

REPORT OF CABINET

(Meetings held on 5 June and 3 July 2013)

1. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND PROVISIONAL BUDGET OUTTURN REPORT 2012/13 (REPORT A – 5 JUNE 2013) (MINUTE NO 4)

The Cabinet received an overview of the Council's performance during 2012/13. Although service delivery has been set within the context of continuing financial constraints, with the 2012/13 budget reduced by 4% compared to 2011/12, there have been significant achievements. The medium term financial plan has achieved savings of nearly £1.8 million. This has allowed Council Tax to be frozen for the fourth year in succession, while maintaining services, and a 1% pay award has been made to all Council employees, the first increase since 2009.

The Council has brought all of its homes up to the decent homes standard and has secured the provision of 94 affordable dwellings, while bringing 89 empty properties back into use. Other achievements of note include the opening of the Ringwood Gateway Project; the securing of £1.8million grant funding to introduce the kerbside collection of glass for recycling; out-performing the income projections from the Health and Leisure Centres by £334,000; reducing incidents of reported crime by 11.3% and introducing improved technology to meet customers' needs and improve efficiency.

The provisional outturn figures for the Housing Revenue Account also show an improvement, with the planned deficit for the year being reduced to £230,000 from £778,000. The Capital Programme forecast outturn expenditure, at £19.91 million has also achieved savings of £150,000, principally from office optimisation.

The organisational performance indicators demonstrate that the Council is performing well, and is on target.

2. SERVICE REVIEW PROGRAMME 2013 ONWARDS (REPORT B – 5 JUNE 2013) (MINUTE NO 5)

The Cabinet has approved a programme of further service reviews in support of the objective, under the Medium Term Financial Plan, of bridging the funding gap anticipated in the period up to 2015/16. The service reviews, which will be overseen by the relevant Portfolio Holder, will allow further opportunities for all Members of the Council to influence the future shape of events through participation in the various task and finish groups that will be established to work on key areas. Although the need to achieve financial savings is important, quality of service remains a key priority. The Leader has invited all members of the Council to suggest additional potential areas for review in order to take this process forwards.

3. SENIOR MANAGEMENT REVIEW PHASE 3 (REPORT C – 5 JUNE 2013) (MINUTE NO 6)

Reviews of the senior management structure in 2011 and 2012 adjusted the EMT/Heads of Service structure that had been introduced in 2007/8 to respond to the changing needs of the Council. It was recognised at that time that a further review would be necessary in due course, but that any further changes must maintain the capacity of senior management to take the authority forward at a time when there is an increased need for innovation and resilience.

The Cabinet have approved the further amendment of the current structure by allowing the Head of Housing and one of the Executive Directors to reduce their hours from 37 to 22.5 hours per week under the flexible retirement arrangements, with the Executive Director retiring within the next 2 years and the Head of Housing within the next year. Further reports on the longer term structures, to respond to these retirements, will be brought to the Cabinet in due course. A report on the proposals for Housing will come forwards once the necessary consultations with employees have taken place, expected to be by October 2013 at the latest.

Flexible retirement is recognised as a valuable tool for both the employee and the authority, allowing the proper planning of succession and retaining essential expertise throughout the transitional period.

4. HAMPSHIRE JOINT HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY (REPORT D – 5 JUNE 2013) (MINUTE NO 7)

The Cabinet has endorsed the draft Hampshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which has been produced in accordance with requirements under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. There has been an extensive consultation and collaboration exercise leading to the preparation of the current document, which represents a shared plan of action for key partners involved in promoting and delivering health and wellbeing. The over-arching Strategy will feed through into the activities of the well-established and effective New Forest Health and Wellbeing Board, which will reflect more local priorities in its programme of action. This Council has a supporting role in delivering the strategy through various services that contribute to health and wellbeing.

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy will be adopted by the Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board at its inaugural meeting in the summer of 2013.

5. LYMINGTON HEALTH AND LEISURE – CAR PARK EXTENSION (REPORT E – 5 JUNE 2013) (MINUTE NO 8)

The Cabinet has approved a supplementary estimate of £40,000, as this Council's contribution towards the cost of work to extend the car park at Lymington Health and Leisure Centre, costing £159,000 in total. The opportunity to secure an increase in the car parking provision at the Centre has arisen in association with amendments to the campus being promoted by the school. The lack of adequate car parking is a recognised problem on this site, and could prejudice the future development of the Centre's business. The proposal represents excellent value for money for this Council, with the majority of the cost being met by the School. The Centre will have the use of 15 additional car parking spaces during the day and 80 spaces during the evenings and weekends. The new car parking area will not affect the playing fields at the school.

6. RINGWOOD LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – ADOPTION (REPORT A – 3 JULY 2013) (MINUTE NO 14)

Following the successful development of local distinctiveness documents for New Milton and Lymington, which are playing a valuable role in achieving this Council's high level objectives of protecting the quality and individual character of the area, the Local Distinctiveness Document for Ringwood has now also reached the stage of adoption, following a resolution to that effect by the Cabinet. The local distinctiveness documents become part of the Local Development Framework for the

New Forest District outside the National Park area and are a material consideration when determining planning applications.

The initial preparation of the Document involved extensive work with local ward councillors, the Town Council, Ringwood Society and local people and interest groups. The draft Document was then subject to a public consultation exercise and some changes have been made in response to the comments received. The Cabinet welcomed the many constructive comments that had been received, which had strengthened the document and would help enhance its robustness for the protection of the special character of Ringwood.

7. CCTV, COMMUNITY ALARMS AND OUT OF HOURS SERVICE (REPORT B – 3 JULY 2013) (MINUTE NO 15)

The Cabinet has agreed that the CCTV, Community Alarms and Out of Hours Services should be amalgamated within a single management structure within Public Health and Community Safety. Negotiations will be held with the staff affected as there will need to be changes to their roles. The decision to combine these services follows a review undertaken by a Task and Finish Group established by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel. In addition to achieving savings currently estimated at £25,000 per annum, the combined service will allow a number of operational benefits and service enhancements. The CCTV Control Room will be manned for 24 hours a day, allowing live surveillance of the network of CCTV cameras, but more importantly allowing users to progress important tasks when other work pressures are reduced overnight. The Council's own response to out of hours calls should be improved by bringing the service in-house, while the availability of a 24 hour service opens up other business opportunities with client groups who need continuous monitoring to be available. The opportunity is also being taken to review the fees and charges for the community alarms service to bring them onto a sounder business footing, more in line with competitors.

Negotiations will continue with Tunstall, the current providers of the out of hours service, to secure an extension of their current contract with the Council to cover the transitional period for the introduction of the new in-house arrangements, and perhaps also for the purchase of their lifeline equipment and other ancillary technology.

The amalgamation of these services has been warmly welcomed by the Housing and Communities Portfolio Holder and also by the Chief Inspector of Police for the New Forest Command area.

The capital outlay to implement the project is £80,000, which gives a payback period of 3.1 years. A supplementary estimate is required for this sum.

The Head of Public Health and Community Safety and her staff were thanked for the excellent support that they had given to this review.

RECOMMENDED:

That a supplementary estimate of £80,000 be approved for the implementation of this project.

8. ELECTORAL REVIEW TASK AND FINISH GROUP – UPDATE (REPORT C – 3 JULY 2013) (MINUTE NO 16)

The Cabinet received an initial report from the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel, in the light of recommendations from the Task and Finish Working Group that was established to evaluate the potential reduction in the number of Members of the Council. They had concluded that the timetabling for the Boundary Commission for England, together with the amount of research and local consultation that would be necessary to develop soundly based conclusions, made it impractical to attempt to complete the review in time for the 2015 elections. It has therefore been agreed that, provided the costs of the review and consultation process are properly considered against the likely savings and potential benefits, the Electoral Review Task and Finish Group should progress the evaluation of outline schemes for a 40 or 45 member Council. As this will involve considerable work, the Task and Finish Group will meet again in the autumn, once the officers have undertaken the initial research that has been requested, with further updates being reported to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel as appropriate.

9. RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: ROLE AS ACCOUNTABLE BODY (REPORT D – 3 JULY 2013) (MINUTE NO 17)

The current Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) LEADER programme is coming to an end and although details of the next programme are still emerging from Defra, expressions of interest in bidding for the next round of funding had to be submitted by 12 July 2013. Historically, the New Forest has been successful in bidding, with some £4 million of European funding being attracted to the area through this programme.

In the previous LEADER programmes the Council has fulfilled the role of Accountable Body, which includes acting as the employer for the programme staff and undertaking administrative/audit roles. The cost is reclaimed from the LEADER funding. The programme is run by a Local Action Group, made up of representatives of business, voluntary and statutory bodies, and they will develop the bid. The new bid is likely to be strengthened if it has the support of a named Accountable Body and the Local Action Group has asked the Council to fulfil this role once again. The objectives of the next Programme are expected to place a greater emphasis on economic development, enhancing competitiveness and reducing poverty, which is consistent with the Council's Corporate Plan. There are transitional arrangements to cover the interim period.

It has been agreed that, subject to the Executive Director (Finance) agreeing the details of the funding arrangements, the Council will continue to act as the Accountable Body for the RDPE programme through the period of transition between the end of the last programme and the submission of the bid for funding under the next programme, and, if the bid is successful, for the next full RDPE programme.

**Cllr B Rickman
CHAIRMAN**