



New Forest
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Meeting Agenda

11 July 2016



SUMMONS

To All Members of the Council

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the District Council to be held in the Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 11 July 2016, at 6.30 pm



Bob Jackson
Chief Executive

Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, Hampshire. SO43 7PA
www.newforest.gov.uk

This Agenda is also available on audio tape, in Braille, large print and digital format

AGENDA

Apologies

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 16 May 2016 (Special Meeting and Annual Council Meeting) as correct records.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To note any declarations of interest made by members in connection with an agenda item. The nature of the interest must also be specified.

Members are asked to discuss any possible interests with Democratic Services prior to the meeting.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

5. REPORT OF AUDIT COMMITTEE (Pages 7 - 14)

To consider the report of the Audit Committee dated 28 June 2016.

6. REPORT OF GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

(Pages 15 - 18)

To consider the report of the General Purposes & Licensing Committee dated 6 June 2016.

7. REPORTS OF THE CABINET (Pages 19 - 20)

To consider the reports of the Cabinet dated 1 June and 6 July 2016 (to follow).

8. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22

9. QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22A

To ask questions of Portfolio Holders. Members are reminded that questions must be submitted to the Chief Executive or to the Executive Head of Governance and Regulation by not later than noon on Friday 8 July 2016.

10. MEETING DATES FOR THE 2017/18 MUNICIPAL YEAR

RECOMMENDED:

That meetings be held on the following Mondays at 6.30pm:-

15 May 2017 (Annual meeting, already agreed)

10 July 2017

11 September 2017

16 October 2017

11 December 2017

26 February 2018

16 April 2018

21 May 2018 (Annual Meeting)

11. APPOINTMENT OF SECTION 151 OFFICER LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (SECTION 151)

Following the appointment of Alan Bethune as Service Manager for Finance and Audit, the Council is requested to appoint him as the Council's Chief Finance Officer, pursuant to Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, with Kevin Green as Deputy Section 151 Officer in his absence.

RECOMMENDED:

That Alan Bethune, Service Manager for Finance and Audit be appointed as the Council's Chief Finance Officer, pursuant to Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, with Kevin Green as Deputy Section 151 Officer in his absence.

12. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

To consider any changes to the membership of Committees or Panels that might be proposed by the political groups.

13. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

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Agenda Item 1

16 MAY 2016

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a special meeting of the New Forest District Council held in the the Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 16 May 2016

* Cllr Mrs A J Hoare (Chairman)

* Cllr G C Beck (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

* A R Alvey
* Mrs D E Andrews
* W G Andrews
* P J Armstrong
* Mrs S V Beeton
* Ms R Bellows
* Mrs S M Bennison
* J E Binns
* G R Blunden
* D A Britton
* Mrs D M Brooks
* Mrs F Carpenter
* Mrs L D Cerasoli
* S J Clarke
* Mrs J L Cleary
I C Coombes
Ms K V Crisell
* S P Davies
* A H G Davis
* W H Dow
* Ms L C Ford
* R L Frampton
* A T Glass
* L E Harris
* M R Harris
* D Harrison
* J D Heron
* E J Heron
* Mrs M D Holding

Councillors:

Mrs P Jackman
* M J Kendal
Mrs E L Lane
* Mrs P J Lovelace
* B D Lucas
* Mrs A E McEvoy
* A D O'Sullivan
* J M Olliff-Cooper
* N S Penman
* A K Penson
* D M S Poole
* L R Puttock
* B Rickman
* W S Rippon-Swaine
* Mrs A M Rostand
* D J Russell
* Miss A Sevier
* M A Steele
* M H Thierry
* Mrs B J Thorne
* D B Tipp
* D N Tungate
* A S Wade
* R A Wappet
* J G Ward
* Mrs C V Ward
* M L White
* C A Wise
* Mrs P A Wyeth

*Present

Officers Attending:

R Jackson, Miss G O'Rourke and Ms M Stephens

Apologies:

Cllrs Mrs Crisell, Mrs Jackman and Mrs Lane.

75 HONORARY FREEDOM OF THE DISTRICT

RESOLVED:

- (a) That in recognition of the distinguished record of the 17 Port and Maritime Regiment, Royal Logistics Corps, and its eminent service to Her Majesty the Queen and country and to the life and community of the New Forest District in many diverse ways, the New Forest District Council in accordance with Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 hereby admits to the Honorary Freedom of the New Forest District the Commanding Officer and all Ranks of 17 Port and Maritime Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps, and confers upon them the right, honour and distinction of marching through the streets of the New Forest District on all ceremonial occasions with swords drawn, bayonets fixed, drums beating, bands playing and colours flying; and
- (b) That the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to an Honorary Freedom Scroll to be presented to the Regiment at a special ceremonial event, on Sunday, 25 September 2016

CHAIRMAN

16 MAY 2016

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held in the Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 16 May 2016

* Cllr Mrs A J Hoare (Chairman)

* Cllr G C Beck (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

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* R A Wappet
* J G Ward
* Mrs C V Ward
* M L White
* C A Wise
* Mrs P A Wyeth

*Present

Officers Attending:

R Jackson, Miss G O'Rourke and Ms M Stephens

Apologies:

Cllrs Mrs Crisell, Mrs Jackman and Mrs Lane.

The Chairman of the Council, Cllr Mrs Hoare, in the Chair

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Mrs Hoare moved that Cllr Beck be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing municipal year. The motion was seconded by Cllr O'Sullivan.

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Beck be elected Chairman of the Council to continue in office until his successor becomes entitled to act as Chairman at the next annual meeting of the Council.

Cllr Beck took the chair and made the declaration of acceptance of office, which was formally witnessed by the Chief Executive.

Cllr Mrs Hoare invested the Chairman with the Chain and Badge of Office, and presented Mrs Beck, the Chairman's consort, with a bouquet of flowers.

The Chairman thanked members of the Council for electing him as Chairman. He said that he looked forward to the year ahead and hoped to serve the Council and its residents well.

2 VOTE OF THANKS TO CLLR MRS HOARE

The Chairman moved a vote of thanks to the outgoing Chairman, Cllr Mrs Hoare.

The Chairman, in paying tribute to Cllr Mrs Hoare, thanked her for the exemplary manner in which she had conducted herself during her term of office. He thanked Mrs Hoare's husband, Peter, for his support as Chairman's consort, and wished Cllr Mrs Hoare best wishes for any roles she might undertake within the Council in the future.

The motion was seconded.

Members spoke in support of the motion. They said that Cllr Mrs Hoare had worked very hard during her year in office and had been very successful in her charitable fundraising. She had represented the people of the New Forest District very well and had been a great ambassador for the Council.

Other members commented on the happy memories of the past year, and the popularity of the Chairman. In particular members referred to the commitment and charm displayed by Cllr Mrs Hoare during her time in office.

The Chief Executive, on behalf of staff, expressed his thanks to Cllr Mrs Hoare for her hard work during her year as Chairman. He made particular reference to her charity abseil down the Spinnaker Tower demonstrating her courage and determination to raise money for her charities.

RESOLVED:

That the thanks and best wishes of the Council be recorded to Cllr Mrs Hoare for her service during her term of office as Chairman of the Council.

In thanking members for the great honour of allowing her to be Chairman for the year, Cllr Mrs Hoare said that her year in office had been extremely fun and rewarding. She had met many selfless and dedicated volunteers across the Forest,

working for various causes, who worked hard to assist the vulnerable and those in need. Cllr Mrs Hoare had been proud to represent the New Forest District, which was, in her opinion, one of the most beautiful places to live and work in the Country. Cllr Mrs Hoare praised local businesses and producers of the New Forest and the local tourism industry for championing the unique area of the Forest. Cllr Mrs Hoare was pleased to announce that she had raised approximately £5,000 for her chosen charities and she thanked her family, colleagues and officers for their support during her year in office and gave particular thanks to her PA Donna Langfield. A representative from Oakhaven Hospice was in attendance and gratefully received a cheque from Cllr Mrs Hoare.

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was moved by Cllr O'Sullivan and seconded by Cllr Mrs Bennison that Cllr Mrs Ward be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

Members spoke in support of the motion.

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Mrs Ward be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council to hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman at the next annual meeting of the Council.

Cllr Mrs Ward made the declaration of acceptance of office, which was formally witnessed by the Chief Executive. The Chairman invested Cllr Mrs Ward with her badge of office and flowers and presented the Vice-Chairman's Consort, Mr Ward, with a gift.

4 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by any member in connection with an agenda item.

6 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that his two chosen charities for the year would be New Forest Disability and First Opportunities.

New Forest Disability was a local charity which supported over 2000 disabled people, families, carers and professionals each year throughout the New Forest.

First Opportunities was a New Milton based charity which provided therapeutic play and pre-school education for babies and young children (aged 0-5 years) with additional needs in the New Forest.

The Chairman hoped that colleagues would assist in his fundraising efforts during his year in office.

The Chairman announced that he would host his Civic Service on Sunday 3 July at 3.00pm in New Milton Parish Church.

7 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council announced that there would be no changes in Cabinet Portfolios or Portfolio Holders. Cllr E Heron would remain Deputy Leader of the Council.

8 ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS

RESOLVED:

That the report to the Council be noted.

9 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

No changes to committees or panels were proposed by the political groups.

CHAIRMAN

REPORT OF AUDIT COMMITTEE

(Meeting held on 28 June 2016)

1. AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT – 2015/16 (MINUTE NO. 16 – 28 June 2016)

The attached report summarises work carried out by the Audit Committee during the 2015/16 municipal year.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) good practice recommends that an annual report is produced setting out the work that the Audit Committee has undertaken during the preceding year, and that it be submitted to the full Council.

It is hoped that this report will help illustrate the breadth of work undertaken, and the assurances it gives, and the Audit Committee is pleased to present it to all members for their information.

**Cllr A D O’Sullivan
Chairman**

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COUNCIL – 11 JULY 2016

AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT - 2015/16

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to summarise the work carried out by the Audit Committee during 2015/16.

BACKGROUND

The role of the Audit Committee, which was created in 2012, is to provide assurance regarding best practice in the provision of effective corporate governance arrangements.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy good practice recommends that an annual report is produced setting out the work that the Audit Committee has undertaken during the preceding year.

MEMBERSHIP

The Membership of the Panel is as follows:

Cllr A O'Sullivan (Chairman)
Cllr J G Ward (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr W G Andrews
Cllr M R Harris
Cllr J D Heron
Cllr Mrs E L Lane
Cllr R A Wappet
Cllr C A Wise

WHAT DOES THE AUDIT COMMITTEE DO?

The terms of reference of the Audit Committee can be found in Annex 1 to Chapter 13 of the Council's constitution, and at the following link :

<http://www.nfdc.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=17902&p=0>

The Committee meets four times per year in June, September, January and March. In summary, the Committee's purview in the main includes the following elements:

- **Annual Financial Report (Statement of Accounts)**
- **Governance Reports**
- **Internal and External audit activity**
- **Treasury Management**
- **Procurement**
- **Risk Management**
- **Regulatory Framework**
- **Counter Fraud**

HOW IS THE COMMITTEE SUPPORTED?

INTERNAL AUDIT

The Council's Internal Audit function is headed by Glenda Chambers (Principal Auditor) who oversees a team of six auditors. The team also provides audit services for partners including the New Forest National Park and two Town Councils and a management service to East Dorset and Christchurch Councils, Purbeck District Council. The Principal Auditor reports to the Section 151 Officer/Chief Executive and the Chair of Audit Committee.

EXTERNAL AUDIT

Following the recent abolition of the Audit Commission, the External Audit Function is now carried out by Ernst and Young, a multinational professional services firm. Mrs Helen Thompson and Mrs Justine Thorpe are the local Ernst and Young contacts.

ACTIVITY OVER THE PAST YEAR

Annual Financial Report 2014/15 (Statement of Accounts)

The Committee approved the Council's statutory annual financial report, which included six Statements of Account:

- (a) Comprehensive income and expenditure statement
- (b) Movement in reserves
- (c) Balance sheet
- (d) Housing Revenue Account
- (e) Collection fund (two separate accounts)
- (f) Cash flow statement

The report also gave details of the general fund budget, capital programme reserve, net receipts from business rates and identified savings.

Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2014/15

The Committee approved the Annual Governance Statement for 2014/15.

The Leader of the Council and the Head of Paid Service (the Chief Executive) were required to sign the AGS and be satisfied that the document was supported by reliable evidence. It was published with the statement of accounts and provided to the external auditor for review.

ASSURANCES

To enable the Committee to agree the Statement of Accounts and the AGS (above), the following assurances were provided to the Committee during the year, as set out below:

Assurances Provided by the Internal Auditor

Annual Internal Auditor's Opinion Report 2014/15

The Committee considered the annual report of the Principal Auditor for 2014/15. This included an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the control environment, and the effectiveness of internal audit.

The Committee noted the audit plan timetable and outcomes for 2013/14 as well as other audit work, details of the insurance framework and the conformance action plan for 2015.

Based on the work undertaken during 2014/15, the Committee endorsed the opinion of the Principal Auditor that:

- Arrangements were in place to ensure there was an adequate and effective control environment
- Overall systems for managing risks, complying with governance requirements and having good internal control arrangements continued to be effective.
- Agreed policies and regulations had been complied with in the majority of cases.

Progress Against the 2015/16 Internal Audit Plan

The Committee noted regular progress reports made against the 2015/16 audit plan, in particular progress on high priority recommendations.

The Committee noted the current structure of the internal audit partnership and the related resource implications. Members were pleased to note the benefits of the reciprocal working arrangements where staff from this authority undertook work for Purbeck and East Dorset and vice-versa.

Internal Audit Charter, Assurance Framework and Internal Audit Plan 2016/17

The Committee reviewed the internal audit plan for 2016/17.

The Committee noted changes to the Audit Plan for 2016/17 as a result of the current management restructure. The Principal Auditor will continue to work with officers to align the Audits within the Audit plan to the service reviews detailed in the corporate plan.

Review of Local Code of Good Governance 2014/15

The Committee approved the annual report of the Monitoring Officer and the Internal Audit Manager for 2014/15.

They also endorsed the view of the Monitoring Officer and Internal Audit that the Council was able to have confidence in the effectiveness of its governance arrangements.

The actions arising from the review of compliance with the Council's Code of Good Governance for the financial year 2014/15, were also approved.

Assurances Provided by the External Auditor

Audit Results Report 2014/15 (External Auditor)

The Committee noted the External Auditor's Results Report 2014/15. The report which summarised the findings from the 2014/15 Audit had considered the Council's financial statements, appropriate arrangements to secure value for money, whole of Government accounts, and the Audit Certificate. The report also included audit risks and assurances gained in connection with these.

The Committee also noted the content included in the External Auditor's Certification of Claims and Returns Annual report for 2014/15, which included information on sample testing that had been carried out.

External Auditor - Progress Against the 2015/16 Action Plan

The Committee received regular external audit progress reports for its work in 2015/16.

The Committee noted that the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had decided not to extend the existing arrangements for external audit contracts beyond the end of 2017/18. This means that, from 2018/19 onwards, local authorities will be responsible for appointing their own auditors, and the resulting contract. Councils will need to start putting in place the mechanism required to deliver this, and the selection, appointment and removal of external auditors would need to take place from early 2017. The new auditors would take over for the year 2018/19.

Other Assurances

Treasury Management Annual Out-Turn Report 2014/15 and Monitoring

The Committee received the treasury management annual outturn report for 2014/15.

The report dealt with the management of the organisation's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with those activities and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks. Although the function was operated by Hampshire County Council, overall responsibility for treasury management remained with the Council. All treasury activity had complied with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy as well as the prudential indicators for 2014/15. The report covered the economic background, the local context, borrowing strategy, investment activity and outturn, as well as the treasury management indicators.

Hampshire County Council had undertaken the treasury management function since 2014 and also provided the service to Winchester City Council, the Police Service and Hampshire Fire & Rescue. Each individual authority's investments were separate.

The Committee also approved the performance of the Treasury Management function for 2015/16 together with proposed changes to the Treasury Management Strategy.

The report detailed the economic background, the Borrowing Strategy, Investment Strategy, as well as compliance with the Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators. The Committee considered recommended changes to the current strategy, including changes to the Investment Strategy and an increase in investment limits. It was noted that Hampshire County Council managed £65m worth of investments on behalf of New Forest District Council, which was £10m more than the previous year.

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) - Annual Report

The Committee noted a summary of the Council's use of its powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000.

It was reported that the Council had not authorised any surveillance activities under RIPA in 2015.

Members were pleased to note that Sir David Clarke, Assistant Surveillance Commissioner, had visited the Council to undertake an inspection of the Council's use and management of its powers under RIPA and had concluded that the Council's RIPA structure remained in good health.

Insurance Procurement

The Committee noted an update on the outcome of the procurement exercise for new insurance arrangements for the Council.

New Forest District Council had collaborated with the other 10 district and borough councils in Hampshire to achieve overall procurement savings in insurance of approximately £1.9 million over the next three years, saving £42,000 per annum for NFDC. The performance of the new arrangements would be monitored to ensure ongoing savings, as well as minimising insurance losses and continued good risk management.

Final Accounts 2014/15 - Bad Debts Write Off

The Committee received a report, detailing total bad debts written off during the financial year 2014/15, in accordance with the Code of Practice for write offs approved by the Cabinet.

The Committee queried whether any improvements could be made to the collection rates. It was explained that officers were attempting year on year improvements through the continuous promotion of direct debit, as well as other measures. It was noted that the current economic climate with welfare reforms, including Universal Credit, was likely to make collections more difficult, but this would be kept under review.

The total bad debt write off for 2014/15 was £769,749 (a slight reduction on 2013/14), which represented 0.3% of the total income collected by the Council.

Procurement Rules, Regulations and Contract Standing Orders - Waivers 2014/15

The Committee noted the waivers to the Council's procurement rules, regulations and contract standing orders approved during the financial year 2014/15.

There were 46 applications for waivers against the procurement rules during the year, the total value of which was £1,513,303. This compared with 24 applications submitted during 2013/14 totalling £543,713. The value of waivers had increased significantly along with the number of applications made. It was believed this may be partly due to improved collation of applications through a new electronic process as well as improved officer awareness following extensive training sessions.

CONCLUSION

In partnership with the External Auditors, and with the support of Officers, the Audit Committee has concluded that it has provided robust and effective independent assurance on a wide range of risk and internal control issues, thereby making a valuable contribution to the Council's corporate governance arrangements.

The Committee was again pleased to note a number of significant improvements over recent years which underline the Council's commitment to improving financial governance arrangements. Within the Annual Governance Statement are a number of recommended actions for continuous improvement which the Committee will continue to monitor.

The Council has continued to work with its partners on Insurance Procurement and Treasury Management, as well as collaborative work on fraud and changes to its banking arrangements. All of these measures have resulted in considerable savings and other financial and organisational benefits.

The Committee members look forward to continuing their work with the support of officers and external partners.

CLLR A O'SULLIVAN
CHAIRMAN

REPORT OF GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

(Meeting held on 6 June 2016)

1. ELECTORAL REVIEW OF HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (MINUTE NO. 6)

The Council will be aware that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has been undertaking a review of Hampshire County Council's electoral boundaries. The Committee has considered this matter on two previous occasions, firstly, on 13 July 2015, after which the Council submitted initial comments on the review, and secondly, on 8 January 2016, when, acting under power delegated by the Council, it agreed recommendations in response to the LGBCE's draft recommendations.

The LGBCE's final proposals were due to be published on 5 April 2016. However, the LGBCE opened a new phase of public consultation in regard to the county division boundaries for the New Forest and for Havant. The proposals for New Forest District are shown in Appendix 1. The Committee met on 6 June to consider these amended final proposals. The deadline for submission of the Council's views was 6 June 2016. All members of the Council and Hampshire County Councillors representing the District were invited to attend the meeting of the Committee.

Having considered the proposals in detail, the Committee decided to submit the following comments to the LGBCE:

The Council:

- (i) Welcomes the fact that the revised final recommendations provide for the Bransgore, Copythorne and Netley Marsh Parishes to be contained within single electoral divisions;
- (ii) Is disappointed that the revised final recommendations provide for the division of the Bashley ward of both New Forest District Council and New Milton Town Council across two divisions, but accepts this in the light of the remainder of the recommendations now proposed;
- (ii) Reiterates its recommendations for the renaming of the following Divisions as indicated:

LGBCE Proposal

Brockenhurst
Ringwood
Milford & Hordle

NFDC suggested alternative

Mid-Forest
West Forest
Milford, Hordle & Fernhill

- (iv) Requests the following further change of name:

LGBCE Proposal

Totton North

NFDC suggested alternative

Totton North & Netley Marsh

- (v) Withdraws its previous recommendation to change the name of the proposed Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge Division.

However, in not opposing the LGBCE's final proposals, the Committee noted that the LGBCE is required by law to have regard to the following when undertaking electoral reviews:

- Electoral equality
- Community interests and identities with readily identifiable boundaries; and
- Effective and convenient local government.

The Committee has expressed grave concern that the LGBCE's proposals do not meet the latter two statutory criteria but instead appear to have been made merely to ensure electoral equality. In the light of this, the Committee is concerned that an unelected body such as the LGBCE has the power to determine the makeup of electoral areas, taking little or no account of views expressed by elected representatives who have greater insight into the needs and identities of the their communities. The Committee therefore recommends that the Council should lobby local Members of Parliament with regard to the matter.

RECOMMENDED:

That the local Members of Parliament be requested to take up the issue of the undemocratic nature of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, its lack of accountability, its perceived reluctance to take account of the views of local democratic representatives in determining electoral boundaries; and its apparent inflexible adherence to electoral equality considerations at the expense of

- ***Community interests and identities with readily identifiable boundaries; and***
- ***Effective and convenient local government.***

**CLLR S J CLARKE
CHAIRMAN**

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REPORT OF CABINET

(Meeting held on 1 June 2016)

1. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND PROVISIONAL OUTTURN REPORT 2015/16 (MINUTE 4)

The Cabinet has reviewed the Council's performance and achievements during the last year of the corporate plan for 2012-2016 "Delivering for our communities". The Council's future strategic direction will be set by "Our corporate plan", which was adopted recently and covers the period 2016-2020. With the financial planning process supporting the delivery of the corporate objectives, the Council's financial performance is an important element of the assessment.

The provisional outturn figures show that an overall saving of £1.774 million has been achieved against the General Fund budget of £18.327 million. This is within the context of Council tax having been frozen at £155.76 for a Band D property for 6 years. The General Fund provisional outturn figures, highlighting the sources of the significant variations, are set out in Section 4 of report item 4 considered by the Cabinet. A number of significant savings have been made, notably from the reorganisation of the senior management structure. Additional income has also contributed, including from improved interest returns and the receipt of Government new burdens grant. There has also been improved income generation by the garden waste and cemeteries services and from car parking. The Health and Leisure centres had also improved their trading position by a further £104,000.

The summary of the outturn on the Housing Revenue Account also shows an improvement upon the budget by £573,000. Again, both improved income and reduced costs have contributed. There has been a significant underspend against the budget for repairs and maintenance (£309,000 saving) and bad debt charges were £95,000 lower than expected.

With respect to the capital programme, the additional funding of £3.75 million which was approved earlier in the year to provide further housing acquisitions has been partly offset by savings and the rephasing of other expenditure into future years.

The Council's achievements during 2015/16 are set out in Section 3 of the report in a shortened, bullet point and pictorial format to assist their publication.

The Council's performance against the key organisational indicators for 2015/16 is set out in Section 5 of the report, with most indicators, over which this Council has control, having been met. Those indicators which had not been met, for example affordable housing, were largely due to targets being set at an unrealistic level.

The Cabinet welcomed the proactive approach being taken by the Chief Executive and the new senior management structure which was ensuring that the Council continued to provide high quality services to meet the needs of the local community, while achieving the essential savings that must be made against the Council's budgets.

2. MILFORD ON SEA BEACH HUT REPLACEMENT SCHEME (MINUTE 5)

The Cabinet is recommending that there should be linked supplementary budget approvals to allow the implementation of an enhanced scheme for the replacement of

the 119 beach huts at Milford on Sea which were damaged by the storm of 14 February 2014. The beach huts have now been demolished and all materials removed from the site. The slab, which is an important element of the longer term coast protection measures for the area, has also been replaced. The original budget approved on 6 August 2014 (minute 19 refers) was £1,259,070.

Since that time there has been further research to achieve the best option for the future of this area of the coastline at Milford on Sea, and there has also been a thorough public consultation exercise. This established a preferred option, which includes a number of environmental enhancements, in particular using a fully integrated scheme that incorporates an inhabited roof to the terraced beach huts, allowing uninterrupted views across to the Isle of Wight, along with improved access for all users of the area.

The tender process has now been completed and, in order to implement the fully integrated scheme with environmental enhancements, further, linked, budget allocations are required. Full details of the additional work proposed and the consequent financial implications are set out in Section 3 of Report Item 5 considered by the Cabinet.

The Cabinet considers that it is important to take advantage of this once-in-a-generation opportunity to secure a scheme that will benefit the community and the local economy.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) That to enable the contract to be awarded to the most advantageous contractor the following two supplementary capital budgets be approved, together, to achieve the integrated scheme as approved following the public consultation exercise:**
 - (i) Original hut replacement scheme - £170,560; and**
 - (ii) Public and environmental enhancements, following public consultation - £861,271 (allowing an offsetting revenue contribution of £70,000 to the scheme)**

- (b) That authority be given to the Executive Head of Operations to award the contract for the construction of 119 beach huts and associated environmental improvements to the most economically advantageous contractor following the recent tender exercise.**

**Councillor B Rickman
CHAIRMAN**