

20 FEBRUARY 2017

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held in the Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 20 February 2017

* Cllr G C Beck (Chairman)

* Cllr Mrs C V Ward (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 A J Hoare

Councillors:

* Mrs M D Holding
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
* M L White
* C A Wise
* Mrs P A Wyeth

*Present

Officers Attending:

R Jackson, Miss G O'Rourke, C Read, Mrs R Rutins and Ms M Stephens

Apologies:

Cllrs Alvey, Mrs Beeton, Blunden, Dow, Mrs Rostand, Olliff-Cooper, Rippon-Swaine, and Wade.

45 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Ms Bellows in Minute 51, item 4 of the Report of Cabinet dated 1 February 2017.

Cllrs Mrs and B Andrews in Minute 56, Report of the Planning Development Control Committee dated 8 February 2017.

All members of the Council had been granted dispensations to speak and to vote on Minute No. 54, the 2017/18 Council Tax.

47 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman's activities since the last Council meeting had been listed in the latest information bulletin.

Chairman's Charity Dinner

On Saturday 11 February the Chairman had hosted his Charity Dinner at Hoburne Bashley. The event had raised over £3,500 which would go towards the Chairman's chosen charities. The Chairman thanked all those who had attended and officers for their support, in particular Donna Langfield.

The Chairman reminded members that in accordance with the law, recorded votes would be taken under the budget items.

48 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

49 REPORT OF AUDIT COMMITTEE

Cllr O'Sullivan, Chairman of the Audit Committee, presented the report of the meeting held on 27 January 2017.

On the motion that the report be received and the recommendation adopted, it was

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendation be adopted.

50 REPORT OF GENERAL PURPOSES & LICENSING COMMITTEE

Cllr Clarke, Chairman of the General Purposes & Licensing Committee, presented the report of the meeting held on 13 January 2017.

On the motion that the report be received and the recommendations adopted, it was

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendations be adopted.

51 REPORTS OF CABINET

Cllr Ms Bellows disclosed a pecuniary interest in item 4 of the report of the Cabinet dated 1 February, on the grounds that she was a Council tenant. There was no discussion on this item. She did not vote.

The Leader of the Council, as Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the reports of the meetings held on 4 January, 1 February and 20 February 2017.

1 February 2017, Item 2 – Community Grants

Cllr Binns thanked the members of the Community Grants Task & Finish Group and the officers involved for the thorough work they had done in bringing forward recommendations to the Cabinet. The Council now had a robust and transparent grants system.

1 February 2017, Item 3 – The Medium Term Financial Plan and Annual Budget 2017/18

The Chairman moved that Standing Order 47.6 be suspended to allow the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition to exceed the time limit for making their speeches. The motion was seconded and carried.

The Chairman ruled that in accordance with Standing Order 47.11 he would allow more than one amendment to be proposed and discussed at the same time.

The Leader of the Council made the statement on the Administration's proposed budget, attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes.

The Deputy Leader of the Council seconded the recommendation.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group then made the statement attached as Appendix 2 to these minutes.

Members discussed the Cabinet's budget proposals together with the Liberal Democrat Leader's speech.

Some members expressed the view that as the Liberal Democrat Leader had not sought to offer an alternative budget the statements made in his speech could not be substantiated. The budget recommended by the Cabinet ensured that front line Council services would be maintained. The Council would continue to meet corporate priorities, such as delivering affordable housing. The Housing and Communities Portfolio Holder pointed out that this Council was one of only two councils in the country to start a programme of purchasing and building new housing.

The Deputy Leader of the Council expressed the view that the recommended small increase of £3 per week in Council tax for band D properties, would be acceptable to residents as it meant that valued services would continue to be delivered. Other members spoke in support of the budget.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group expressed disappointment that the points raised by him, particularly regarding unnecessary spending by the Council, had not been taken on board.

The Leader of the Council commended the budget to the Council for approval.

A recorded vote was taken on the Cabinet's proposed budget. The outcome was:

Members voting for: 50
Members voting against: 1
Abstentions: 0

Details are shown in Appendix 3 to these minutes.

The motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

That the reports of the Cabinet dated 4 January, 1 February and 20 February 2017 be received and the recommendations be adopted.

52 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22

There were none.

53 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22A

There were none.

54 COUNCIL TAX 2017/2018

All members of the Council had been granted dispensations to speak and to vote on this matter.

The Council considered the Council Tax for 2017/18.

A recorded vote was taken on the recommendation.

The outcome was:

Members voting for: 50
Members voting against: 1
Abstentions 0

Details are shown in Appendix 4 to these minutes.

The motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That it be noted that on 4 January 2017 the Council calculated the Council Tax Base for the year 2017/18:
 - (a) for the whole Council area as 70,155.20 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; and
 - (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates.
2. To calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2017/18 (excluding Parish Precepts) is £11,460,550.
3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2017/18 in accordance with Sections 31A, 31B and 34 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011: -
 - (a) £141,641,781 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
 - (b) £124,712,010 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
 - (c) £16,929,771 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B(1) of the Act).
 - (d) £241.32 being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by the Council Tax Base, Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
 - (e) £5,469,221 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
 - (f) £163.36 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (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 specifically for the District Council. There are no non-parished areas.

(g)

LOCAL COUNCIL AREA

£

ASHURST & COLBURY	197.52
BEAULIEU	179.01
BOLDRE	187.88
BRAMSHAW	182.94
BRANGORE	216.14
BREAMORE	187.64
BROCKENHURST	205.85
BURLEY	180.62
COPYTHORNE	177.44
DAMERHAM	201.12
DENNY LODGE	198.10
EAST BOLDRE	202.60
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY	195.02
EXBURY & LEPE	163.36
FAWLEY	276.65
FORDINGBRIDGE	249.82
GODSHILL	210.18
HALE	200.12
HORDLE	204.79
HYDE	181.53
HYTHE & DIBDEN	257.75
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	263.83
LYNDHURST	214.59
MARCHWOOD	275.59
MARTIN	193.09
MILFORD-ON-SEA	198.86
MINSTEAD	190.64
NETLEY MARSH	184.45
NEW MILTON	232.24
RINGWOOD	252.96
ROCKBOURNE	238.98
SANDLEHEATH	188.89
SOPLEY	235.01
SWAY	198.86
TOTTON & ELING	288.77
WHITSBURY	181.09
WOODGREEN	193.16

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 3(f) 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.

(h) These are the District plus Town/Parish Council elements only. See below for the full amounts of Council Tax.

LOCAL COUNCIL AREA	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
ASHURST & COLBURY	131.68	153.63	175.57	197.52	241.41	285.31	329.20	395.04
BEAULIEU	119.34	139.23	159.11	179.01	218.79	258.57	298.35	358.02
BOLDRE	125.25	146.13	167.00	187.88	229.63	271.38	313.13	375.76
BRAMSHAW	121.96	142.29	162.61	182.94	223.59	264.25	304.90	365.88
BRANSGORE	144.09	168.11	192.12	216.14	264.17	312.20	360.23	432.28
BREAMORE	125.09	145.95	166.78	187.64	229.33	271.04	312.73	375.28
BROCKENHURST	137.23	160.11	182.97	205.85	251.59	297.34	343.08	411.70
BURLEY	120.41	140.49	160.54	180.62	220.75	260.90	301.03	361.24
COPYTHORNE	118.29	138.01	157.72	177.44	216.87	256.30	295.73	354.88
DAMERHAM	134.08	156.43	178.77	201.12	245.81	290.51	335.20	402.24
DENNY LODGE	132.06	154.08	176.08	198.10	242.12	286.15	330.16	396.20
EAST BOLDRE	135.06	157.58	180.08	202.60	247.62	292.65	337.66	405.20
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY	130.01	151.69	173.34	195.02	238.35	281.70	325.03	390.04
EXBURY & LEPE	108.90	127.06	145.20	163.36	199.66	235.97	272.26	326.72
FAWLEY	184.43	215.18	245.90	276.65	338.12	399.61	461.08	553.30
FORDINGBRIDGE	166.54	194.31	222.05	249.82	305.33	360.85	416.36	499.64
GODSHILL	140.12	163.48	186.82	210.18	256.88	303.59	350.30	420.36
HALE	133.41	155.65	177.88	200.12	244.59	289.06	333.53	400.24
HORDLE	136.52	159.29	182.03	204.79	250.29	295.81	341.31	409.58
HYDE	121.02	141.19	161.35	181.53	221.87	262.21	302.55	363.06
HYTHE & DIBDEN	171.83	200.48	229.10	257.75	315.02	372.31	429.58	515.50
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	175.88	205.21	234.51	263.83	322.45	381.09	439.71	527.66
LYNDHURST	143.06	166.91	190.74	214.59	262.27	309.96	357.65	429.18
MARCHWOOD	183.72	214.35	244.96	275.59	336.83	398.08	459.31	551.18
MARTIN	128.72	150.19	171.63	193.09	235.99	278.91	321.81	386.18
MILFORD-ON-SEA	132.57	154.67	176.76	198.86	243.05	287.24	331.43	397.72
MINSTEAD	127.09	148.28	169.45	190.64	233.00	275.37	317.73	381.28
NETLEY MARSH	122.96	143.47	163.95	184.45	225.43	266.43	307.41	368.90
NEW MILTON	154.82	180.64	206.43	232.24	283.84	335.46	387.06	464.48
RINGWOOD	168.64	196.75	224.85	252.96	309.17	365.39	421.60	505.92
ROCKBOURNE	159.32	185.88	212.42	238.98	292.08	345.19	398.30	477.96
SANDLEHEATH	125.92	146.92	167.89	188.89	230.86	272.84	314.81	377.78
SOPLEY	156.67	182.79	208.89	235.01	287.23	339.46	391.68	470.02
SWAY	132.57	154.67	176.76	198.86	243.05	287.24	331.43	397.72
TOTTON & ELING	192.51	224.60	256.68	288.77	352.94	417.11	481.28	577.54
WHITSBURY	120.72	140.85	160.96	181.09	221.33	261.58	301.81	362.18
WOODGREEN	128.77	150.24	171.69	193.16	236.08	279.01	321.93	386.32

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3(g) 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.

4. That it be noted that Hampshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority have issued precepts for 2017/18 to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated below:

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL	755.40	881.30	1,007.20	1,133.10	1,384.90	1,636.70	1,888.50	2,266.20
POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR HAMPSHIRE AUTHORITY	110.31	128.69	147.08	165.46	202.23	239.00	275.77	330.92
HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY	42.56	49.65	56.75	63.84	78.03	92.21	106.40	127.68
	908.27	1,059.64	1,211.03	1,362.40	1,665.16	1,967.91	2,270.67	2,724.80

5. That the Section 151 Officer be given delegated authority to implement any variation to the overall level of Council Tax arising from the final notification of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority precept.
6. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3(h) and 4 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011), hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2017/18 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings shown on the next page:-

LOCAL COUNCIL AREA	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
ASHURST & COLBURY	1,039.95	1,213.27	1,386.60	1,559.92	1,906.57	2,253.22	2,599.87	3,119.84
BEAULIEU	1,027.61	1,198.87	1,370.14	1,541.41	1,883.95	2,226.48	2,569.02	3,082.82
BOLDRE	1,033.52	1,205.77	1,378.03	1,550.28	1,894.79	2,239.29	2,583.80	3,100.56
BRAMSHAW	1,030.23	1,201.93	1,373.64	1,545.34	1,888.75	2,232.16	2,575.57	3,090.68
BRANSGORE	1,052.36	1,227.75	1,403.15	1,578.54	1,929.33	2,280.11	2,630.90	3,157.08
BREAMORE	1,033.36	1,205.59	1,377.81	1,550.04	1,894.49	2,238.95	2,583.40	3,100.08
BROCKENHURST	1,045.50	1,219.75	1,394.00	1,568.25	1,916.75	2,265.25	2,613.75	3,136.50
BURLEY	1,028.68	1,200.13	1,371.57	1,543.02	1,885.91	2,228.81	2,571.70	3,086.04
COPYTHORNE	1,026.56	1,197.65	1,368.75	1,539.84	1,882.03	2,224.21	2,566.40	3,079.68
DAMERHAM	1,042.35	1,216.07	1,389.80	1,563.52	1,910.97	2,258.42	2,605.87	3,127.04
DENNY LODGE	1,040.33	1,213.72	1,387.11	1,560.50	1,907.28	2,254.06	2,600.83	3,121.00
EAST BOLDRE	1,043.33	1,217.22	1,391.11	1,565.00	1,912.78	2,260.56	2,608.33	3,130.00
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY	1,038.28	1,211.33	1,384.37	1,557.42	1,903.51	2,249.61	2,595.70	3,114.84
EXBURY & LEPE	1,017.17	1,186.70	1,356.23	1,525.76	1,864.82	2,203.88	2,542.93	3,051.52
FAWLEY	1,092.70	1,274.82	1,456.93	1,639.05	2,003.28	2,367.52	2,731.75	3,278.10
FORDINGBRIDGE	1,074.81	1,253.95	1,433.08	1,612.22	1,970.49	2,328.76	2,687.03	3,224.44
GODSHILL	1,048.39	1,223.12	1,397.85	1,572.58	1,922.04	2,271.50	2,620.97	3,145.16
HALE	1,041.68	1,215.29	1,388.91	1,562.52	1,909.75	2,256.97	2,604.20	3,125.04
HORDLE	1,044.79	1,218.93	1,393.06	1,567.19	1,915.45	2,263.72	2,611.98	3,134.38
HYDE	1,029.29	1,200.83	1,372.38	1,543.93	1,887.03	2,230.12	2,573.22	3,087.86
HYTHE & DIBDEN	1,080.10	1,260.12	1,440.13	1,620.15	1,980.18	2,340.22	2,700.25	3,240.30
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	1,084.15	1,264.85	1,445.54	1,626.23	1,987.61	2,349.00	2,710.38	3,252.46
LYNDHURST	1,051.33	1,226.55	1,401.77	1,576.99	1,927.43	2,277.87	2,628.32	3,153.98
MARCHWOOD	1,091.99	1,273.99	1,455.99	1,637.99	2,001.99	2,365.99	2,729.98	3,275.98
MARTIN	1,036.99	1,209.83	1,382.66	1,555.49	1,901.15	2,246.82	2,592.48	3,110.98
MILFORD-ON-SEA	1,040.84	1,214.31	1,387.79	1,561.26	1,908.21	2,255.15	2,602.10	3,122.52
MINSTEAD	1,035.36	1,207.92	1,380.48	1,553.04	1,898.16	2,243.28	2,588.40	3,106.08
NETLEY MARSH	1,031.23	1,203.11	1,374.98	1,546.85	1,890.59	2,234.34	2,578.08	3,093.70
NEW MILTON	1,063.09	1,240.28	1,417.46	1,594.64	1,949.00	2,303.37	2,657.73	3,189.28
RINGWOOD	1,076.91	1,256.39	1,435.88	1,615.36	1,974.33	2,333.30	2,692.27	3,230.72
ROCKBOURNE	1,067.59	1,245.52	1,423.45	1,601.38	1,957.24	2,313.10	2,668.97	3,202.76
SANDLEHEATH	1,034.19	1,206.56	1,378.92	1,551.29	1,896.02	2,240.75	2,585.48	3,102.58
SOPLEY	1,064.94	1,242.43	1,419.92	1,597.41	1,952.39	2,307.37	2,662.35	3,194.82
SWAY	1,040.84	1,214.31	1,387.79	1,561.26	1,908.21	2,255.15	2,602.10	3,122.52
TOTTON & ELING	1,100.78	1,284.24	1,467.71	1,651.17	2,018.10	2,385.02	2,751.95	3,302.34
WHITSBURY	1,028.99	1,200.49	1,371.99	1,543.49	1,886.49	2,229.49	2,572.48	3,086.98
WOODGREEN	1,037.04	1,209.88	1,382.72	1,555.56	1,901.24	2,246.92	2,592.60	3,111.12

55 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

RESOLVED:

- (a) That it be noted that Cllr Frampton has resigned from the Planning Development Control Committee and that the vacancy would be filled at a later date; and
- (b) That Cllrs M Harris, Mrs Holding, Rickman and Steele be appointed as the Employers' Side representatives on the Employee Engagement Panel, with Cllrs E Heron, J Heron, Mrs Crisell and J Ward as substitutes.

56 ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

RESOLVED:

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and the Press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 & 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act and the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

The Council considered a confidential report of the Planning Development Control Committee dated 8 February 2017 for which there is a confidential minute.

CHAIRMAN

Attachments: Appendices 1-4

Leader of the Council – Budget Speech - 20 February 2017

“Delivering our Promises – Securing a better future for the New Forest”

In May 2015 New Forest residents showed their trust in the conservative administration of New Forest. Last year I highlighted that we had many challenges to face and many changes were needed. I urged all councillors long standing or newly elected to observe our manifesto and its pledges in conjunction with the corporate plan as we go forward. As I set out our budget for 2017 -2018 I will give you a mid-term report of how I think we are doing.

We recognised that to secure a better future for the New Forest we needed to **support local businesses to grow and prosper**. At the New Forest and Hampshire County Show we showcased our help to local business answering questions on Business start-ups, planning questions, broadband enquiries and social media advice - just some of the ways the Council supports New Forest business. The Countess of Wessex and members of the eM3 Local Enterprise Partnership were our highest profile visitors among hundreds that visited our stand.

Our partnership with Creative England which utilises the many natural attributes of the New Forest has generated in its first few months an estimated £80,000 for the local economy.

The successful New Forest Expo held at Brockenhurst College also served to highlight both the strength of local business and our partnership with the New Forest Business Partnership. At the Expo 80 local businesses were able to showcase their products and services. Following this success the business partnership will be following this up in 2017 again at Brockenhurst.

The eleventh annual New Forest Brilliance in Business Awards was another success with seven local businesses highlighted with awards, presented by Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, President of the New Forest Business Partnership. Congratulations also to Hythe for becoming village of the year 2017. I would like to thank Mathew Lawson for all his work as Chairman of the Business Partnership.

I am committed to ensuring support to local businesses both large and small as a priority.

We need to invest in the next generation of our workforce and I am pleased that since 2010 we have recruited 30 apprentices of which 5 have gone on to gain employment with the Council, 4 have undertaken further apprenticeships and others have found employment outside of the council.

Last year I talked about the fiscal challenges we faced and the changes we needed to make in order to **keep Council Tax as low as possible**. We again face further significant reductions in government funding and the government is looking to us to increase Council Tax by £5 at Band D, an increase of 3.2%. (Band D £163.36 -2017/18)

In maintaining our good housekeeping we will ensure we deliver a balanced budget and live within our means. We have overseen the slim down of our senior management structure which is now completed and working well. We will continue to improve the management of the Council's resources to help make us less reliant on government grant. We have done this by looking at all we do and funding what is important to our community, protecting existing revenue streams and identifying new areas that could increase our annual revenue.

This approach has led us to review our contribution to the visitor destination. The establishment of a new company driven by local business with some initial support from us.

This will provide support for the visitor economy of the New Forest and when the Company is fully up and running save the taxpayer £140,000 per annum. It is both a good deal for business and for the taxpayer.

Our investment in rebuilding the beach huts at Milford on Sea will provide a new improved facility to beach hut owners, enhance the protection to our coastline and deliver annual revenue of £44,000, a return of 4.4% on the net beach hut investment. In addition the extra work we have carried out to the promenade will enhance the amenity for all visitors to Milford.

Looking ahead we will continue to both support our local economy and increase annual revenue with our new Asset Investment Strategy. This we will approach in a prudent and sensible manner. These are not easy decisions to take but we have taken these brave steps to ensure we **maintain and improve frontline services**.

We made a commitment to provide more affordable homes and this month we will be delivering 21 newly built council homes at New Milton. We will be looking very closely at the recently published Housing White Paper to identify opportunities for providing more and affordable homes.

Our special environment means that we have to work hard to protect it and we welcome new powers we have received that will enable us to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for fly tipping. We will not hesitate in protecting our special environment.

We recognise that many of our residents are vulnerable so we have continued to develop our community alarm service "Appletree Careline". To improve the service we launched a new wristband service, which quickly gets help to an individual when it is needed. In our review of Community Grants we agreed to give New Forest Disability Information Service an increase in their grant of £7,500.

We have obtained planning permission to provide a much needed new cemetery on the former military base at Calshot.

Keeping weekly rubbish and recycling collections unchanged is important to us. This key service we are continually looking to improve and as we promised there are no plans to change the method, black and clear sacks. We recently launched Remind Me, a text messaging service which reminds residents to put their glass out the evening before collection is due. Within the first two weeks we had almost 10,000 residents sign up for this service.

I am pleased to report that in February 2017 we reached an all-time high in our Health and Leisure Centre membership, 7,616 members. We will continue to invest in our centres Totton and Lymington benefited from new equipment, last year and we have plans to refurbish Ringwood 2017.

We will continue to deliver on our commitment to provide good frontline services that our residents want. We are not afraid to make changes and look at new ways of working in order to deliver better services for our community.

Looking ahead reviewing our local plan is a key action of 2017-18. The need for more housing is a serious and difficult challenge for our community within our special environment. The challenge we face is how we locally respond to a national shortage. I believe we will in the future see more housing and development. What we have to ensure is that we **listen to our local residents** and deliver what is both needed and acceptable to the New Forest. In all cases we will try to influence outcomes that residents want.

A good example of how we are prepared to listen and improve services is in the building of two new Public Conveniences with “Changing places” facilities. One of our residents Sarah Brisdion, has a son Hadley who has Cerebral Palsy. She had been campaigning for improved facilities. We made contact with her and took note of the special requirements of her son in designing the new facilities as a result they are fully accessible for Hadley. The Council is now named as one of Hadley’s Heroes for its response to her campaign.

We recognise that we are part of our community and we need **to work with partners** and engage with our local communities to deliver good outcomes for the New Forest. Throughout the year we have recognised that we are part of our community.

Engaging with future generations is in particular a highlight for me in my role and visits from young students to the Council chamber to learn about democracy and how the council works are important engagements for the Council. . The young people also provided comments and perspectives on the Council that we can learn from.

The Volunteers evening was a great success and showcased the work of many in our community. I would like to thank the Chairman of the Council for his efforts in instigating this event and I hope we build on it in future years.

The success of the military parade to mark the granting of the Freedom of the New Forest District to the 17 Port & Maritime Regiment, Royal Logistics Corps was one of many events where we successfully engaged with our local community.

I mentioned the Chairman of the Council earlier and I would like to thank him for his work in promoting the Council and also thank the staff of the Council, many of whom contribute in ways beyond their council role. I was impressed with Totton Health and Leisure Centre staff who raised more than £15,000 for four local charities with a big indoor cycling event.

I would also like to highlight Jake Hoy, one of our Health and Leisure lifeguards who was shortlisted for an award by the Royal Life Saving Society, a drowning prevention charity, in recognition of his outstanding contribution.

During the last year the future of the District council has come under much scrutiny with long drawn out discussions on devolution. The Council has taken an active role working closely with neighbouring local authorities. We shared in a joint piece of work undertaken by Price Waterhouse Cooper to help us better understand options. Over the last year mine and the Chief Executive’s time spent on trying to find a sensible and acceptable workable solution was considerable. To date this has come to nothing, but we remain very much engaged in the development of the discussion. We have watched closely the discussion in Dorset on Local Government Reorganisation and we await with interest that outcome.

During all of these discussions our approach was to assess the benefit to our community of any change in arrangement. We remain open to support any action which brings clear benefit to our community. During these discussions which at times were difficult we maintained good relationships with all councils.

The Council has a good track record of working with neighbouring Council’s. With Hampshire County Council we together delivered the successful Ringwood Gateway. We currently undertake on their behalf work under the Highways Agency, together with highways grass cutting. We are part of the Countywide Waste Partnership (Project Integra). We share our Treasury Management service with them giving us the benefits derived from their scale and broader knowledge base. We work very closely with them on the Supporting Troubled Families programme which brings benefits to their care service and our housing and housing

benefits service. We work very well with the Police, Fire and Rescue Services and other local bodies in the delivery of our Community Safety Partnership. We share our Internal Audit Service with Christchurch, East Dorset and Purbeck. We share some of our Planning Services with the National Park. We work closely with and support our 37 Town and Parish Councils on areas of common interest, e.g. tree maintenance contract.

Looking to the future we see the potential for greater working together with neighbouring councils and partners in order to deliver improved outcomes for our community.

For now the role of the district council is as it always has been to carry on delivering good services like collecting your rubbish and recycling, administering planning, managing council housing, providing housing advice and homelessness prevention, maintaining public toilets, supporting CCTV in towns and villages, operating cemeteries, caring for the coastline, keeping our streets clean and grass cut, administering taxi licencing, monitoring air quality, running electoral registration, recovering stray dogs, controlling food hygiene, maintaining trees, providing community and leisure services, and offering pest control services. Next year we will do all this and more for £3.14 per week (Band D).

We intend to get on with this job and deliver what I believe to be good value for money for our community.

I said at the beginning, I would use this Budget Speech as a mid term report on how we are doing on what we set out in our manifesto.

My report conclusion is that we are delivering on our promises and securing a better future for the New Forest.

My grateful thanks to all councillors, staff, cabinet members and our chief executive in getting us to this point. I commend the Budget to you.

Liberal Democrat Leader - Budget Speech - 20 February 2017

Chairman,

I wanted to start on a point of agreement. It's to express my thanks and appreciation to all the officers and staff of the Council for all the hard work they have undertaken during the year. I am sure other members will have experienced what I have done. Whenever I have referred something to them, whether it is a housing issue, a waste collection problem or a problem with my I.T. equipment, I have always been impressed by a very professional, responsive and courteous response.

I am more aware than most that this has been a difficult and challenging time for the workforce and I of course include, in my thanks, recognition to those who are no longer with the Council.

And now to the budget. Chairman, I have only two main issues with the budget that you have produced this year....

It's all the things you are doing,

And it's all the things you are not doing!

So let's remind ourselves of what you are setting out to achieve in your budget setting process.

First of all, I hope at least some members will agree with me that it's a crazy system, a Tory system, that says a referendum is needed if you want to raise the council tax beyond a set limit. We all know that referendums are expensive and some of us don't like the outcomes, but the worst thing about this particular Tory straight jacket is that it takes away local accountability for deciding what people are prepared to pay for the services that are delivered locally.

The experience has been, up and down the country, that local authorities have not held referendums, they have restricted council tax increases, often within a tissue thickness of what they can get away with and sacrificed public services.

If the government really understood devolution it would give the freedom for Councils to determine council tax rates and the accountability for their decisions would come from the ballot box – not central control of a type that Karl Marx would be proud of!

As if this was not bad enough, you Conservatives are exercising rigid, inflexible, control over a few thousand pounds worth of council tax, whilst at the same time, taking out a £30 million loan of public money.

£30 million Chairman.... spending taxpayer's money without a referendum, without even asking them whether they thought this was a wise idea. It's your cunning plan, designed to save public services. It's an unnecessary risk with no Plan B if the investments don't perform as you hope they will. Is this prudent? I don't think so. Is it a more secure way of making sure that we have public services in 5 years, ten years or 50 years time? I don't think so.

The best way to secure public services is to raise council tax to the levels people are prepared to pay. We don't want to be operating on a wing and prayer, hoping that investments will perform well so that we can collect household waste. I can't believe that all members support this and I hope they aren't keeping quiet in order not to rock the boat and put party interests above what's right for the residents of the New Forest.

I touched on devolution. Sometimes I express opinions, hoping that I am going to be wrong. Sadly that rarely happens. I seem to be a bit of a mystic meg.

When you Conservatives started the ball rolling, talking up the possibilities of devolution, I stood in this Chamber and encouraged you not to spend time, effort and money into this enterprise. I knew, for example, that what was being proposed was not devolution – as most people would understand it – it was really about a local government reorganisation, carving up Hampshire and creating a new tier of government, with an elected Mayor.

I said, did I not, that there was no appetite amongst the public for these proposals and I directly opposed all of the effort and expense, again taxpayer's money being spent on the issue. It's been calculated that the total expenditure by all local authorities in Hampshire, dealing with the devolution issue amounts to £500,000. That's £500,000 of taxpayer's money and where has it got us ? All it seems to have achieved is bad feelings between different authorities, just at a time when we owe it to the public to be working ever more closely together.

I deeply regret that it has taken so much the valuable time of our Chief Executive and his Senior management team. I want him to be entirely focused on doing the best he can for the residents of the New Forest. I have heard it said that devolution in Hampshire is a dead duck, I think it's more like a dead albatross hanging across the neck of Tory Council leaders and I won't easily allow you to forget it.

Now another thing... beach huts. 2016 will go down in history as the year in which you managed to surpass yourselves with your national fame, including a mention in Private Eye's Rotten Boroughs Section, the £300,000 loss of taxpayer's money on the slippery floors case. I honestly thought that that was going to be the high water mark of Tory stupidity, but you have proved me wrong.

Where and when, pray tell me, was the provision of swanky new beach huts, costing £1.2 million more than they need to, elevated to a council corporate priority?

How on earth, did you get yourselves sucked into approving and signing off such a scheme? Are there any members who think that spending over a million pounds on beach huts is more important than keeping our recycling facilities, for example. You have decided to close no less than 80 mini recycling sites that benefit people from all over the District, in order to save a few thousand pounds whilst spending all this money on beach huts.

It's priceless, it's also beyond my understanding that you have sought to justify the expenditure on the basis that it's a coastal flooding protection scheme. You have demonstrated that you have the same level of judgement as King Canute!

So.... that's some of the things you have achieved... now let's look at what you aren't doing

Still another year with no action to help those people who have lost a bus service. Other District and Boroughs recognise the importance of providing a subsidy to keep bus services running, not this one. Who suffers the most, older and more vulnerable people, many of whom used to enjoy an Age Concern luncheon club before you take the funding for that away.

Recycling – where are the initiatives aimed at improving recycling rates in the District. Your performance is dismal. The actions you have taken are all going in the opposite direction, making it more difficult for people to recycle. It will mean your rates will go down further and there will be increased instances of fly-tipping all around the area, including in our much loved National Park.

Housing – another year of pathetic performance providing any realistic scale of affordable housing in the area. It comes to something when we ask the Comms team here to make a big thing of the District delivering a handful of council houses. We still have a waiting list of some 5000 people. We still have far too many people in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. We still have too many people in housing that does not meet their needs. It a consistent record of failure.

And thank goodness for the National Park Authority. Your latest money saving wheeze, withdrawing funding for the Visitor Information Service to 130,000 tourists who visit the centre each year would have been a disaster. I am so pleased that despite being put into this position and not having the benefit of all the hundreds of thousands of pounds of car park income that the District Council enjoys, the Park Authority responded positively and rescued the situation. I think we owe them a debt of gratitude.

Last year, was the year that the District Council washed its' hands, shirking responsibility for running a tourism service. It begs the question.... what next?

If you have the inclination to withdraw from direct delivery of services and contracting things out to the commercial or the third sector, then it's perfectly possible to do so. But how long before people start asking what's the point of even having a District Council.

I am very pleased that you picked up a theme I first introduced a few years ago, looking at whether we really need so many Councillors, especially having downsized the workforce so much. The sensible things that Tories do are often those that were first suggested by the Lib Dems. We are a small group, at the moment, but thank goodness we are here, as an effective opposition. It needs someone to highlight your gross inadequacies and misjudgements.

No budget today from the Lib Dems, but our time will come!

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Minute Item 51

APPENDIX 3

RECORDED VOTE MINUTE NO. 51 –ITEM 3 OF THE REPORT OF THE CABINET DATED 1 FEBRUARY 2017

Votes For		Votes Against	Abstentions
Cllr Mrs Andrews	Cllr Mrs Holding	Cllr Harrison	
Cllr Andrews	Cllr Kendal		
Cllr Armstrong	Cllr Mrs Lane		
Cllr Beck	Cllr Mrs Lovelace		
Cllr Ms Bellows	Cllr Lucas		
Cllr Mrs Bennison	Cllr Mrs McEvoy		
Cllr Binns	Cllr O'Sullivan		
Cllr Britton	Cllr Penman		
Cllr Mrs Brooks	Cllr Penson		
Cllr Carpenter	Cllr Poole		
Cllr Mrs Cerasoli	Cllr Puttock		
Cllr Clarke	Cllr Rickman		
Cllr Mrs Cleary	Cllr Russell		
Cllr Coombes	Cllr Ms Sevier		
Cllr Ms Crisell	Cllr Steele		
Cllr Davies	Cllr Thierry		
Cllr Davis	Cllr Mrs Thorne		
Cllr Ms Ford	Cllr Tipp		
Cllr Frampton	Cllr Tungate		
Cllr Glass	Cllr Wappet		
Cllr L Harris	Cllr Mrs Ward		
Cllr M Harris	Cllr Ward		
Cllr E Heron	Cllr White		
Cllr J Heron	Cllr Wise		
Cllr Mrs Hoare	Cllr Mrs Wyeth		

Total:

50

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APPENDIX 4

RECORDED VOTE MINUTE NO. 54 - THE 2017/18 COUNCIL TAX

Votes For		Votes Against	Abstentions
Cllr Mrs Andrews	Cllr Mrs Holding	Cllr Harrison	
Cllr Andrews	Cllr Kendal		
Cllr Armstrong	Cllr Mrs Lane		
Cllr Beck	Cllr Mrs Lovelace		
Cllr Ms Bellows	Cllr Lucas		
Cllr Mrs Bennison	Cllr Mrs McEvoy		
Cllr Binns	Cllr O'Sullivan		
Cllr Britton	Cllr Penman		
Cllr Mrs Brooks	Cllr Penson		
Cllr Carpenter	Cllr Poole		
Cllr Mrs Cerasoli	Cllr Puttock		
Cllr Clarke	Cllr Rickman		
Cllr Mrs Cleary	Cllr Russell		
Cllr Coombes	Cllr Ms Sevier		
Cllr Ms Crisell	Cllr Steele		
Cllr Davies	Cllr Thierry		
Cllr Davis	Cllr Mrs Thorne		
Cllr Ms Ford	Cllr Tipp		
Cllr Frampton	Cllr Tungate		
Cllr Glass	Cllr Wappet		
Cllr L Harris	Cllr Mrs Ward		
Cllr M Harris	Cllr Ward		
Cllr E Heron	Cllr White		
Cllr J Heron	Cllr Wise		
Cllr Mrs Hoare	Cllr Mrs Wyeth		

Total:

50

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