

BOROUGH OF POOLE

COUNCIL

10 APRIL 2007

The Meeting commenced at 7.00pm and concluded at 9.00pm.

Present:

Councillor Mrs Butt (Mayor)
Councillor Knight (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor Allen (Sheriff)
Councillors Adams (from 7.27p.m.), Belcham, Brooke, Bulteel, Burden, Clements, Collier, Curtis, Eades, Mrs Deas, Mrs Dion, Eades, Gillard, Gregory, Mrs Hillman, Mrs Hives, Mrs James, Mrs Lavender, Leverett, Matthews, Meachin, Montrose, Mrs Moore, Newell, Parker, Pethen, Rampton, Smith, Sorton, Trent, White, Wilson, Miss Wilson and Woodcock.

Members of the public present at the Meeting: 7 approximately

Members of the Standards Committee present at the Meeting: 2

1. PRAYERS

Prayers were said.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ms Atkinson, Adams (for late arrival), Collyer, Plummer, Mrs Stribley and Wretham.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the last Meeting of the Council held on 15th February 2007, having been previously circulated, be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record subject to the following amendment:-

M.6 – PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

First line delete “the Clump, Upton Way/Highway, Broadstone” and insert “Pinesprings, Broadstone”.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs Hives, declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 19, “Questions Relating to General Business” in the transport costs for service users of Day Centres as her husband was a user of this Service.

Peter Pawlowski, Strategic Director, Tim Martin, Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Pauline Gill, Democratic Services Manager declared personal interests in Agenda Item 14, Retirement, Early Retirement, Redundancy and Flexible Retirement Policies and Procedures – Local Government Services Employees” as Local Government employees.

5. MAYOR’S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor informed the Council that as it was aware four Members of the Council were not seeking re-election at the local Elections on the 3rd May 2007, Councillors Mike Collier, Mrs Jane James, Ray Smith and Bill Wretham. The Mayor, on behalf of the Council, had prepared Certificates referring specifically to the attributes and service each Member had given the community for presentation at the Council Meeting to those Members present.

The Mayor presented the Certificate to each of the Councillors in turn.

Mr Blacker, brother-in-law of Councillor Wretham attended the Meeting to accept the Award on Councillor Wretham’s behalf due to Councillor Wretham’s indisposition. On behalf of Councillor Wretham, Mr Blacker, thanked the Mayor and Council for its best wishes and kind words.

In presenting the Certificate to Councillor Smith the Mayor explained that she felt Councillor Smith had been an exemplar Councillor for Canford Cliffs. In response Councillor Smith explained it was with regret that he was standing down but this was due to medical advice for him to have less stress which should be helped by no longer being Chairman of Planning Committee!

Councillor Mrs James thanked the Members and Officers for their support, and explained that she too was standing down on medical advice.

“It is with sadness that we acknowledge the retirement of some long serving Councillors.

Councillor Bill Wretham

The longest serving is Bill Wretham, who was first elected to Dorset County Council in 1981 and to this Borough in 1983. During his long and distinguished service he was Chairman of Social Services and Deputy Leader of the old County Council. He served on very many Committees of this Council and from 2003-2005 served as a member of the Cabinet. Bill represented the Council on innumerable bodies and served as Governor at a number of schools, on many as Chairman.

Unfortunately ill-health curtailed his career and, although unable to attend meetings, it was his sincere wish that he could return and finish his term. Unfortunately, that was not to be. As well as for his hard work and total commitment, he will be remembered for his sense of humour, his wise counsel and his ability to quickly appreciate the full ramifications of proposals put in front of him.

Councillor Ray Smith

Like Bill, Ray Smith is a Londoner who settled in the area and brought a lifetime of business experience to his local Authority role. First elected to the County Council in 1993, and to this Council in 1997, Ray served with distinction on a large number of Committees and in May 2003 was appointed as Chairman of the Planning Committee, arguably the most difficult Committee of the Council to Chair. He immediately won the respect of his peers for the totally fair and impartial way he handled complex debates which sometimes had emotional representations. Always strong, he could only be swayed by the justness of the argument.

Elected Sheriff in 2002 and Mayor in 2003, his easy outgoing style endeared him to all. He collected a staggering £70,000 for his charity and was awarded second place in the National Mayor of the Year competition.

In spite of his civic achievements, he will best be remembered for his charity work. A supporter of and fund raiser for many charities – he is currently directing his considerable talents towards bringing happiness into the life of carers – something he proposes to continue.

We thank all Councillors who are not standing again for what they have done for the community and the town of Poole and wish them a long, healthy and happy retirement.”

Councillor Mrs Jane James

He also thanked Councillor Mrs James for the 16 years service she had given to the people of Poole and deferred to the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Brooke, to address the Meeting.

Councillor Brooke informed the Meeting that Councillor Mrs James was first elected in 1991. She had been a Council representative on the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Community Health Council, a School Governor Merley First School and Bearwood, served on the Education Committee, Founder Member of Poole Shopmobility and the first Chair of the Council’s Social Services Committee when it was youth unity status in 1997. She had also served as a Non-Executive Director of the NHS Trust and as the Chairman of the Community Support and Education Scrutiny Committee. He praised her for her commitment and dedication to the people of Poole.

Councillor Brooke then addressed Councillor Smith explaining that he would be missed, that he put people first and did sterling work for children and young carers which he understood he was to continue and that Councillor Smith had deserved the title of the “Council’s Champion for Carers”. Councillor Brooke also extended his best wishes to Councillor Wretham.

30th Anniversary of Poole/Cherbourg town twinning

The Mayor invited representatives of the Twinning Association to present her with the Flag of Honour to commemorate 30 years of Poole/Cherbourg town twinning.

The Mayor informed the Council that in 1987 Poole had been awarded a Flag of Honour by the Council of Europe to recognise the links established between the various clubs and organisations. This year was the 30th anniversary of the twinning of the two towns. Since the initial twinning the Association had been awarded the Royal Mail International Twin Towns Award in 1995 and this year 2007 had submitted an application to the Council of Europe for the "Plaque of Honour". The next step towards the coveted Europe prize, the results of which were eagerly awaited.

The Mayor was to attend a dinner to re-present the Flag to the Twinning Association.

6. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

(a) From Members of the Public

None allowed as this Meeting was the last Meeting prior to the local Elections.

(b) From Members

Councillor Trent presented a Petition on behalf of residents of Heatherview Road requesting replacement of the kerbstones and complete resurfacing of Heatherview Road.

RESOLVED that in accordance with the Council's Constitution the Petition is referred to Transportation Advisory Group and the Portfolio Holder or Cabinet

7. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no Questions as this was the last Meeting prior to the local Elections.

8. FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REVIEW OF AREA COMMITTEES WORKING GROUP: REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR RESOURCES

Councillor Sorton introduced his Report explaining this was a culmination of a detailed and long running review of the present Area Committee system.

He thanked Members of the Working Party, Councillors Gregory, Mrs Deas, Brooke and Clements for their hard and detailed work. He explained that widespread consultation had been carried out including 42 Councillors, each Area

Committee and this had taken place by means of a single, well thought out questionnaire.

Cabinet had concurred with the proposals from the Working Party to Council agreeing that the Area Committee process is a two-way process between the Council and its residents and as a recognition of this the Working Party had recommended that not more than one-third of the Meeting should be devoted to presentations on Council policies such as the Waste Strategy, the latter greater part of the Meeting would be devoted to an Open Forum which would debate issues raised by residents. Members noted there were several “housekeeping” recommendations both in the interests of economy and in an effort to standardise the Meetings.

Two innovations had been proposed with Agendas including questions to the Police and Fire Authorities and other relevant public bodies on policy, not operational issues with the opportunity for such public bodies to make presentations on initiatives being proposed and the facility for any policy issue raised by residents agreed by the Councillors present could be referred to the relevant Overview or Scrutiny Committee which a member of the public may address. A number of Members were disappointed that the review had not been more radical, centering on procedural issues but were pleased to note that the process was to be kept under review.

A Member commented that he felt that the expanded number of Area Committees and the change in their boundary since 2003 had hindered the process.

A Member responded explaining that response from Area Committees had been very varied and that there was nothing to prevent Members from going to Area Committees elsewhere to learn lessons. A Member commented that she felt the Canford Cliffs, Alderney coupling of Area Committees had worked well. A Member disagreed.

In conclusion, Councillor Sorton, conceded that the recommendations were not unanimous but based on the broad majority view.

RESOLVED that Council

- (i) endorse and approve the actions contained in Section 5.1 to 5.14 of the Report to Council; and
- (ii) support the suggestion that the function of Area Committees continue to be monitored and kept under review especially with regard to their potential relationship with the Groups identified in Section 6 of the Report to Council.

9. PROGRESS ON THE REVIEW OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY: REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader of the Council introduced his Report explaining that the scrutiny function was at the centre of the present system of Local Government. He felt this

review had been a step in the right direction to enable the Council to enhance its scrutiny process.

A Member commented that the Working Party had concluded that there were two basic functions of scrutiny, that of calling the Portfolio Holder/Cabinet/Officers to account and that of monitoring what was happening. He felt that the establishment of a Scrutiny Board may assist in moving the process forward and removing some of the duplication of items being considered by several Committees.

A Member commented that scrutiny should be a useful tool for all Members of the Council and should be used to improve, enrich and involve the work of Councillors.

A Member commented that he felt there was a lack of Officer support for scrutiny. It was explained that this had been recognised by the Officers and as part of this review process a post of Principal Democratic Support Officer (Scrutiny) had been created by the revision of the current role in Democratic Services together with a Support Officer to assist with this important function.

RESOLVED that Council approve that:-

- (i) Overview and Scrutiny functions remain separate;
- (ii) Overview Groups' remit be revised to reflect the Council's priorities along themed lines;
- (iii) A Scrutiny Board, comprising the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of each Scrutiny Committee to be established on a trial basis (reviewed September 2007) to co-ordinate/advise help, scope and direct the work of scrutiny and to avoid duplications of consideration of issues within the current structure.;

(The Board to be supported by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services assisted by Democratic Services Manager and Principal Scrutiny Officer.)
- (iv) This Board to oversee the formulation of a comprehensive Forward Plan for the Council's scrutiny process;
- (v) A dedicated Committee be established, politically balanced as legally required, but with a smaller number of Members than the current Scrutiny Committee numbers (currently 11 for each Committee) solely to address Member "call-ins"; This Committee to receive updated training on the techniques and skills required to discharge the specific duties of call-in.
- (vi) General training for Members and Officers in the scrutiny process to be undertaken to include questioning techniques, report style presentation, witness evidence and scoping/selection of reviews and use of resources;

- (vii) the need for more dedicated officer support at an appropriate level be reviewed;
- (viii) the existing Scrutiny Procedure Rule which precludes a Member who is a signatory to a “call-in” from being part of that Scrutiny Committee be revoked;
- (ix) Additional scrutiny duties placed on the Council by statute e.g. Crime and Disorder, be undertaken by the existing Scrutiny Framework under the guidance of the Scrutiny Board;

10. REVISION TO POOLE’S LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME: REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LOCAL ECONOMY (INCLUDING TRANSPORTATION)

Councillor Parker, the Portfolio Holder, introduced his Report, explaining that the Local Economy Overview Group, at its Meeting on 8 March 2007 and Cabinet on 3 April 2007, had considered these issues, including the need to revise the timeframe for the Town Centre North Area Action Plan, delaying it by six months to allow further work to be undertaken. A consequence of this would mean that the submission of the document to the Secretary of State would move from March to October 2008.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Documents be included in the amended Development Scheme be endorsed and Council approve the Scheme for submission to the Secretary of State;
- (ii) the approval of the final wording of the Local Development Scheme be delegated to the Head of Strategic Planning Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder; and
- (iii) the original timeframe approved for the Town Centre North Area Action Plan be delayed by six months from March to October 2008.

11. BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET AND POOLE MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN AD HOC JOINT COMMITTEE: REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE: REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LOCAL ECONOMY (INCLUDING TRANSPORTATION)

Councillor Parker introduced his Report, explaining this was a procedural issue which Cabinet had also supported.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Terms of Reference of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan Ad Hoc Joint Committee be revised as:

“To oversee the production of Minerals and Waste Development Documents relating jointly to Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole and to approve these for consultation, and to recommend the submission of adoption of the final documents to the three parent Authorities;

- (ii) that Membership of the Joint Committee be extended to include at least one Member of the Executive of each parent Authority; and
- (iii) that the title of the Joint Committee be revised to the “Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals and Waste Policy Advisory Committee.”

12. REVISED MINERAL AND WASTE DEVELOPMENT SCHEME: REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LOCAL ECONOMY (INCLUDING TRANSPORTATION)

Councillor Parker, the Portfolio Holder, introduced his Report, explaining that the current Dorset Minerals and Waste Development Scheme covered the period 2004 to 2007 and was attached to the Local Development Schemes of the three parent Authorities since these Schemes did not address minerals and waste. Council noted the proposed revisions to the Scheme explained in detail in the Report of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Waste Local Ad Hoc Joint Committee 12 February 2007.

Members noted that the Revised Scheme had been submitted to the Secretary of State before 1 April but that the Secretary of State had been advised that this Council would consider it on 10 April and any additional comments it may make would be forwarded following Council consideration.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Revised Scheme be submitted to the Secretary of State before 1 April 2007;
- (ii) subject to any action being taken by the Secretary of State, the Revised Scheme be effective from 1 May 2007; and
- (iii) on being brought into effect the Revised Scheme be attached to the Local Development Schemes of Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council and the Borough of Poole.

13. REVIEW OF DELEGATION: PLANNING: REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LOCAL ECONOMY (INCLUDING TRANSPORTATION)

Councillor Parker introduced his Report, explaining that Cabinet was supportive of all the proposed changes, including that recommended by the Service Provision Scrutiny and Audit Committee on 15 March (included at Agenda Item SA3 of this Meeting) which suggested that a provisional date be set aside in the Council’s Calendar of Meetings to enable Meetings of the Planning Committee to be held in the event of a Member “Red Carding” a prior notification application in respect of telecommunications.

The other changes to the Scheme of Delegation were relatively minor but have been suggested to improve the way the Planning process worked in the Borough.

Members were supportive of the proposals.

RESOLVED

That Council approve the following amendments to the Council's Scheme of Delegation with regards to Planning:-

Red Card Scheme

- (i) When a Red Card is to be submitted, Councillors should, if possible, first discuss the application with a Planning Officer. The Red Card should state clearly the reason(s) why the Application should not be handled under the Delegation Scheme to allow the Planning Officer to address those concerns in his Report to the Committee and as a courtesy to the Planning Committee. Councillors may withdraw a Red Card at any time.
- (ii) E: Planning Design and Control Services

That No.10 in the above Delegation contained within the Constitution be amended to:

10. Applications (excluding prior approval applications) for telecommunications development which involve the erection or installation of new masts. Proposals for additional antennae or dishes on existing telecommunication structures fall within the scheme of delegation.

- (iii) Where the recommendation involves a significant change to the planning history of a site (refusal now approval and vice versa) the Case Officer would advise the Ward Members by e-mail of the new recommendation so that a Committee referral may be requested;
- (iv) Planning Applications which identified Housing Associations having "identifiable interest" should be considered by the Planning Committee; and
- (v) In the case of departures from the Development Plan only those Planning Applications which had a recommendation for approval should be considered by the Planning Committee.

14. RETIREMENT, EARLY RETIREMENT, REDUNDANCY AND FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES – THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND EMPLOYEES: REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR RESOURCES

Councillor Sorton introduced his Report, explaining that the Council continually reviewed its Policy on Early Retirement and Redundancy Provisions. Most retirements were due to age rather than early or due to ill health. Over the last seven years early retirements had dropped from 21 to 3 per annum with total severance costs reducing from £1,180,000 in 1997/8 to £80,900 in 2005/6 (mainly arising from Schools Reorganisation) enabling resources to be diverted into improved services.

The Policy had been reviewed in the light of Age Discrimination Regulations, changes to the Local Government Compensation Regulations, changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme which had removed the provision for employees between the ages of 50 and 60 to apply for early retirement although the Government had allowed some employees with long service to retain an entitlement to make this request. Any application or proposal for early retirement was judged against the financial implications for the Council with such applications being subject to Member approval.

Councillor Sorton informed the Council that this Council's Policy was broadly in line with that of neighbouring Authorities although some in the South West were using discretionary powers to the full and applying more generous provisions. The Policy was to be kept under review and subject to an annual report to Members.

Note: Councillor Pethen declared a personal interest in this matter as a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

RESOLVED that

- (i) Council approves and adopts the revised Policy; and
- (ii) The operation of the revised Policies be reviewed by the Joint Information Consultative Committee after one year of operation.

Note: Councillor Pethen abstained from voting on this item and wished his abstention to be recorded.

15. DRAFT JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY PROTOCOL FOR BOURNEMOUTH, POOLE AND DORSET: REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Mrs Hillman, the Chairman of the Council's Health Scrutiny Committee, introduced her Report, recommending that Council adopted the Joint Draft Health Scrutiny Protocol with Bournemouth and Dorset, explaining that the purpose of the Protocol was to set out the principles, commitments and responsibilities for the three Local Authorities, local NHS Bodies, Patient and Public Involvement Foras for the conduct of effective Health Scrutiny. The Protocol would

address issues that would be helpful to the Committee in considering changes in Health Service delivery. The Protocol Impact Assessment Forum would also help identify substantial variations when changes in Health Service delivery were being considered. Should the Protocol be agreed by all Parties it was to be reviewed annually by the three Local Authorities in consultation with Health Partners, relevant Public and Patient Involvement Organisations.

It was hoped to launch the Protocol by the end of April 2007.

Members were supportive of the proposal, hoping that this would go some way to bridge the democratic deficit in this area as it was felt the Health Service should be operated for the benefit of the public and it was important that Members were abreast of issues.

RESOLVED that Councillors adopt for the Draft Joint Health Scrutiny Protocol for Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset.

SA1. SOUTH WEST REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY: GYPSY AND TRAVELLER POLICY REQUIREMENTS: FIRST DETAILED PROPOSALS FOR THE DORSET SUB REGION: REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LOCAL ECONOMY (INCLUDING TRANSPORTATION)

Councillor Parker introduced his Report, explaining that, in response to the new requirements of Government Circular 01/2006, "Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites", the Local Authorities in the Dorset Sub Region had jointly commissioned Anglia and Ruskin University to carry out a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment.

Insufficient Authorities in the South West had completed their Accommodation Assessments at this time and the Regional Planning Board could not fully take into account Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs in the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) which had been submitted to Government in April 2006. The Regional Planning Board was therefore undertaking a partial Review of the RSS in relation to the provision for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites. The Regional Planning Board had produced a Brief setting out advice requested from the 4/4 Authorities in the form of First Detailed Proposals which had to be submitted by 22 March to the Assembly.

These proposals did not differ fundamentally from those submitted in 2005 although the opportunity had been taken to emphasise the priorities to provide the demand for unauthorised families. Given the timescales in enabling response to be submitted to the Assembly I made a "holding response" circulated to all Members and will report any issues raised by Council.

A Member expressed concern that the Borough of Poole had provided facilities for Gypsies and Travellers when no other neighbouring Authority had and he hoped that the situation would not continue of only Poole providing facilities.

A Member responded, explaining that all District Authorities and Unitary Authorities had to have designated sites which had to be within the County Borough identified.

RESOLVED that the First Detailed Proposals on the 4/4 Authorities be provided to the Regional Spatial Strategy on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs.

SA2. APPOINTMENT OF NEW INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE: REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Councillor Sorton, a Member of the Standards Committee, introduced this Report, explaining that two vacancies for Independent Members had been advertised in the local press and details sent to Community and Residents Associations together with other public bodies. A number of candidates were interviewed and Mrs Penny Rogers, retired Financial Adviser, and Miss Micheline Loussot, an Immigration Inspector, both met the selection criteria and demonstrated at interview their commitment to assisting the Borough and supporting the work of the Standards Committee.

Both Councillor Sorton and Curtis joined with the Council in thanking the two longest serving Independent Members of the Standards Committee, Mrs Sylvia Fox and Mrs Donna Blanche for the outstanding service they had given to the Council as Chair and Vice Chair respectively.

The Council placed on record its appreciation for their work during their terms of Office.

RESOLVED that Mrs Penny Rogers and Ms Micheline Loussot be appointed as two new Independent Members of the Standards Committee with effect from 1 May 2007.

SA3. PLANNING COMMITTEE – DELEGATION: REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SERVICE PROVISION SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Councillor Allen, the Chairman of the Service Provision Scrutiny and Audit Committee, introduced his Report, requesting the Council to approve the proposal to include provisional dates in the Council's Calendar of Meetings to enable Meetings of the Planning Committee to be held should a Member red card a Prior Notification Application in respect of Telecommunications.

This proposal had arisen following the Scrutiny Committee Meeting on 15 March 2007 when an amendment to the Scheme of Delegation, also detailed at Agenda Item 13 to the Council, was considered relating to Telecommunications Prior Approval Consents.

Cabinet had been supportive of this proposal.

RESOLVED that Council approve the inclusion of provision dates in the Council's Calendar of Meetings to enable Meetings of the Planning Committee to be held in the event of a Member "red carding" a Prior Notification Application in respect of Telecommunications.

SA4. APPOINTMENT OF HEAD OF STRATEGY AND IMPROVEMENT, CHILDREN'S SERVICES: USE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DELEGATED POWER

The Council noted that the Chief Executive had used his delegated powers to enable a formal offer of employment to be made for Mr Stuart Twiss to be appointed as the Head of Strategy and Improvement, Children's Services following his successful interview for this Post on 8 March 2007. The Chief Executive had consulted the Appointment Panel before making the formal offer of employment to Mr Twiss.

16. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

It was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED that Standing Orders be suspended to allow consideration of the following Motion on Transport Costs for Service Users of Day Centres, in the public interest.

On being put to the vote, the Proposal was LOST.

(a) Transport costs for Service Users of Day Centres

"In support of a number of concerned residents who have contacted us, and who are prevented from presenting their concerns directly to Council at this meeting, we propose that, the recently imposed 160% increase in charges for transport to Day Centres be reviewed urgently and, that the increase is reduced to a level in line with the rate of inflation.

Signed: Councillors Tony Trent, Charles Meachin, Brian Clements, Graham Curtis, Lindsay Wilson, Graham Wilson

RESOLVED, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Motion be referred to the Community Support Overview Group/Portfolio Holder/Cabinet.

(b) Review of Members' Allowances

The following Motion was moved and seconded:

"We, the undersigned, request the Independent Panel convened to review Members' Allowances to consider that, in the event of a Member being granted leave to be absent from Council beyond the statutory six month period, the payment of Members' Allowances should cease."

Signed: Councillors Charles Meachin, Brian Clements and Tony Trent.

RESOLVED that, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, the above Motion was referred to the Resources Overview Group/Independent Members Remuneration Panel and Cabinet.

17. REPORT BACK ON MOTION: AUDIOLOGY SERVICES FOR POOLE

Council noted that the Motion on Audiology Services in Poole in the following terms was considered by the Health Scrutiny Committee at its Meeting on 13 February 2007 and a Working Party had been established to conduct a review into the access to Audiology Services in Poole.

Audiology Services for Poole

"This Council requests the Bournemouth and Poole Primary Care Trust: either to restore the two mornings a week, Poole Hospital 'drop in' service, for the repair of hearing aids, and the assessment / review of patients' needs; or provide more 'bookable' clinics at the hospital to cut the current waiting times of three weeks for repairs and three months for Assessments / Reviews."

Signed: Councillors Meachin, Mrs Moore, Wilson, Matthews, Brooke, Clements, Mrs James, Curtis, Mason and Miss Wilson.

A Report outlining the Working Party's recommendations was to be presented to Council for consideration at a later date.

18. QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE POLICE AND FIRE AUTHORITY

There were no Questions.

19. QUESTIONS RELATING TO GENERAL BUSINESS

The Questions received, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, and the Answers given are detailed in Appendix A to these Minutes.

20. APPOINTMENT OF HEAD OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES: USE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DELEGATED POWERS

The Council noted that, as the appointment of a Service Unit Head was a Council decision, and in view of the fact that the next Council Meeting following interviews on 26/27 February 2007 was not until 10 April 2007, in order to make an appointment to the Post before mid July 2007, the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Interview Panel Members and Group Leaders, had used his delegated powers to make the appointment.

Mr Julian McLoughlin had accepted the Post of Head of Transportation Services.

21. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

22. MAYOR'S REMARKS

The Mayor, as it was the last Meeting before the Annual Council on 15 May 2007, wished all Members seeking re-election, well in the Local Elections on 3 May and thanked Members most sincerely for their support and assistance in ensuring that the Chairing of Council Meetings had not been too onerous a task during her Mayoral Year.

Both the Leader of the Council and Councillor Brooke, the Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group, joined in congratulating the Mayor for Chairing Meetings of the Council extremely well.

MAYOR

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 9.2 TO 9.4

1. Question from Councillor Clements to Councillor Woodcock, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

"In a letter published in the Daily Echo on 29th January 2005, Councillor Woodcock stated "LibDem Councillors should already be aware that this administration is planning to rebuild the very tired Gaff Youth Centre in Hamworthy on the site of the old first school and restore the derelict playing field next to it for their use." Can I be told what progress has been made in delivering that promise - an important part of the Council's declared priority of giving young people the best possible start in life?"

Councillor Brian Clements

RESPONSE

Councillor Clements is correct in that Cabinet commissioned a feasibility study to explore the possibility of developing the Old Hamworthy First School site as a new youth, library, and pupil referral facility to replace the current facilities in Hamworthy at the Cabinet meeting of 7th December 2004. As he is also aware the outcome of that Study was that the Scheme was unaffordable, and given the need to use the original school building, inappropriate for a modern facility. Cabinet therefore decided (28 March 2006) not to proceed but to look to alternative ways of improving the facilities for young people in Hamworthy.

Some of these alternative schemes are already coming to fruition with the development of the Children's Centre and the new gym facility specially designed for young people at Carter Community School (open outside school hours). The lottery bid for a new Community facility incorporating a Library and facilities for young people will continue these improvements for children and young people in the area.

**Councillor Tony Woodcock
Portfolio Holder for Children's Services**

2. Question from Councillor Meachin to Councillor Leverett, Leader of the Council

"At the Cabinet meeting on 6th September 2005 the Leader of the Council Councillor Brian Leverett, responding to a question from Councillor Ms Atkinson, asking for assurance that 'the improvements to the facilities, would not result in charging for the use of toilets', assured her 'that this was not the case'; no charges would be made for using Public Toilets.

When and by whom was the decision made to reverse this stated policy?
Another 'U' turn in policy!??

Is this part of the new policy announced by Councillor Collier and Councillor Leverett; 'we believe the consumer should pay'?"

Councillor Charles Meachin

RESPONSE

In October 2005 we took a paper through the Environment Overview Group and then to Cabinet relating to the refurbishment of public toilets. At that time there was no intention to charge for any of the refurbished public toilets.

During early 2006 Environment and Consumer Protection went out to tender for the new toilets. Part of the specification was to design toilets which reduced vandalism, anti social behaviour and overnight sleeping.

It became clear that this could best be achieved by having limits on the door locks to ensure that they opened after a set time thereby reducing the incidence of overnight sleeping, drug taking and other ASB. The timer mechanism being operated by a coin. Without the coin operation there are no other ways to protect the toilet from overnight sleeping and antisocial behaviour.

The Head of Service discussed the departure from the original proposal with both the Portfolio Holder and the Strategic Director before taking the decision under delegated powers. The Head of Service briefed the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Collier, on the benefits of having time locked doors and suggested that we went for the lowest coin denomination possible - 10p - as this was not about income generation but reducing vandalism and anti-social behaviour. He was comfortable with this and the Head of Service took the decision using his delegated powers. This decision was made in the summer of 2006.

The wisdom of this pragmatic approach has been clearly demonstrated. Since the toilet reopened there has only been 1 minor incident of vandalism. Prior to the refurbishment the toilets were frequently closed due to vandalism and were often unusable due to overnight sleepers and drug litter.

Councillor Brian Leverett

3. Question from Councillor Meachin to Councillor Ms Atkinson, Portfolio Holder for Community Support

"In view of the unprecedented 160% increase in transport charges for travel to Day Centres (+ a 23% increase lunch charge!), will the Portfolio Holder remove the charge for those over 60's unable to travel to day care, on public transport, using their free bus passes?"

Councillor Charles Meachin

RESPONSE

The Local Government Association survey of the increase in national costs of the provision of Adult Social Services revealed that there is a £1.76bn black hole in the funding for this service nationally.

A number of reasons for this were identified and some are particularly relevant to Poole:

- The population is ageing and the number of people requiring care is increasing;
- nationally, the financial pressures have led to a tightening of eligibility criteria with only 20% of local authorities now including moderate risk to independence within Fair Access to Care guidance.

In 2006/2007, there has been a continued increase in demand for Adult Social Services. An example of this is a 7% increase in the number of home care clients. The Council has agreed a 5.6% increase in Adult Social Services budget for 2007/2008 in order to meet this increasing demand.

The Local Government Association recommends that charges for services should be based on the full cost of providing these services. The transport costs for each individual using Social Services transport amount to £21 per day.

The original intention was to increase Adult Social Services' income from transport by an extra £46,000 by increasing the Day Centre charge from £2.00 per day to £2.60 per journey, whilst continuing with the policy of having no charge for attending Day Centres. The decision to increase charges was to enable the Council to maintain its current high standards of care services to people having critical, substantial and moderate needs.

As you are aware, following consultation with Service Users and their Carers, it has been decided from 9 April 2007 to reduce the proposed charge of £5.20 per day to £3.00 per day. This will result in a reduced amount of income and the Head of Adult Social Care and Well-being Unit has identified staff vacancies in his Unit that will not be filled until the budget is balanced. As a result there will be a small increase in group sizes and a decrease in some activities in the Day Centres.

Provision of transport is undoubtedly a critical element in this service for a number of people, therefore it has been agreed that the Head of Adult Social Services Commissioning will lead a review of Adult Social Services transport in the coming year in order to assess Service Users' needs and eligibility for specialist transport, with a view to ensuring most efficient and effective use of the transport fleet.

Councillor Ms Elaine Atkinson
Portfolio Holder for Community Support

4. Question from Councillor Mason to Councillor Sorton, Portfolio Holder for Resources

“As a Ward Councillor for Broadstone I would respectfully ask why when this Council has received extra funding of approximately £21M in the last year and the amount of money we have in reserve is it not short sighted and petty not to fund Poole in Bloom and particularly Broadstone in Bloom in view of the small amount of funding needed to brighten up local areas and give so many residents great pleasure. Is Poole no longer a beautiful place or are we only Striving for Excellence?”

Councillor Graham Mason

RESPONSE

Leisure Services have not stopped funding or supporting Poole in Bloom, there is still funding in place for the committee's activities. The Committee still meet to discuss their programme of work and has recently attracted representatives from Heckford Park and Canford Cliffs. The Council is still represented on the committee and Leisure Services have developed a web site for them [ww.pooleinbloom.org](http://www.pooleinbloom.org) linked to the Borough of Poole website. The committee has been successful in attracting sponsorship this year.

What has changed, following the Environment Overview Group meeting on 7th December 2006, is the range of activities that Leisure Services can fund. Leisure Services will no longer fund hanging baskets for private traders as there are insufficient resources to roll it out Borough wide and there are now concerns that this type of work is environmentally unsustainable because of the intensity of visits to water the baskets. Furthermore, some areas of the town notably Broadstone and Hamworthy benefit from the current approach whilst others who may wish to see more displays do not. If traders or Poole in Bloom committee want hanging baskets or troughs etc for private traders, they will have to organise the funding locally. The bedding displays at Haven Road, Canford Cliffs this summer will be an example of that.

Leisure Services will continue to help the committee and fund those projects which sit well with Leisure Services' aims and the broader Council values in encouraging environmental interest and involvement from the community, in particular young people.

**Councillor Neil Sorton
Portfolio Holder for Resources**

5. Question from Councillor Clements to Councillor Leverett, Leader of the Council

“The Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2006 shows a total of £119,000 expenditure on Poole News and 'Other Publicity' (excluding

recruitment advertising and Council Tax Leaflets). This had risen from £61,000 in the previous year - an increase of 95%. May I be told the estimated figure for the year ended 31st March 2007?"

Councillor Brian Clements

RESPONSE

The estimated figure for the year ended 31st March 2007 is £125,000.

The movement between years includes a reduction in consultancy work and an increase in the cost of Poole News arising due to 6 editions being issued during 2006/07 compared to 5 editions in 2005/06.

**Councillor Brian Leverett
Leader of the Council**

6. Question from Councillor Trent to Councillor Leverett, Leader of the Council

"Several years ago a number of Councillors raised concern at the number of roads in the Borough that no longer received "the Advertiser", and that this disadvantaged residents in the affected areas when it came to getting up to date information about Council matters and meetings. Since then the number of roads that do not receive this paper have increased and residents complain to us that they are not kept up to date with a range of information like road traffic orders and Area Committee agendas. Could this Council take a serious look at their use of this Paper for essential advertising and could it look into whether the rates it pays for advertising are fair in view of the drastically reduced circulation?"

Councillor Trent

RESPONSE

I thank Councillor Trent for his Question. With regard to the circulation of the "Advertiser", may I suggest he refers his concerns over circulation to the newspaper's proprietor.

With regard to advertising, the Council has a duty to advertise in one local newspaper circulating in the area. We have chosen to use the "Advertiser" in the past as this newspaper is free.

With regard to the rates for advertising, these are set by the newspaper and is not something which the Council can influence.

**Councillor Brian Leverett
Leader of the Council**

7. **Question from Councillor Brooke to Councillor Leverett, Leader of the Council**

“Will the Leader of the Council please tell Members what he considers to be a reasonable time period within which an answer to a specific query should be given?”

Councillor Brooke

RESPONSE

Without knowing what Councillor Brooke means by specific query, I am unable to give a definitive answer.

Where members of the public contact the Council, we aim to respond or, if it is of a complex nature, to give an acknowledgement within ten working days. Where none routine answers, for example involving research, are required, the full answer may take longer.

**Councillor Brian Leverett
Leader of the Council**