or had produced additional income in 2006/2007. That would enable the Cabinet to decide whether, as part of its overall Financial Strategy, part of the funding gap should be met from releasing funds previously set aside for other potential spending plans.

If the additional cost transpired to be a recurring annual cost, it would require significant changes to be made to the Council's priorities and the range of services provided, in order to realign the base budget. The Government was currently consulting on its proposals for providing additional funding to local authorities in respect of the National Concessionary Fares scheme which would be in place from April 2008.

Report No 194/07 suggested that the best option for the Council, in financial terms, was for it to allocate a grant in the sum of £0.283m. If the recurring cost of the new scheme was not fully funded, additional pressure would be placed on the Council's base budget.

The Director of Finance and Community Services updated the Cabinet orally on matters relating to the cost of the existing scheme and the timetable for obtaining the estimated costs of the new scheme from April 2008, following the introduction of the proposed National Concessionary Fares scheme.

It was anticipated that income from planning fees in 2007/2008 would exceed the budget of £440,000 by £80,000. Further large scale planning applications were expected to arrive during the autumn, which would add to the surplus.

A key member of the Planning Department was currently absent as a result of long-term sickness and it was therefore proposed to bring in temporary cover for the post to ensure that performance in processing planning applications and appeals was maintained. The cost of such cover namely, £8,000, could be funded from the additional planning fee income.

Arrangements were also being made within the Planning Department to cover the absence of another senior member of staff who was likely to be away from work for some time while recovering from an accident. It was proposed that such cover be undertaken by a combination of staff 'acting up' to the role of the senior post, with additional hours being worked as paid overtime. The cost of the arrangement was likely to be £3,500.

Paragraph 3.1 of the Report set out details relating to proposals to relocate staff from the office building at 3a Fisher Street, Lewes, into Southover House, Lewes. The cost of the necessary adaptation of the office accommodation in Southover House was £30,000, which included the cost

of moving. The full-year saving arising from the disposal of 3a Fisher Street would be £21,000 per annum which would result in the cost being 'paid back' in the second year. The Report therefore suggested that the 2007/2008 Capital Programme be updated to incorporate the project.

Paragraph 3.2 of the Report set out details of an envelope folding machine which was located in the Corporate Support Unit and which had reached the end of its useful life. Three quotations for suitable replacement machines had been obtained, further details of which were set out in paragraph 3.2.3 of the Report.

Paragraph 4 of the Report stated that the Council's approved lending list included Northern Rock bank with which £1million was invested. Such deposit would be returned to the Council in November 2007.

However, the Council's Treasury Advisers, Sector, had advised that the credit rating of Northern Rock had been downgraded and that it no longer fell within the Council's criteria for approved investments. Consequently, no further funds would be deposited with that bank.

Details of a request which had been received from the Support the Princess Royal Hospital Campaign (SPRH) for the Council to make a contribution to support its campaign to save its Accident and Emergency and Maternity Services, were set out in paragraph 5 of the Report. The SPRH had noted that such services were under threat from Government proposals and the West Sussex Primary Care Trust in their Fit for the Future Consultation paper.

The SPRH was seeking funding to employ specialists to analyse the economic and health assumptions in the proposals. It could not undertake a meaningful campaign without external assistance and without wide publicity for its cause. A supporting statement explaining the organisation and finances of the SPRH campaign was set out at Appendix 1 to the Report.

Paragraph 5.3 of the Report set out details of the limited amount of money, within the Council's approved budget, which was available for grants to community organisations.

Resolved:

104.1 That the additional cost of the concessionary fares scheme in 2006/2007, as detailed in Report No 194/07, be funded from the General Fund working balance;

DFCS

104.2 That a transfer in the sum of £11,500 be made from the Planning fee income budget to fund the appointment of temporary cover within the Planning Department;

DFCS

- | | | |
|--------------|---|------|
| 104.3 | That the amendment to the 2007/2008 Capital Programme in respect of the office relocation project, as set out in paragraph 3.1 of the Report, be approved; | DFCS |
| 104.4 | That the folding machine in the Corporate Support Unit be replaced, and that provision be included within the capital programme as necessary; | DFCS |
| 104.5 | That the Council's Approved Lending List be changed as detailed in paragraph 4 of the Report; | DFCS |
| 104.6 | That a contribution in the sum of £1000.00 be made to the Support the Princess Royal Hospital Campaign for the specific purpose of contributing towards the employment of a Health Economist and that, in the event that such sum is not taken up for that purpose, then it be returned to the Council; and | DFCS |
| 104.7 | That the remainder of the Report be received and noted. | |

Reason for the Decisions:

A Report on funding issues in relation to the Council's General Fund Revenue Account, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme is made to each meeting of the Cabinet to ensure that the Council's financial health is kept under continual review.

105 Fort Road Recreation Ground – Sports Park Project

The Cabinet considered Report No 195/07 relating to the outcome of an options appraisal for the improvement of existing facilities at Fort Road Recreation Ground, Newhaven, including the development of the cricket pavilion and the partially completed football stand.

At its meeting on 11 September 2007, the Cabinet had been advised of the opportunities afforded by the recently announced BIG Lottery - Community Asset Fund (CAF) and the requirement for the Council to identify potential buildings that might be suitable for the basis of a capital bid to the Fund.

The Officers had suggested that the cricket pavilion and the partially completed football stand, which were located at the Recreation Ground, might be suitable for development as community/sports facilities which, if implemented, could lead to widespread community benefit and enable the Council to achieve a long term desire to improve local facilities in that location.

The Officers had undertaken an initial feasibility appraisal of both buildings and a risk assessment based upon the complexity of developing each building, further details of which were set out in the Report.

Paragraphs 3.4 to 3.7 of the Report set out details relating to the current position in respect of the cricket pavilion which was in a poor state of repair with damage to the roof and external walls. However, internally it had been managed, to a basic standard, by Newhaven Cricket Club and the Council.

Consultation with the Club had identified its strong sense of identity and association with the pavilion. It was seen as the heart of the Club, as a focal point for social interaction as well as providing practical facilities for changing and the provision of refreshments. Those requirements were seen as a priority for retention in any new proposal which might arise.

Wave Leisure Trust (WLT) was the Council's stated preferred partner to operate both the cricket pavilion and the football stand, following refurbishment by the Council. WLT had indicated that the pavilion must generate sufficient income so as to, at least, break even in the longer term. As such, the simple refurbishment of the building within the existing footprint was not feasible as a means of generating sufficient revenue for its operation and future upkeep. The requirements of the CAF also needed to be incorporated into any proposal, further details of which were set out in the Report.

The Council's Architect had been briefed accordingly and had provided a draft design proposal which was set out at Appendix 1 to the Report. It incorporated several key elements, further details of which were set out in the Report.

Paragraphs 3.8 to 3.18 of the Report provided details of the proposed project and paragraph 3.11 suggested that, if implemented, it be named the "Henry North Pavilion" after Henry North Holroyd, 3rd Earl of Sheffield, who was an avid supporter of cricket at local, national and international levels.

The Council's Officers and those of WLT were of the opinion that the Football Stand was not suitable as a project for submission to the CAF due to the complexity of securing a funding package within the deadlines of the CAF submission timetable.

However, the Report suggested that, instead, it be considered as a "Second Phase" project following submission of a bid for the cricket pavilion to the Fund, as Phase 1 of the redevelopment of the Recreation Ground. If implemented, that would allow more time to carefully construct both the design proposals and a sustainable business case to support the operation and upkeep of the building.

Paragraphs 3.21 to 3.26 of the Report set out details of other funding sources in respect of the football stand.

The Director of Finance and Community Services circulated a copy of Appendix 2 to the Report which set out details of the Draft Partnership Agreement between the Council and the WLT, (a copy of which is contained in the Minute Book), which had not been available when the

Report had been published.

Resolved:

- 105.1** That the recommended Phase 1 of the redevelopment of facilities at Fort Road Recreation Ground, Newhaven, in respect of the proposed "Henry North Pavilion", as set out in Report No 195/07, be approved, subject to the successful submission of a bid to the BIG Lottery - Community Asset Fund; DFCS
- 105.2** That the draft Partnership Agreement included at Appendix 2 to the Report be approved in principle in furtherance of Resolution No 77.7 of the Cabinet at its meeting on 11 September 2007, establishing Wave Leisure Trust as the Council's preferred development partner in respect of the redevelopment proposals at Fort Road Recreation Ground; DFCS
- 105.3** That a maximum aggregate revenue contribution of £53,825 be approved, in principle, to offset the deficit projected to be incurred by Wave Leisure Trust when operating the Pavilion for the first four years; and DFCS
- 105.4** That it be noted that the development of the current partially constructed Football Stand at the Recreation Ground will form Phase 2 of the project and that officers will work to develop a business case and seek appropriate funding sources in consultation with Newhaven Football Club, other potential users of the facility and Wave Leisure Trust.

Reasons for the Decisions:

The improvement of Fort Road Recreation Ground, Newhaven, has been a long term objective as a means of replacing and upgrading the various time expired buildings and sports facilities on the Recreation Ground.

The Community Asset Fund bidding process requires there to be in place a clearly defined proposal accompanied by a business plan that is supported by the Council and evidence of a partnership arrangement in place with the Council's identified third sector partner.

106 Shared Services : Evaluation Framework

The Cabinet considered Report No 196/07 which provided a framework for evaluating the Council's participation in shared service provision.

All publicly funded bodies needed to secure value for money in the provision of services to the community and gain the maximum benefit for each pound of taxpayers money which was used.

Several national policy documents had set the direction of travel for the next three to four years in the development of shared services, between local authorities, public bodies and the private sector, key references to which could be found in several documents, details of which were set out in paragraphs 2.3 to 2.6 of the Report.

Paragraph 2.8 of the Report stated that operating a shared services centre was akin to establishing a trading operation and suggested that it would be prudent to adopt advice which was contained in Orders that permitted councils to trade, further details of which were set out in that paragraph.

The Council was currently participating in the evaluation of a shared Housing Benefit Fraud Investigation Service and a shared Revenues Service within East Sussex, experience from which had shown that the evaluation process could be a resource intensive activity that impacted upon a range of professional disciplines including Personnel, Information Technology, Legal and Financial Services.

Appendix A to the Report set out details of an evaluation framework which had been prepared by the Corporate Management Team. It reflected the experience that had been gained from the evaluation processes referred to above and was designed to ensure that resources were used to best effect and that the Council remained focused on delivering its priorities and securing value for money services.

Resolved:

106.1 That the framework for evaluating participation in shared services, as set out at Appendix A to Report No 196/07, be approved.

DFCS

Reasons for the Decision:

A framework to evaluate participation in shared service projects will help to ensure that the Council's resources are used to best effect and that the Council remains focused on delivering value for money services.

107 Shared Services : Housing Benefit Fraud Investigations

The Cabinet considered Report No 197/07 relating to participation in an East Sussex Housing Benefit Fraud Investigation Shared Service and in an East Sussex Revenues Shared Service.

In January 2007 the Department for Work and Pensions had produced a strategy document entitled "Getting Welfare Right: Tackling Error in the Benefits System". It contained detailed plans for achieving that aim in Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. It had been estimated that, for the period April 2005 to March 2006, the loss from fraud nationally was £0.8billion.

Partnership working, in the form of shared services and joint working, was currently high on the national agenda. The four most relevant reasons for evaluating shared services was to secure:

- (i) improved customer service;
- (ii) improved performance;
- (iii) increased resilience; and
- (iv) potential for on-going revenue savings.

The challenge of developing more extensive partnerships was considerable following the Gershon Review and it was an assumption behind the 3% per annum efficiency target for local government which was expected from the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review 2007.

By exploring and evaluating multi district partnerships, the East Sussex authorities were demonstrating their willingness to meet the efficiency challenge, develop local capacity and knowledge and implement solutions where there was a sound business case to do so.

The Director of Finance and Community Services represented the Council on the East Sussex Joint Improvement Project Board which had been evaluating the two business cases for shared services within East Sussex. The Fraud Investigation business case had been completed and the one relating to the Revenues Service was nearing completion.

All five district and borough councils in East Sussex had displayed an interest in exploring new ways of undertaking their benefit fraud investigation functions. A business case has been prepared and evaluated, details of which were set out at Appendix 1 to the Report.

The Report suggested that, if there was a sound business case for the East Sussex Revenues Shared Service project, then the Fraud service would automatically be part of that package.

The governance model for the partnership was that one Lead Authority had Service Level Agreements with the other three. All four authorities had agreed that Eastbourne Borough Council should be the Lead Authority.

Details relating to the staffing issues and financial appraisal associated with the proposal, were set out in paragraphs 6 and 8 respectively of the Report.

Resolved:

- 107.1** That the Council participate in an East Sussex Housing Benefit Fraud Investigation Shared Service subject to the Cabinet's approval, at a future meeting, of a sound business case to proceed, at the same time, with an East Sussex Revenues Shared Service.

DFCS

Reasons for the Decision:

The business case for a stand alone shared housing benefit investigation service is not financially advantageous to the Council and is unlikely to lead to a significant improvement in performance. However, it would make sense to participate if a sound business case arises from the current evaluation of an East Sussex Revenues Shared Service for all taxation and housing benefits functions, and the fraud service becomes part of that larger project.

108 Pilot Cardboard Recycling Scheme

The Cabinet considered Report No 198/07 relating to a proposal to introduce a pilot cardboard, and later paper, recycling scheme for flats and commercial premises.

Kerbside recycling was provided to all households in the District, with the exception of premises which were particularly difficult to serve and flats of more than two storeys. The Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 required that, with certain exceptions, all premises were to be provided with the collection of at least two separate recycled materials by December 2010.

The proposed pilot scheme comprised the using of a second-hand refuse collection vehicle to target the capture of cardboard from blocks of flats and from commercial premises in Seaford which had been chosen because it was the largest town in the District, access was comparatively easy for heavy goods vehicles and there was a significant proportion of blocks of flats. It was further proposed that the same vehicle be used to offer a bespoke cardboard collection service to commercial customers in Seaford.

It was anticipated that the pilot scheme might have a knock-on effect in attracting new commercial business for the Council's Trade Waste Collection service which, in turn, would generate additional income.

The Report suggested that the pilot scheme would operate for six months from November 2007 to May 2008 which, if implemented, would provide sufficient time for the arrangements to stabilise and for settled recycling patterns to emerge. Performance of the scheme would be reviewed on a monthly basis. It was proposed that a Report be prepared for consideration at a future meeting of the Cabinet with detailed recommendations of how to expand the scheme in the most efficient way.

A review of waste and recycling was being undertaken which was working towards development of a recommended package of measures to improve waste management and recycling for the District into 2008 and beyond. Such measures might include proposals for expanding cardboard recycling which might be considered as part of the 2008/09 revenue and capital budgets.

Resolved:

- 108.1** That a six month pilot scheme for cardboard recycling, to run from November 2007 to May 2008, as set out in Report No 198/07, be agreed; and DPES
- 108.2** That the Officers be requested to prepare a Report for consideration at a future meeting of the Cabinet on matters relating to the results of the pilot project and recommendations on the future operation of the scheme. DPES

Reasons for the Decisions:

To move towards compliance with Section 1 of the Household Waste Recycling Act 2003, as outlined at Appendix 1 to Report No 198/07.

To increase recycling in accordance with the priorities for service improvement, as set out in the Council Plan 2007/08.

To provide a service to flats.

To improve customer satisfaction with the commercial and domestic waste services.

109 Gender Equality Scheme

The Cabinet considered Report No 199/07 relating to a proposal to adopt the Gender Equality Scheme 2007 to 2010, a copy of which was set out at Appendix A thereto.

Under the Equality Act 2006, the Council had a general duty to eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment and promote equality of opportunity between women and men.

The regulations under the Act required that, since May 2006, the Council produce and publish a Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan which sets out the arrangements it had in place to meet the duty. The aim of the Scheme was to proactively ensure that women and men were treated equally and fairly as service users and employees.

The Government wanted local authorities to approach equalities on a comprehensive basis. The Council was committed to achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government, which was a framework for mainstreaming equalities into all its activities.

The Council was working to promote gender equality and tackle sex discrimination as an employer and as a provider of services. Level 2 of the Equality Standard involved it in conducting a programme of equality assessments to help identify and remove any discriminatory barriers which prevented equal access for women and men. Such assessments had

highlighted several areas for promoting gender equality which were reflected in the Scheme's Action Plan.

The Scheme and Action Plan were regarded as a continuation of the Council's work in promoting gender equality. They would be reviewed on an on-going basis and a revised Scheme published every three years.

Resolved:

109.1 That the Gender Equality Scheme 2007 to 2010, as set out at Appendix A to Report No 199/07, be adopted.

CE

Reasons for the Decision:

To ensure that the Council complies with its duties under the Equality Act 2006 and to enable it to progress with its gender equality work.

110 Abandoned Trolleys - Adoption of Enforcement Powers

The Cabinet considered Report No 200/07 relating to proposals to adopt enforcement powers in respect of abandoned trolleys.

The Council had adopted the majority of the new powers contained within the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, primarily as part of the establishment of the Clean and Green Team in 2006.

Section 99 of the Act had been introduced on 1 April 2006 and had the effect of amending Schedule 4 to the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA). Taken together, those provisions enabled a local authority to seize shopping and luggage trolleys that had been abandoned within its area, and recover the removal, storage and disposal charges from their owners.

The frequency, quantity and location of abandoned trolleys varied across the District in which Lewes presented the most significant number on a weekly basis.

Much officer time was expended on retrieving, storing and transporting abandoned trolleys. The Council's Community Ranger, Street Wardens and Park Wardens recovered trolleys from several locations which were then returned either directly to the owner or stored at Southover House, Lewes, awaiting collection by their owners.

Paragraphs 4.6 to 4.9 of the Report set out details of the proposed action which could be taken relating to the future seizing, storage and disposal of abandoned trolleys, and paragraphs 4.10 to 4.14 thereto outlined the consultation exercise which had been undertaken in respect of the proposal to adopt the new powers, as detailed in the Report.

If the Cabinet was minded to adopt Schedule 4 of the EPA 1990, it would enable the Officers to deal, more effectively, with abandoned trolleys within

the District. It would also reduce the resource costs to the Council and might also act as a deterrent to trolley owners and therefore encourage them to put in place more rigorous arrangements to prevent the unauthorised removal of trolleys from their premises.

Resolved:

110.1 That Schedule 4 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, as amended by Section 99 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, relating to abandoned trolleys, as detailed in Report No 200/07, shall apply to the District of Lewes and come into force on 10 February 2008; and

DFCS

110.2 That the charges, as set out in paragraph 4.9 of the Report, be approved.

DFCS

It was further

Recommended:

110.3 That the Constitution be amended so as to enable the Director of Planning and Environmental Services to implement and enforce the provisions of Schedule 4 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Section 99 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, and to appoint authorised officers for this purpose.

DPES/
DFCS
(both to
note)

Reasons for the Decisions:

The abandonment of trolleys within the District is a persistent and growing issue that requires significant Officer time and cost to the Council to remedy as well as causing a nuisance to the local community and, on occasion, damage to the environment.

Schedule 4 of Environmental Protection Act 1990, as amended by Section 99 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, provides local authorities with the power to charge the owners of abandoned trolleys for the costs associated with their retrieval, storage and return or disposal as appropriate.

Cabinet must establish the appropriate charges to be made to owners and must set a commencement date for the new power, if adopted, that is no less than 3 months from the date of the Resolution.

111 IT Strategy

The Cabinet considered Report No 201/07 relating to the proposed updated version of the Information Technology (IT) Strategy, a copy of which was set out at Appendix A thereto.

The Draft document was designed to set a “direction of travel” rather than

identify, in detail, how everything would be undertaken. It was based on the premise that the Council's objectives for IT developments should, amongst other things:

- increase flexibility within the Council by improving facilities for mobile and home working and to allow more flexible use of accommodation;
- improve access to information and services for both internal and external customers;
- improve resilience by further efforts on security, disaster recovery and business continuity planning and by reducing the number of potential failure points in the infrastructure; and
- increase efficiency by helping departments to exploit all the functionality in the Council's existing IT systems, ensuring that new investment had a sound business case behind it, providing more self service facilities to reduce the demands on staff and introducing systems that improve business processes and help reduce complexity and cost.

Details of further objectives were set out in the Report.

Resolved:

111.1 That the draft Information Technology Strategy, as set out at Appendix A to Report No 201/07, be approved and adopted.

HBS

Reasons for the Decisions:

Most of the Council's services are now dependent on Information Technology (IT) and further developments of its IT capacity will help to meet departmental requirements and introduce new corporate improvements. An IT Strategy is needed to guide those developments, but the existing Strategy document is outdated and needs to be replaced to reflect the current state of the Council, technology and customer expectations.

112 Newhaven Fort Fees and Charges 2008

The Cabinet considered Report No 202/07 relating to the proposed admission fees to be charged at Newhaven Fort, Newhaven, in 2008.

In order to conserve an important part of Newhaven's heritage, the Council had opened the Fort as a visitor attraction in 1988, with a management policy to maximise income from admissions and to encourage additional spending through the shop and canteen activities.

An annual assessment of admission fees was undertaken, based on visitor

comments relating to value for money; price comparison with other Sussex visitor attractions, new features and recorded visitor numbers.

Following that assessment, various pricing options were considered namely: no change; inflationary increases; above inflation increases or selective and phased increases to bring prices into line with one another.

Comparisons had been made with regional visitor attractions of heritage or military interest. Overall, the recommended fees which were set out in paragraph 2.6 of the Report, kept the Fort's pricing policy in line with similar attractions whilst, at the same time, did not penalise vulnerable groups or endangered core markets. The fees shown included Value Added Tax where appropriate.

Resolved:

112.1 That the 2008 admission fees for Newhaven Fort, Newhaven, as detailed in Report No 202/07, be approved.

DPES

Reasons for the Decision:

To maximise income at Newhaven Fort, Newhaven, develop visitor numbers in core target groups and enable preparation of 2008 promotional material.

Alternative Option Considered and Rejected:

That the 2008 admission fees for Newhaven Fort, Newhaven, remain unchanged from those which have been charged in 2007.

113 Housing Green Paper: Homes for the Future - More Affordable, More Sustainable

The Cabinet considered Report No 203/07 relating to proposed responses to the Government's Housing Green Paper consultation. A copy of the Green Paper Executive Summary was appended to the Report.

The Green Paper had been issued in July 2007. It wrapped up several recently announced housing and planning policy initiatives into a single document. As such, it did not contain much that was totally new, or had not been trailed before. However, it contained proposals which were of great interest to District Councils and some "spin-off" announcements and consultations that needed to be examined in order to obtain a broader picture of Government intentions.

Paragraph 2 of the Report set out details of the proposed responses to the Green Paper however, explanatory notes which were included for the benefit of councillors that were not part of the submission, were shown in italics. Such responses focused on issues that were of particular relevance to the Council and which were considered to be important to draw to the

Government's attention.

The Green Paper also included some general comments on the Government's expectations of local authorities strategic housing role, further details of which were set out in paragraph 1.3 thereto.

Responses to the Government needed to be submitted by 15 October 2007. Therefore, a response, as set out in paragraph 2 of the Report, had been agreed with the Lead Councillors for Housing and Planning which had been submitted to meet the required deadline. In the event that the Cabinet was minded to amend any aspect of the response, then a follow up letter would be sent to the Government which would detail the changes to the earlier response.

The Director of Planning and Environmental Services drew Councillors attention to paragraphs 2.15 to 2.20 of the Report which related to proposals in respect of the Planning Gain Supplement (PGS). He stated that, since the preparation of the Report, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had indicated that the Government would not now proceed with the PGS system and, instead, would introduce some form of "Planning Tariff", for which further proposals would be published in the forthcoming Planning Reform Bill.

Resolved:

113.1 That the responses that have been submitted to the Government to meet the deadline of 15 October 2007 in respect of its Housing Green Paper consultation, as set out in paragraph 2 of Report No 203/07, be endorsed; and

DPES/
DFCS

113.2 That matters relating to the provision of housing, including affordable housing, in the District, be the subject of discussion at the next meeting of the Council to be held on Tuesday, 4 December 2007.

DPES/
DFCS/
CE

Reason for the Decisions:

The Council's response to the proposals in the Housing Green Paper had to be submitted to the Government by 15 October 2007.

114 Membership of the Newhaven Enterprise Gateway Sub-Committee

The Cabinet considered Report No 204/07 relating to a change to the membership of the Newhaven Enterprise Gateway Sub-Committee.

At the Meeting of the Council on 26 September 2007 it had been reported that Councillor J V S Page had resigned from his position as a member of the Cabinet. Councillor Page was therefore no longer eligible to serve as a member of the Sub-Committee.

The Head of Democratic Services had been notified by the Conservative Group that it wished to appoint Councillor I A Nicholson to serve on the Sub-Committee in place of Councillor Page.

Resolved:

- 114.1** That Councillor I A Nicholson be appointed to serve on the Newhaven Enterprise Gateway Sub-Committee in place of Councillor J V S Page.

HDS/
all CMT
to note

Reason for the Decision:

To implement a change to the membership of the Newhaven Enterprise Gateway Sub-Committee, as requested by the Conservative Group, following the resignation from the Cabinet of Councillor Page.

115 Equality Standard for Local Government

The Cabinet received Report No 205/07 which provided an update on the progress of the Council's equalities work.

Appended to the Report were details of the Equality Assessments Programme (Appendix 1); the Equality Standard Level 2 Monitoring Report (Appendix 2); and the Equality Assessments Corporate Action Plan (Appendix 3).

Resolved:

- 115.1** That the progress towards achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government, as set out in Report No 205/07, be noted.

Reason for the Decision:

To enable the Council to complete its programme of work to achieve Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

116 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved:

- 116.1** That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the following items as there is likely to be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act:

- (a) Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007;
- (b) Provision of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Schemes on Behalf of Lewes District Council; and
- (c) Proposed Doctors Surgery, Anchor Field, Ringmer.

117 Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007

The Cabinet considered Report No 207/07 relating to a proposed position statement in respect of the Council's implementation of the new National Concessionary Travel Scheme.

Paragraph 2 of the Report set out information relating to the current arrangements which were implemented by the Council in fulfilling its statutory duty to provide concessionary travel to eligible persons by participation in the Countycard Scheme.

Paragraph 3 of the Report set out details of the new National Concessionary Travel Scheme including the arrangements for its administration, discretionary concessions and Government funding.

Resolved:

- | | | |
|--------------|---|------|
| 117.1 | That the Council use the bureau facility outlined in paragraph 3.1.7 of Report No 207/07 for the production of National Concessionary Travel Scheme bus passes, as permitted by Contract Procedure Rule 14; | DFCS |
| 117.2 | That the fall-back position explained in paragraph 3.1.8 of the Report be adopted for the production of bus passes, should the bureau facility referred to in 117.1 above not prove to be a viable option; | DFCS |
| 117.3 | That bus passes issued under the Scheme be valid for a maximum period of three years; and | DFCS |
| 117.4 | That the Director of Finance and Community Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Staff and Corporate Services, be authorised to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) utilise additional temporary staff support to implement the National Concessionary Travel Scheme, if required; (b) confirm the Discretionary Concessions which will apply locally to the National Scheme; and (c) respond to the Government's consultation exercise in respect of the future funding of concessionary travel. | DFCS |

Reason for the Decisions:

On several occasions in recent months, the Finance Update Report to the Cabinet has referred to the Government's intention to introduce a National Concessionary Travel Scheme, to be operational from 1 April 2008. Although the Department for Transport has not yet finalised the details of how local authorities will be reimbursed for the additional costs which they will incur as a result of the new Scheme, it is timely to report the latest developments to the Cabinet.

118 Provision of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Schemes on Behalf of Lewes District Council

The Cabinet considered Report No 208/07 relating to the selection of a tenderer for the provision of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Schemes on behalf of the Council.

The Council had been offering Energy Efficiency grants for several years as part of its Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy in support of its Private Sector Housing Strategy.

The existing contracts required updating and renewing and, accordingly, in mid-August 2007, several companies which specialised in Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency had been invited to tender for the provision of the Council's schemes, further details of which were set out in the Report.

Resolved:

118.1 That the tender for provision of the Council's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Scheme, as detailed in Report No 208/07, be awarded to Eaga Ltd for grant 1 (Keep Warm in Winter) and Ovesco for grants 2 and 3 (Renewable Energy Schemes), on the basis of supporting local small companies which is in line with the Council's Sustainable Procurement Policy

DPES

Reason for the Decision:

To award a tender for the provision of energy efficiency and renewable energy schemes on the basis of supporting local enterprise.

119 Proposed Doctors Surgery, Anchor Field, Ringmer

The Cabinet considered Report No 209/07 relating to proposals to accept the part surrender of an area of land which was leased to Ringmer Parish Council and to enter into an agreement to dispose of land for the building of a new doctors' surgery at Anchor Field, Ringmer.

Resolved:

- 119.1** That the acceptance of a part surrender of Council owned land which is leased by Ringmer Parish Council, as detailed in Report No 209/07, be approved; DSol
- 119.2** That the disposal of the freehold of the proposed doctors' surgery site at Anchor Field, Ringmer, as detailed in the Report, be approved; DSol
- (a) on terms negotiated by the District Valuer;
 - (b) any other terms the District Solicitor requires;
 - (c) subject to the extended use covenant, as referred to in paragraphs 10 to 12 of the Report; and
 - (d) with an easement for pedestrian and vehicular access through the Council's adjoining car park; and
- 119.3** That the proposed change of use of an area of public open space to provide for the new surgery and the possible increase in parking demand in the vicinity, be noted.

Reasons for the Decisions:

To benefit from a capital receipt and to enhance the provision of medical services in the Ringmer area.

(Note: With regard to the user covenant, as referred to in paragraph 13 of the Report, the developer has confirmed that any pharmacy use will be ancillary to the other permitted uses).

The meeting ended at 11.05am

A C De Vecchi
Chair