NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 27 February 2006.

- p Cllr Sqn Ldr B M F Pemberton Chairman
- p Cllr D N Scott Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

- G Abbott р
- p K F Ault
- p K E Austin
- e C Baker
- p G C Beck
- p Mrs J L Clearv
- p D E Cracknell
- p G F Dart
- p W H Dow
- p LT Dunsdon
- p M H G Fidler
- p Ms L C Ford
- e Mrs L P Francis
- p P C Greenfield
- p R C H Hale
- p C J Harrison
- p D Harrison
- p F R Harrison
- p J D Heron
- p D A Hibbert
- p P E Hickman
- p Mrs M D Holding
- p J M Hoy
- p Mrs M Humber
- p J A G Hutchins
- p M J Kendal
- e Mrs B M Maynard
- e Mrs M McLean
- p M J Molyneux

Councillors:

- p R J Neath
- p G J Parkes
- p J Penwarden
- p L R Puttock
- p A W Rice TD
- p B Rickman
- p Mrs M J Robinson
- p B Rule
- p D J Russell
- p T M Russell
- p N E Scott
- p Lt Col M J Shand
- p S A Shepherd
- p Mrs B Smith
- p Mrs S I Snowden
- p M H Thierry
- p A R Tinslev
- p D B Tipp
- p C R Treleaven
- e Mrs B Vincent
- p MS Wade
- p SSWade
- p G M Walmsley
- p JG Ward
- p A Weeks
- e Dr M N Whitehead
- p C A Wise
- p P R Woods
- p Mrs P A Wyeth

Officers Attending:

D Yates, N Gibbs, J Mascall, C Malyon, Ms J Bateman, Miss G O'Rourke and Mrs R Rutins.

54. **MINUTES (PAPER A).**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2005, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

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55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllrs Cracknell, Kendal and Thierry declared interests in minute 57

56. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

(a) Mrs Linda Musselwhite

The Chairman reported with regret the death of Linda Musselwhite. Mrs Musselwhite had worked for the Council as a computer operator from January 1972 to May 1976. She re-joined the Council in October 1981 working as a Leisure Attendant at Applemore Recreation Centre. Mrs Musselwhite had played a major role at the centre, training all the centre staff and had taught many thousands of children from the Waterside area to swim.

Members and officers joined the Chairman in standing in silence to the memory of Mrs Linda Musselwhite.

(b) New Years Honours

The Chairman was pleased to announce that two residents from the New Forest had been recognised in the Queen's New Year Honours list.

Mr Brian Currie had been awarded an MBE for services to Trade Aid in Africa and to the community in Fordingbridge.

Dr Raw Straton had been awarded an MBE also for services to the community in Fordingbridge.

(c) Commendation Award by Health and Safety Executive

The Chairman was pleased to announce that the Council's Environmental Health employees had been given a special Commendation Award by the Health and Safety Executive. In making the award, the judging panel recognised the essential contribution that had been made in demonstrating that local and central Government could work effectively together, ensuring consistent, effective, risk based regulation. The award recognised the contribution that effective regulation could make to securing business vitality and community well being and, in addition, the cost effective way that the Council could work.

(d) Planthunters Fair

The Chairman reported that his final fundraising event would be the Planthunters Fair at Appletree Court on Saturday 6 May. He asked for volunteers to help with the event on the day. There would be rare and unusual plants for sale as well as other garden related products. All the produce would be from local growers and the whole of the $\pounds 2.50$ entrance fee and all profits from the day would go direct to the Chairman's charity.

(e) Chairman's Charity Ball

The Chairman reminded members that his Charity Ball would be held on Friday 24 March. There would be a grand prize draw and an auction of donated items with all proceeds going to the Chairman's Charity.

57. REPORT OF CABINET.

Cllrs Cracknell and Thierry declared personal and prejudicial interests in item 2 (Housing Revenue Account Estimates 2006/07) in that they both rented Council owned garages. There was no discussion on this particular item. They remained at the meeting took part in the discussion and voted on the remainder of the items.

Cllr Kendal declared a personal interest as a member of Hampshire County Council in Item 10 (District Owned Street Lighting – Private Finance Initiative) he did not consider this interest to be prejudicial. He remained at the meeting took part in the discussion and voted.

Cllr Kendal, Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the report of the meetings held on 4 January and 1 February 2006 and proposed the following amendments:

Item 2 - Housing Revenue Account Estimates for 2006/07 – Recommendation (d) – the revised surplus amount being allocated to the Major Repairs Reserve should be £117,000; and

Item 3 - General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2006/07 – Recommendation (a) – the General Fund Budget for 2006/07 should be set at £21.004m.

In moving the report of the Cabinet, the Leader of the Council paid tribute to Cllr Wise, who was resigning his position as Finance and Support Portfolio Holder. He thanked Cllr Wise for all his support and his hard work as a member of the Cabinet. Many others members of the Council also paid tribute to Cllr Wise.

On the motion that the report be received and the recommendations adopted:

(a) General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2006/07

The Leader of the Council made the statement on the Administration's proposed budget attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes. He proposed an amendment to reduce the rent payable by Hythe Sailing Club to £15,000 p.a. for five years. The papers presented to the Cabinet had allowed for a rental payment to the Council of £26,900 negated by a grant in the sum of £10,090. The net impact of this proposed alteration to the rent and amendment to the budget was therefore £1,810.

The additional budget requirement would be found from the provision made in respect of Electoral Registration and Disability Discrimination Act works, as the detailed expenditure proposals for those areas for 2006/07 were not yet finalised. The amendment would therefore have no effect on the proposed increase in Council Tax.

The Finance and Support Portfolio Holder seconded the amendments and the original recommendation.

The Leader of the Opposition then made the statement attached as Appendix 2 to these minutes and moved an amendment giving alternative budget proposals for 2005/06 as detailed in Appendix 3 to these minutes. She supported the proposed amendment in relation to the reduction in rent for Hythe Sailing Club.

Cllr Hale seconded the Leader of the Opposition's amendment. He said that the Council needed sound financial management and correct alignment of priorities. There had been a 14.9% underspend in 2004/05 that did not demonstrate sound financial management.

Other members then discussed the detail of the budget proposals.

A member said she felt that the budget proposals should give more weight to sustainability. Another member expressed the view that Totton town centre had received insufficient investment compared to the rest of the district. Other members commented on the historical aspects of previous budgets and the increases levied by previous administrations. A member expressed the view that changing from free residents' parking clocks to two separate parking clocks had been a waste of council tax money.

Other members asked for clarification on the way in which the concessionary fares arrangements had been decided, as it was felt that there were some frail groups of residents who would not benefit from the new provisions.

Others members spoke in support of the budget proposals. They said they were well thought out and would benefit the residents of the New Forest. A member said that the Housing, Health and Social Inclusion Review Panel had worked well in the past year and there had been a number of new initiatives that all members of the Panel had supported. He said that there was good constructive work being done in the Council.

In seconding the original recommendation, the Finance and Support Portfolio Holder said that the Council had achieved a number of key improvements. All equipment was now purchased instead of leased which had produced significant savings. The financial management reporting arrangements had been improved and performance could now be effectively monitored. The Council's record on council tax rises was better than other authorities and reserves were adequate but not excessive. However, he said that a council tax rise of less than 2.75% would not be sufficient to support the Council's capital programme.

The Leader of the Opposition, in summing up said that communities, particularly pensioners, felt that the current council tax system was unfair and that the Liberal Democrats were still striving to change that basic system. She said that the continuing level of underspend was unacceptable. The Liberal Democrat Group's alternative budget, whilst not changing the proposed council tax increase, would allocate funds more appropriately.

The Leader, in closing the debate, said that in view of the threat of capping or reduced grant from the Government in 2004/05, the Council had been forced to make a number of savings. These savings had been used to reduce the rise in the council tax in 2005/06 and 2006/07. The Leader confirmed that any resident aged over 60, who could show that they were infirm or disabled would still be entitled to receive travel tokens. In response to comments relating to Totton town centre, the Leader said that substantial investment had been made in Totton Health and Leisure Centre and in Hanger Farm Arts Centre. Unlike New Milton, Totton also had CCTV installed.

Upon a vote, the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition was lost.

(b) Indemnities for Members and Officers

In welcoming this report a member questioned whether there was sufficient independence within the arrangements to grant indemnities within the terms of the approved policy. The Leader responded and said that whilst every situation would need to be considered on its merits, he was confident that the arrangements were robust. The Council had adequate insurance arrangements to cover such eventualities, but suggested that the member should discuss the detail of the scheme separately with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

RESOLVED:

That the reports of the Cabinet dated 4 January and 1 February 2006 be received and the recommendations as amended and detailed above be adopted.

58. REPORT OF COMMERCIAL SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE.

Cllr Thierry, Chairman of the Joint Committee, presented the report of the meeting held on 8 December 2005.

On the motion that the report be received, it was

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

59. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' QUESTION TIME.

Question No. 1 from: Cllr Hale to Cllr Greenfield (Housing Portfolio Holder)

"The Portfolio Holder will remember that at the Council meeting on 24 October, during discussions on traffic management issues, I raised the issue of the management of the Council's stock of almost 2000 garages. A number of points came out of that not least the contribution these garages should be making to the Council's traffic management strategy.

Could Cllr Greenfield say what measures he has taken since the meeting to review the management of the garage stock and when did he put those measures in place"?

Answer

The Housing Portfolio Holder replied that the Council were continually reviewing their assets and stock and considering their most effective use. There was a difficult balance to be made between the needs of the Council's traffic management policy and affordable housing. Some garages were hard to let and therefore alternative uses were better. On average there were 40 garages empty at any one time. 70% of Council garages were let to non-council tenants. Feasibility assessments were made on a site by site basis in conjunction with HCC Highways Section which ensured that the impact of any additional traffic in an area was minimised. As the Council's housing stock was to remain in Council ownership, alternative means of raising additional income needed to be considered. The impact of increasing garage rents still needed to be assessed. The use of Council garages did contribute to the Council's overall parking strategy but this needed to be balanced against environmental and affordable housing needs.

In response to a supplementary question in relation to cars parked on grass verges and the overall management of estates, the Portfolio Holder replied that Housing Officers proactively managed the Council's housing estates and identified and reacted to problems on a daily basis.

Question No. 2 from: Cllr Malcolm Wade to Cllr Beck (Crime and Disorder Portfolio Holder)

"As this Council is committing to purchasing the services of a further two Accredited Community Safety Officers from Hampshire County Council, can the Portfolio Holder advise how the discussions on improving the level of service in regard to holiday/sickness cover and wasted travelling time between areas of operation and home depot with the County Council are going, and when they will be successfully completed"?

Answer

The Crime and Disorder Portfolio Holder replied that it was correct to say the Council would extend their commitment to the partnership between Hampshire County Council and a town or parish council, yet to be nominated within the District, subject to discussions to improve the present service.

As with the majority of new initiatives being launched there were inevitably going to be a few issues identified, as was the case regarding the introduction of ACSO's. However those matters were currently being addressed by those responsible for the management of the service, in this case the Licensing and CCTV Manager, who had made representations to HCC. The Portfolio Holder said the he was personally in discussions with the Leader of HCC as to how the present service could be improved, and would be attending the Policy & Resources Committee meeting scheduled to take place at Winchester on 12 April when ACSO's would be discussed. These discussions would continue and would result in an improved and more efficient service to the public.

Regarding travelling time, as a result of this Council's concern, the Portfolio Holder was pleased to inform members that an officer had been recruited who lived in New Milton and reported directly to her place of employment in the town. The recruitment of a second officer residing in New Milton area was currently being undertaken.

It was unfortunate that the two dedicated officers tasked to New Milton were both unwell at the same time. This Council's agreement with HCC was that whenever one or both of the dedicated officers had a reason to be absent from their place of duty, then resources from elsewhere in the county would be redirected to the town for the duration of the absent officer. This did happen in this particular case. The exception to that arrangement would be in the event of a major emergency within the county, which all officers would be required to attend.

The Portfolio Holder said that the general public had welcomed this Council's commitment to improving their day to day safety with the introduction of ACSO's in the community. Those officers provided reassurance to residents concerned about crime in their neighbourhoods. They also provided a valuable way to combat anti-social behaviour, enabling police officers to focus on core policing functions.

In response to a supplementary question, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that two ACSO's were now continuously operating in the Hythe and Dibden area.

Question No. 3 from: Cllr David Harrison to Cllr Kendal (Policy and Strategy Portfolio Holder)

"Will the new portfolio holder for Finance urgently outline to the District Council how he/she plans to put this authority back on a sound financial footing"?

(A response from the Leader will be acceptable if the Conservative administration has still failed to find anyone of their number willing or able to take on the new portfolio)".

Answer

The Policy and Strategy Portfolio Holder replied that as a result of the Audit Commission's respect for this Council's approach to financial management, New Forest District Council were invited to be part of a pilot exercise for the testing of the new Use of Resources element of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. The Council were one of only five authorities chosen nationally, and the only district council, who were given this opportunity to influence how the financial management of all authorities would be evaluated in future years. It was therefore not correct to imply that the Council needed to be put back on a sound financial footing.

Question No. 4 from: Cllr Hale to Cllr Heron (Economy and Planning Portfolio)

"Would the Portfolio Holder please explain the Council's policy regarding street naming and renaming and his role in it"?

Answer

The Portfolio Holder replied that he believed that Portfolio Holders' question time was an important means by which issues could be brought before the Council and to the attention of the public. However he did not feel it was appropriate to use it as a quick reference section, by Councillors, to obtain information that was readily available to them.

In a supplementary question Cllr Hale said that the local paper had reported a change in name of a street in Boldre. He asked if the Portfolio Holder had taken a decision to that effect and, if so, would it be notified in the usual way?

The Portfolio Holder replied that he had not taken a specific decision to change a street name. He said that the matter had been referred to him under the provisions of the Council's policy regarding street naming and renaming. Under those specific arrangements he had concluded that an error had been made and therefore a street name had reverted to that by which it had been known previously.

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60. NOTICE OF MOTION.

Cllr Kendal moved the following motion standing in his name:-

"That New Forest District Council

- (i) expresses its concern at
 - the decline of local services and facilities which affects local communities and in particular the elderly and people on the lowest incomes; and
 - the resulting decline of local jobs and local economies and the resulting extra traffic and pollution caused by the need to travel further
- (ii) and notes that this combination of factors increases people's feelings of exclusion and lack of involvement; and so
- (iii) supports measures to reverse this process; and
- (iv) supports the concept of local sustainability as envisaged in the Sustainable Communities Bill, namely;
 - the promotion of local economies
 - the promotion of local services and facilities
 - the protection of the environment
 - the reduction of social exclusion and
 - measures to increase involvement in the democratic process
- (iv) and accordingly resolves to support the Sustainable Communities Bill which
 - requires the Government to assist councils and communities in promoting local sustainability in ways decided by them;
 - sets up a participative process whereby councils and communities can drive the way in which Government uses its power and influence to assist with the promotion of local sustainability;
 - recognises therefore that the Bill provides for a 'bottom-up' rather than a 'top down' one-size-fits-all process;
 - notes that this Bill is therefore fully in accord with current thinking in local Government in that it impacts on central authorities and does not impose any new duties on councils but instead enables them to influence how Government uses its resources and influence to help councils and communities; and
 - specifically provides that where councils themselves decide to take action to promote local sustainability that they should be given the resources to do so; and

- (v) further resolves
 - to inform the local media of this decision;
 - to write to local MPs, asking them to support the Bill; and sign EDM (Early Day Motion) No. 641; and
 - to write to the Local Works Campaign (at 94 White Lion St, London N1 9PF) expressing its support."

The motion was seconded. Members were unanimously of the view that the Motion should be supported. Local democracy was seriously threatened and measures needed to be taken to preserve local communities and rural areas.

The motion was put to the vote and was agreed.

61. THE 2006/2007 COUNCIL TAX (REPORT B).

RESOLVED:

- (1) That it be noted that at its meeting on 12 December 2005 the Council calculated the following amounts for the year 2006/07 in accordance with regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992: -
 - (a) £71,105.30 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its council tax base for the year.

(b) LOCAL COUNCIL AREA

ASHURST & COLBURY	922.70
BEAULIEU	517.30
BOLDRE	1,056.10
BRAMSHAW	337.20
BRANSGORE	1,861.80
BREAMORE	181.90
BROCKENHURST	1,754.10
BURLEY	784.90
COPYTHORNE	1,215.90
DAMERHAM	234.00
DENNY LODGE	157.30
EAST BOLDRE	399.70
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY	587.10
EXBURY & LEPE	110.10
FAWLEY	4,806.20
FORDINGBRIDGE	2,309.90
GODSHILL	213.40
HALE	267.60
10	

HORDLE	2,386.40
HYDE	503.70
HYTHE & DIBDEN	7,669.70
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	6,819.30
LYNDHURST	1,381.40
MARCHWOOD	1,974.50
MARTIN	190.50
MILFORD-ON-SEA	2,656.90
MINSTEAD	368.30
NETLEY MARSH	824.40
NEW MILTON	10,756.70
RINGWOOD	5,360.10
ROCKBOURNE	164.40
SANDLEHEATH	266.80
SOPLEY	302.40
SWAY	1,648.00
TOTTON & ELING	9.759.10
WHITSBURY	101.90
WOODGREEN	253.60
	<u>71,105.30</u>

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its council tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

- (2) That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2006/07 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992;-
 - (a) £113,656,814 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (e) of the Act.
 - (b) £88,781,260 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act.

- (c) £24,875,554 being the amount by which the aggregate at 2(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.
- (d) £10,978,550 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates and revenue support grant, increased by the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its collection fund to its general fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Council Tax Surplus), and increased by the amount of any sum which the Council estimates will be transferred from its collection fund to its general fund pursuant to the Collection Fund (Community Charges) directions under Section 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Community Charge Surplus).
- (e) £195.44 being the amount at 2(c) above less the amount at 2(d) above, all divided by the amount at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year.
- (f) £3,872,004 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- (g) £140.99 being the amount at 2(e) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 2(f) above by the amount at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.
- (h) LOCAL COUNCIL AREA

	£
ASHURST&COLBURY	163.75
BEAULIEU	149.69
BOLDRE	157.23
BRAMSHAW	151.37
BRANSGORE	184.39
BREAMORE	162.98
BROCKENHURST	165.22
BURLEY	148.00
COPYTHORNE	148.97
DAMERHAM	158.08
DENNY LODGE	155.61
EAST BOLDRE	154.75

ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE &	159.30
EXBURY & LEPE	145.53
FAWLEY	226.66
FORDINGBRIDGE	204.50
GODSHILL	178.48
HALE	164.08
HORDLE	173.40
HYDE	152.90
HYTHE & DIBDEN	204.31
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	209.77
LYNDHURST	166.89
MARCHWOOD	233.40
MARTIN	161.99
MILFORD-ON-SEA	168.46
MINSTEAD	157.28
NETLEY MARSH	150.69
NEW MILTON	182.23
RINGWOOD	191.21
ROCKBOURNE SANDLEHEATH	162.28
SOPLEY	155.98 189.20
SWAY	154.95
TOTTON & ELING	240.97
WHITSBURY	157.67
WOODGREEN	161.10

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 2(g) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(i) **PART OF THE COUNCIL'S AREA**

These are the District plus Town/Parish Council elements only. See below and page 14 for the full amounts of Council Tax.

LOCAL COUNCIL AREA	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
ASHURST & COLBURY	109.17	127.36	145.56	163.75	200.14	236.53	272.92	327.50
BEAULIEU	99.79	116.43	133.06	149.69	182.95	216.22	24948	299.38
BOLDRE	104.82	122.29	139.76	157.23	192.17	227.11	262.05	314.46
BRAMSHAW	100.91	117.73	134.55	151.37	185.01	218.65	252.28	302.74
BRANSGORE	122.93	143.41	163.90	184.39	225.37	266.34	307.32	368.78
BREAMORE	108.65	126.76	144.87	162.98	199.20	235.42	271.63	325.96
BROCKENHURST	110.15	128.50	146.86	165.22	201.94	238.65	275.37	330.44
BURLEY	98.67	115.11	131.56	148.00	180.89	213.78	246.67	296.00
COPYTHORNE	99.31	115.87	132.42	148.97	182.07	215.18	248.28	297.94
DAMERHAM	105.39	122.95	140.52	158.08	193.21	228.34	263.47	316.16
DENNY LODGE	103.74	121.03	138.32	155.61	190.19	224,77	259.35	311.22

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EAST BOLDRE	103.17 120.36	137.56	154.75	189.14	223.53	257,92	309.50
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY	106.20 123.90	141.60	159.30	194.70	230.10	265.50	318.60
EXBURY & LEPE	97.02 113.19	129.36	145.53	177.87	210.21	242.55	291.06
FAWLEY	151.11 176.29	201.48	226.66	277.03	327.40	377.77	453.32
FORDINGBRIDGE	136.33 159.06	181.78	204.50	249.94	295.39	340.83	409,00
GODSHILL	118.99 138.82	158.65	178.48	218.14	257.80	297.47	356.96
HALE	109.39 127.62	145.85	164.08	200.54	237.00	273.47	328.16
						-	
HORDLE	115.60 134.87	154.13	173.40	211.93	250,47	289.00	346.80
HYDE	101.93 118.92	135.91	152.90	186.88	220.86	254.83	305.80
HYTHE & DIBDEN	136.21 158.91	181.61	204.31	249.71	295.11	340.52	408.62
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	139.85 163.15	186.46	209.77	256.39	303.00	349.62	419.54
LYNDHURST	111.26 129.80	148.35	166.89	203.98	241.06	278.15	333.78
MARCHWOOD	155.60 181.53	207.47	233.40	285.27	337.13	389.00	466.80
MARTIN	107.99 125.99	143.99	161.99	197.99	233.99	269.98	323.98
MILFORD-ON-SEA	112.31 131.02	149.74	168.46	205.90	243.33	280.77	336.92
MINSTEAD	104.85 122.33	139.80	157.28	192.23	227.18	262.13	314.56
NETLEY MARSH	100.46 117.20	133.95	150.69	184.18	217.66	251.15	301.38
NEW MILTON	121.49 141.73	161.98	182.23	222.73	263.22	303.72	364.46
RINGWOOD	127.47 148.72	169.96	91.21	233.70	276.19	318.68	382.42
ROCKBOURNE	108.19 126.22	144.25	162.28	198.34	234.40	270.47	324.56
SANDLEHEATH	103.99 121.32	138.65	155.98	190.64	225.30	259.97	311.96
SOPLEY	126.13 147.16	168.18	189.20	231.24	273.29	315.33	378.40
SWAY	103.30 120.52	137.73	154.95	189.38	223.82	258.25	309.90
TOTTON & ELING	160.65 187.42	214.20	240.97	294.52	348.07	401.62	481.94
WHITSBURY	105.11 122.63	140.15	157.67	192.71	227.75	262.78	315.34
WOODGREEN	107.40 125.30	143.20	161.10	196.90	232.70	268.50	322.20

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 2(g) and 2(h) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

(3) That it be noted that for the year 2006/07 the Hampshire County Council, the Hampshire Police Authority and the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below: -

	А	В	С	D	Е	F	G	н		
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£		
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL	607.08	708.26	809.44	910.62	1,112.98	1,315.34	1,517.70	1,821,24		
HAMPSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE	79.62	92.89	106.16	119.43	145.97	172.51	199.05	238.86		
AUTHORITY	35.76	41.72	47.68	53.64	65.56	77.48	89.40	107.28		
	722.46	842.87	963.28	1083.69	1,324.51	1,565.33	1,806.15	2,167.38		

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY

27 FEBRUARY 2006

4. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 2(i) and 3 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of council tax for the year 2006/07 for each of the categories of dwellings shown on the next page: -

PART OF THE COUNCIL'S AREA

LOCAL COUNCIL AREA	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
ASHURST&COLBURY	831.63	970.23 1	1,108.84	1,247.44	1,524.65	1,801.86	2,079.07	2,494.88
BEAULIEU	822.25	959.30 1	1,096.34	1,233.38	1,507.46	1,781.55	2.055.63	2,466.76
BOLDRE	827.28	965.16 1	1,103.04	1,240.92	1,516.68	1,792.44	2,068.20	2,481.84
BRAMSHAW	823.37	960.60 1	1,097.83	1,235.06	1,509.52	1,783.98	2,058,43	2,470.12
BRANSGORE	845.39	986.28 1	1,127.18	1,268.08	1,549.88	1,831.67	2,113,47	2,535.16
BREAMORE	831.11	969.63 1	1,108.15	1,246.67	1,523.71	1,800.75	2,077.78	2,493.34
BROCKENHURST	832.61	971.37 1	1.110.14	1,248.91	1,526.45	1,803.98	2,081,52	2,497.82
BURLEY	821.13	957.98 1	,094.84	1,231.69	1,505.40	1,779.11	2,052.82	2,463.38
COPYTHORNE	821.77	958.74 1	,095.70	1,232.66	1,506.58	1,780.51	2,054.43	2,465.32
DAMERHAM	827.85	965.82 1	,103.80	1,241.77	1,517.72	1,793.67	2,069.62	2,483.54
DENNY LODGE	826.20	963.90 1	,101.60	1,239.30	1,514.70	1,790.10	2,065,50	2,478.60
EAST BOLDRE	825.63	963.23 1	,100.84	1,238.44	1,513.65	1,788.86	2,064.07	2,476.88
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE								
& IBSLEY	828.66	966.77 1		1,242.99	1,519.21	1,795.43	2,071.65	2,485.98
EXBURY & LEPE	819.48	956.06 1		1,229.22	1,502.38	1,775.54	2,048.70	2,458.44
FAWLEY	873.57	1,019.16 1		1,310.35	1,601.54	1,892.73	2,183.92	2,620.70
FORDINGBRIDGE	858.79	1,001.93 1		1,288.19	1,574.45	1,860.72	2,146.98	2,576.38
GODSHILL	841.45	981.69 1		1,262.17	1,542.65	1,823.13	2,103.62	2,524.34
HALE	831.85	970.49 1		1,247.77	1,525.05	1,802.33	2,079.62	2,495.54
HORDLE	838,06	977.74 1		1,257.09	1,536.44	1,815.80	2,095.15	2,514.18
HYDE	824.39	961.79 1		1,236.59	1,511.39	1,786.19	2,060.98	2,473.18
HYTHE & DIBDEN	858.67	1,001.78 1	.144.89	1,288.00	1,574.22	1,860.44	2,146,67	2,576.00
LYMINGTON &	060.04	1 000 00 1	140 74	1 202 46	1 590 00	1 000 00	0 455 77	2 596 02
PENNINGTON LYNDHURST	862.31 833.72	1,006.02 1 972.67 1		1,293.46 1,250.58	1,580.90	1,868.33 1,806.39	2,155.77 2,084.30	2,586,92 2,501.16
		1,024.40 1			1,528.49			
MARCHWOOD MARTIN	878.06 830.45	968.86 1		1,317.09 1,245.68	1,609.78 1,522.50	1,902.46 1,799.32	2,195.15 2,076.13	2,634.18 2,491.36
MILFORD-ON-SEA	834.77	973.89 1		1,245.08	1,530.41	1,808.66		2,491.30
MINSTEAD	827.31	965.20 1		1,232.15	1,530.41	1,792.51	2,086.92 2,068.28	2,504.50 2,481.94
NETLEY MARSH	822.92	960.07 1		1,240.97	1,508.69	1,782.99	2,008.28	2,461.94 2,468.76
NEW MILTON	843.95	984.60 1		1,265.92	1,547.24	1,828.55	2,007.30	2,531.84
RINGWOOD	849.93	994.00 1 991.59 1		1,203.92		1,841.52	2,109.87	2,531.84
					1,558.21			
	830.65	969.09 1		1,245.97	1,522.85	1,799.73	2,076.62	2,491.94
SANDLEHEATH	826.45	964.19 1		1,239.67	1,515.15	1,790.63	2,066.12	2,479.34
SOPLEY	848.59	990.03 1		1,272.89	1,555,75	1,838.62	2,121.48	2,545.78
	825.76	963.39 1		1,238.64	1,513.89	1,789.15	2,064.40	2,477.28
TOTTON & ELING	883.11	1,030.29 1		1,324.66	1,619.03	1,913.40	2,207.77	2,649.32
WHITSBURY	827.57	965.50 1		1,241.36	1,517.22	1,793.08	2,068.93	2,482.72
WOODGREEN	829.86	968.17 1	,106.48	1,244.79	1,521.41	1,798.03	2,074.65	2,489.58

CHAIRMAN

BUDGET SPEECH BY LEADER OF NFDC.

This year, for the first time, I am able to tell the Council that we have been relatively fortunate in our grant settlement from government. The increase of just over 4.5% arises mainly because we were beneficiaries of the change which the Chancellor announced in the way in which bus passes for the retired folk would be made. As a result we received a fairly generous apportionment which has made our overall grant settlement look favourable this year and I believe, subject to confirmation, will make it look favourable again next year when compared to the previous 7 years. The Chancellor's announcement, however, has increased our expenditure by over 4%. This is half the increase in our total expenditure increase of some 8% over the last year. The other 4% arises from a 2.9% increase in staff pay and the normal inflationary increases associated with fuel, building costs and the like. About one half of our total expenditure is financed by government and roughly half by the council tax payer. So the conundrum for us this year was that we faced an increase in expenditure of over 8%, an increase in government grant of 4% on the 50% which they contributed towards our total expenditure. In order to keep our total council tax increase down to roughly the level of the inflation rate, therefore, we have had to seek further efficiency savings and we have examined our expenditure item by item. We have also examined our income item by item and put up charges where we consider these are being subsidised too heavily by the council tax payer. Thanks to the efforts of many of you sitting in this room, working in your panels, with dedicated officers who have understood the overall problem which we face, there have been no major cuts in front line services and we have been able to contain the expenditure and thus the level of council tax for the residents of the New Forest. The council tax increase of 2.75% is one of the lowest council tax increases we have ever had, apart from 1999/2000 when the first Conservative

administration actually reduced the amount of council tax payable. Despite the history of Government under funding in recent years, the average of council tax since Conservatives regained control here in our District, has been of the order of 4% per annum compared to the 42% increase in council tax in the preceding 4 years of Lib Dem administration.

Although the Expenditure plans attract more attention because of their immediate impact on Council tax, it is also important for us to look ahead to examine our capital expenditure programme in respect of refurbishment and new build of lavatories, refurbishment of our leisure centres, coastal works, environmental enhancement schemes and the like. We try to take a 5 year forward view to ensure that we are fully funded. Thus we earmark surpluses as they arise or savings or windfalls towards the capital programme knowing that we can only implement those sections of the capital programme, not according to our timetable but according to the availability of finance. Nevertheless we have been able to refurbish and renew public lavatories in recent times in Barton-on-Sea, New Milton, Lymington, Milford-on-Sea, Brockenhurst and shortly Calshot.

We have also completed enhancements of Fawley village centre and are working currently on enhancing Hythe promenade and the second phase at Milford-on-Sea. We have completely refurbished and expanded our Recreation centres at Ringwood and Lymington with our share costing nearly £800000. We have allocated funds for major schemes such as Totton town centre. This ambitious capital programme only comes about because of the sound way in which we have managed our finances. This brings me to the point where I believe I can say to you that after 3 years of this administration we have met our first and major objective which is to manage the finances of this Council in a sound professional way

and to use that as the foundation for our other major key objectives with which I shall deal in turn shortly. Before doing that though, it would be remiss of me not to point out that Councillor Colin Wise, working with our financial team of officers, has done a tremendous job in bringing this about and I am extremely grateful to him and I believe the residents of the New Forest should know how much effort and time and hard work he has put into this. Recently his wife has been seriously ill and that continuing illness has led him to ask me to relieve him of his Cabinet responsibilities. Nevertheless he was prepared to stay on and help for this particular financial year in order that we might bring this budget to you today. Clearly Colin's family must come first but we are extremely grateful for the effort that he has put in to this job, over the last five years and particularly over the last 6 months. Colin will be resigning from the Cabinet in the first week in March after attending the next Board Meeting of the Test Valley Partnership. Thereafter I shall bring to Cabinet replacements for Colin on that Board and on other Cabinet and Council Committees. It is my intention for the time being to absorb the financial strategy part of Colin's portfolio within the Leader's overall strategy. Cabinet Members and Members of the various finance panels which Colin has set up are now well placed to continue much of the investigative work within the framework which he has built.

Another one of our key objectives has been the cleanliness of our open spaces, our public spaces, our streets and so forth. We have continued to invest in the partnership with Test Valley to bring this about. We have also continued to invest in improving recycling rates and educating members of the public. The garden waste scheme which will be extended to everyone very shortly is just one example of this. Our third major objective concerned the reduction of fear of crime, the reduction of yobbish behaviour, the reduction of graffiti and is bound up with our second objective which I alluded to a moment ago. By appointing 2

Community Safety Officers to join Hampshire's 8 we have had a force of 10 people doing regular patrols and working with the Police and other branches of Hampshire County Council's Youth Service and the District Council officers in the crime and safety partnership arena. This has had an undoubted impact and although there have been some teething problems, Councillor Goff Beck has addressed these with Hampshire County Council and recent correspondence leads me to believe that they will shortly be resolved to our satisfaction. I am, therefore, proposing in this budget a further 2 Community Safety Officers. I have a very clear objective for them in mind but until I have spoken to the local representatives I cannot tell you whether they will be specifically placed, as has occurred in New Milton, or they will be more generally placed. I hope to have these additional 2 available by summer which would mean that we would have a dozen Community Safety Officers in the New Forest. This will clearly help with such matters as sickness, holiday time, etc., but when all are at full strength you can see that we have a reasonably good unit to target specific problem areas as well.

The fourth major objective which I set our Council related to affordable housing. We have met our affordable housing targets. Since 2000/1, for example, we have funded or started over 750 new homes for rent through Housing Associations. We were forced to reduce our target to some 80 new starts per year because of lack of government finance and the fact that government regulations by and large prevent us from self-building. Nevertheless we have renewed our efforts. We are examining our available open spaces to see which are not being fully used or not needed by the community concerned. We are looking at council garages in the appropriate places. We are even looking at some of those homes which when vacated might be redeveloped to provide even more homes. The major repair allowances which the government uses does not lend itself towards the provision of

new housing but rather is aimed at cleaning up those derelict areas of inner urban conurbations. Unfortunately this impacts in the New Forest in a curious manner which means that we have to replace bathroom suites and kitchen suites which are perfectly sound simply because they are 20 years old in a house which is well heated, well roofed and well maintained by the District Council. This is guite the reverse of many of the situations the major repair allowance was designed for in the urban areas where the houses were run down, roofs leaked and there was no heating. Because all Government finances are focused in the major repair allowance, there is nothing left for new build. New starts come about only when we receive finance from right-to-buy sales and we now receive only 25% with the remainder being grabbed by Government. I shall continue to lobby whoever I can and agree with those members of the Labour party which put before the Select Committee a proposal for a fourth way for housing, namely to enable housing finance to be arranged directly by local authorities. However, even if we had the finance, we have the problem of a shortage of land in the New Forest, hence my request to our officers and members to redouble their efforts at looking at that land which could be used to house our homeless families and to search out every possibility. Therefore, with regard to this fourth objective, although we have met our mathematical targets, I cannot say in my heart of hearts that I am happy with our efforts yet.

The budget before you is that which was approved by the Cabinet and I said then that I would not be changing the recommendations relating to the council tax, that of 2.75%, as an increase. However, in the intervening period I have had discussions with Hythe Sailing Club and our Valuer, Andy Groom, has had another look at certain factors which they have requested him to make allowance for in calculating his valuations. In doing so he believes

the valuation could, therefore, be set such that a rental of £20,000 per year is chargeable. However, he is not able to be definite about how a mediation court might reduce that figure further to allow for a flooding risk. In addition, on my visit I was impressed by the provision for teaching young people to sail and obviously if we can get more people to enjoy the wind in their hair, in the silence of the sailing craft, and master the skill involved at the earliest age possible, it must have a more calming effect than allowing youngsters to roam the streets with nothing to do. These two factors have led me to ask you to accept the agent for the Club's valuation of £15,000 which in itself is considerably higher than the Club originally proposed to us. On such a basis I do not believe there would be any need for us to give a grant to the Club and neither, as I understand it, do they wish it. Therefore, the proposal is that the 5 year rental will be £15,000 a year, that we would remove from the Leisure Services budget provision for a grant to Hythe Sailing Club. The effect of this in the first year is to give us a little more money overall than we thought and over the 5 year period, to give us roughly the same as we would have if we had applied a grant to a revised rental figure of £20,000 per annum. Accordingly there is an amendment before you to allow for this.

We intend extending the garden sack scheme to everyone who wishes to purchase the service. Garden compositing will suit some people; others will want their garden cuttings removed. A £25.00 per year sack provides 26 removals per year and cuts down dramatically on trips and queues at the refuse tips.

We will need to consider carefully how else we can meet the recycling targets agreed through Project Integra. We are under pressure to move to an alternative week collection system using wheelie-bins as most other districts do. One week will be for recyclables, the

next week for non-recyclables. We have engaged consultants to study the effect of the various collection methods and their cost and benefit report will go before our panel soon. We shall also see how much more efficient we can make our sack collection system for recycling purposes. Thereafter the Cabinet will consider their comments. However I know that any change will be highly contentious. The arguments in favour of and against the weekly sack collection system or the wheelie-bin system are finely balanced. In any event a 100% wheelie-bin system is not possible due to the physical constraints of some dwellings. When the options have been thoroughly evaluated I intend that they will be summarized along with the cost per household of each option. What we would then like to do is hold a form of referendum of council tax payers and ask them for their preferred method and cost. This would be the first such referendum held in the forest and it will need a healthy lead in time so that comprehensive information can be fed through to everyone as it may well involve a selection from multiple choice. But I believe that we can trust the people to decide how best to proceed with their collection system and their recycling arrangements. For too long so called experts have conducted campaigns for or against a particular method. In Southampton they had a situation where party politics bedeviled the decision. I want to ensure none of that happens here. Therefore a vote with clear choices, benefits, disadvantages and costs will be held prior to any change. Cilr Michael Thierry will lead on this project.

Our work with the National Park continues. We would obviously like more partnership working rather than less. At this stage we have identified savings in the expenditure plans relating to the reductions in our development control practices. This amounts to some £300,000 and has been included in our 2006/07 savings. There should be some more savings but we are unable to quantify these at this stage as discussions are ongoing.

However so far a number of the proposals we have put to the National Park have been rejected. I therefore regret that I am not optimistic that there will be significant savings but we shall report these to the appropriate panels for their views whenever we have a proposal which we and the National Park approve.

The program on replacement and refurbishment of public toilets to which we are working is that which was agreed some time ago by a working party of Liberal Democrats and Conservatives which toured the New Forest and considered the location and usage of all our public conveniences. We are therefore replacing some, refurbishing some and demolishing others where they are not needed. In those cases they simply attract ne'er do wells and vandals. So far we have spent over £1m on replacement and refurbishment. Before we have finished I believe we shall spend easily another £1m in our capital forward program. I deplore those members who attempting to gain some cheap political mileage over this issue. I say now categorically that every public toilet which is needed, which is being used regularly, which serves a need will be replaced or refurbished. However there are some, I can think of one in Brockenhurst, one in Totton, and one in Calshot where a new larger convenience is to be built to replace two smaller decrepit conveniences, where there is no longer a need and it would not be a good use of council tax payers funds to replace these.

I have attempted to highlight the main issues for report to members. The detail of the proposals and the capital programme forecasts are before you and I would be happy to take members questions on any of that. Therefore I conclude now, Chairman, by asking that you approve the recommendations before you with the amendment concerning rents and grants to allow for the revised figures mentioned earlier.

M J KENDAL

Leader

Liberal Democrat Budget 2006.

If the Council Tax payers of the New Forest thought their bills have been high this year, I really can't blame them because according to figures I have been given, our bills for a band D property were the highest in Hampshire....including Southampton and Portsmouth!

The Administration here forced through a 4.79% rise, deriding the Oppositions' alternative of just over 2% as being irresponsible. Last year we proposed a number of initiatives, including a proposal that £300,000 could be slashed from the budget, based on a pattern of year on year underspends. At that time it looked as-if the underspend for 04/05 was going to be around half a million pounds. Well it wasn't. It turns out that the final figure was £1.303 million! That's the equivalent of 14.9 on the Council Tax. At that rate we could actually have had a cut of 10% instead of a rise.

Now the Leader and Finance portfolio holders will tell us that it's OK because the money has been put into reserves and its prudent to have a healthy reserve. The difference between them and the Liberal Democrat group is that we believe the public has a right to know how much of their money is required to go into reserves every year and that the Council Tax should be set appropriately. It's about time these massive underspends stopped. That's now over £2 million money collected from residents since 2002/03.

This year we are set to spend less than budgeted once again. The figure currently stands at \pounds 186,000 and even then that's after having topped up the capital reserve to the tune of \pounds 219,000 following the final accounts adjustment.

Whilst this unacceptable state of control continues we cannot see the point in building in a figure for transfer to reserves in our alternative budget, but it would be a priority for a Liberal Democrat Administration to sort this out. The council should have learned from the past by now and the public deserve to have a clearer idea of where their money is going to go.

But you're always keen to know what specifically we would offer residents in the coming financial year. Quite simply we would look to put more into front line services not the back office as much of the emphasis is from the Administration this year.

Concessionary Fares.

The Government's new scheme for public transport for the over 60's has much to commend it, especially as it is fully funded. However, the current proposal here in the New Forest will entail a cut in entitlement for the over 80's. We would reinstate the local scheme previously available to this group.

Cost £73,480.

Licensing Enforcement.

This is the first year of the new Licensing regulations. Some members have worked long and hard to put the new regime in place. Many members of the public have attended panels to express concerns about the new licenses on their peace and quality of life. Hopefully their fears will not materialise, however, what if they do?

Despite assurances, there is no proposal before us to put in place an enforcement regime but the recommendation is to 'wait and see'. If problems occur then the public will have to bear with us while we appoint and then train appropriate officers. That's not good enough. We believe that some resource needs to be in place and propose that a part time appointment be made in the interim.

Cost £14,000.

Car sharing promotion.

Well the jury is still out as far as I'm concerned on the new Parking Clock charges. You might like to spin it that because fewer people have shelled out £80 than you expected has resulted in a 'modal shift' and therefore less traffic on the roads, but we all know that it's simply not true.

Nevertheless, we do need to encourage more people to find alternatives to the motor car. Perhaps many of our residents aged over 60 will be enticed onto public transport now.....who knows.

We believe that the council can help commuters to car share by providing a matching service using our website. It will cost some officer time and a bit of publicity but could cost as little as £5000 a year. We believe this will be money well spent.

Cost £5000.

And how will these initiatives be funded?

We would reduce the £125,000 you intend transferring to the redundancy fund by £75,000, thus transferring only £50,000.

Saving. £75,000

And could simply take £220,000 out of the budget because we know that there will be another underspend at the end of the year. And before you cry 'transfer to reserves', I'm sure you'll still have some left over for that.

Saving £220,000.

However, there is a pressing need to retain that sum in our budget proposals. By far the biggest concern we have is around the provision of new affordable housing. We share the Administration's conviction that this is an important corporate priority for the council, so we would invest that £200,000 in the provision of new rented housing.

Cost £200,000.

Given that, it amazes me that the housing budget area is expected to consume its own smoke. It is clear that in current circumstances we will fail to deliver anywhere near enough homes to cope with the number of local families that join our housing waiting list. It isn't satisfactory that families are living for long periods in temporary accommodation, unable to solve their own problems due to the high cost of market housing.

For years this council has tangibly failed to deliver on its capital budget. We have seen slippage after underspend after excuse. Delivery, or rather lack of it has been disguised because there are a number of other agencies involved, and indeed, some of that capital has been restricted. Nevertheless, priorities have been muddled. Given the 'single pot' that now exits for our unrestricted capital we need to take a good hard look at not just project efficiency, but also how we allocate the pot of money at our disposal.

This budget would therefore propose that £800,000 which currently sits within the capital reserve is reallocated to social housing provision. This means that a total of £1 million would be made available. We estimate that this could mean an extra 20 new homes in the district.

We also propose that for future years priorities are reviewed to ensure that capital is allocated according to new priorities and to maximise delivery in all projects rather than the current wish list we currently permit.

Finally, I would like to assure Cllr Kendal that the Lib Dem group is happy to support the new figure reached for Hythe Sailing Club rent. The fact that the Council's income will be reduced by the grand sum £1,810 seems to be reasonable in view of the fact that the rent is now felt to be reasonable and realistic.

So there you have it. Effectively no change in the actual Council Tax proposed, but a reexamination of where the money will go and greater control in spending the money as allocated.

On capital, which is so often not properly examined we demand that priorities are reviewed so that this district's pressing housing needs are given a higher priority.

On revenue, greater delivery at the front line. The proposals put before you today will also result in a Council Tax rise of 2.75% but will deliver greater delivery at the front line. Making sure that we work the money available to greater public benefit. More transparency of where the money will go.

I ask the council to seriously consider our proposals.

Maureen Robinson. 24.2 06.

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT BUDGET 2006

2002/03

You underspent by increase actually needed NFDC Council Tax increase

2003/04 NFDC Council Tax increase You underspent by increase actually needed

2004/05 NFDC Council Tax increase You underspent by Reduction actually needed

2005/06

NEDC Council Tax increase Increase probably actually needed Underspend so far

4.79%

2.79%

£186,000 (Equivalent to 2.0% increase)

FOTAL UNDERSPEND

£531,000 (Equivalent to 7.1% increase) 9.4%

3.5% 0.0% £356,000 (Equivalent to 3.5% increase)

4.9% £1,303,000 (Equivalent to 14.9% increase) -10.0%

£2.376m

