

**7 DECEMBER 2016**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 7 December 2016

- \* Cllr B Rickman (Chairman)
- \* Cllr E J Heron (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

Mrs S V Beeton  
\* J E Binns

**Councillors:**

\* Mrs J L Cleary  
\* J D Heron

\*Present

**In attendance:**

**Councillors:**

Mrs D E Andrews  
W G Andrews  
P J Armstrong  
G C Beck  
Mrs S M Bennison  
G R Blunden  
S J Clarke  
Ms K V Crisell  
S P Davies  
A H G Davis  
Ms L C Ford  
R L Frampton  
A T Glass

**Councillors:**

L E Harris  
M R Harris  
Mrs A J Hoare  
Mrs A E McEvoy  
A K Penson  
D M S Poole  
Mrs A M Rostand  
Miss A Sevier  
D B Tipp  
Mrs C V Ward  
M L White  
C A Wise

**Officers Attending:**

R Jackson, C Elliott, Miss G O'Rourke, C Read, Mrs M Sandhu, A Bethune, Miss J Debnam, Mrs L Evans, Mr R Stevens and Mrs K Williams

**Apologies:**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Beeton.

**36 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**38 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No issues were raised in the public participation period.

**39 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW UPDATE**

The meeting had been preceded by a presentation by the Chief Executive which allowed the background to the report before the Cabinet to be evaluated in greater detail.

The Cabinet was advised of the latest position with respect to the exploration of options for the potential devolution of powers from central government to local authorities in Hampshire. Following the failure to reach an agreement among all the local authorities in Hampshire to secure a Hampshire-wide bid, various other options had been considered. A bid had been submitted by the Solent authorities, but to date there had been no indication whether this had been successful. The County Council had undertaken a consultation on the possibility of establishing a Hampshire-wide Unitary Authority, which could then take on devolved powers, but there had been no appetite for such an arrangement amongst the responders. The County Council had consequently decided that there was no merit in pursuing this option, but would revisit this stance should any other bids seek to change the current structures in the County.

This Council, together with 5 other local authorities, collectively known as the "Heart of Hampshire" authorities, had commissioned independent research into potential options for the future. The executive summary of this report was set out in Appendix 2 to Report Item 4 considered by the Cabinet, and the full report, together with the Government's Autumn Statement and the County Council's consultation response had been made available for inspection through the Council's website.

The Government's Autumn Statement had made no reference to the devolution of powers. The future direction of Government policy therefore remained unclear. The Statement had however confirmed that the current financial constraints would continue, including the 4 year funding agreement that had already been agreed and incorporated into this Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. The Government had announced initiatives that would affect local communities including a new National Productivity Investment Fund with an emphasis on increasing the overall housing supply and investment in broadband; additional Business Rate reliefs; and funding for Local Enterprise Partnerships.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the following be noted:
  - (i) the update provided on the Autumn Statement 2016;
  - (ii) that there is no change required to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2017 to 2020 arising from the Autumn Statement;
  - (iii) the recommendations taken by the County Council's Cabinet (Appendix A to Report Item 4 considered by the Cabinet) in response to their recent consultation with residents and business across Hampshire;

- (iv) the information set out within the reports produced by Price Waterhouse Cooper
  - (v) that there was no announcement of a devolution deal for the Solent area within the Autumn Statement; and
  - (vi) the information set out within the reports of Price Waterhouse Cooper's independent assessment on "devolution and the future of local government"
- (b) That the following actions be supported:
- (i) to work with Councils in Hampshire on a solution that brings significant tangible benefits to residents and businesses; and
  - (ii) to ensure that the local voice and local choice of the New Forest is represented and reflected in any developments both now and in the future.

#### **40 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

The Cabinet considered whether this Council should continue to operate a traffic management agency agreement with the County Council.

Over recent months the terms of the proposed future traffic management agency agreement had changed to allow greater flexibility. In particular, although the County Council would only fund traffic management schemes that met their own objective or casualty reduction, they would now allow other schemes, such as waiting restrictions and signs, provided they were funded locally. The funding from the County Council would still be significantly reduced by 2018/19, but a number of ways of closing the budget gap had now been identified, as set out in Report Item 5 considered by the Cabinet, including an allowed increase in the fee charged for temporary road closures, which were largely for the benefit of utilities.

The Cabinet balanced carefully the relative merits of continuing the traffic management agency against the costs, including significant redundancy costs, associated with terminating the agreement. Members referred to the local traffic management liaison meetings, which had been valued locally and effective in delivering much wanted schemes. They hoped that equivalent liaison arrangements would be reinstated.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the County Council be advised that this Council wish to renew the traffic management agency from 1 April 2017 on the basis of the information contained in the County Council's decision of its Executive Member for Environment and Transport, "Highways Development Control Agency Arrangements and Traffic Management Agency Arrangements Update", dated 15 September 2016.

#### **41 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME**

In the light of the recommendations of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the Cabinet considered the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, to be applied to those of working age on low income. The Panel had established a Working Group to evaluate options in detail.

It had been concluded that there should only be relatively minor adjustments to the current scheme. The minimum contribution should remain unchanged at 10%.

Many of the claimants were under increasing pressure from other welfare reforms and raising the minimum contribution could therefore be counterproductive. The changes that were proposed were largely to mirror those to other benefits and would consequently maintain consistency and reduce confusion. In addition, to address the needs of the most vulnerable households, it was proposed to establish a Hardship Fund, which would be at least part funded by the proceeds from a new Prosecution and Penalties policy that was currently under development.

**RESOLVED:**

That, in so far as it is empowered to do so by law, the Cabinet agrees that the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme be amended with effect on 1 April 2017 as follows:

- (i) To remove the Work Related Activity Component in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction for new claims;
- (ii) To limit the number of dependent children within the calculation for Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of 2 for new claims and entitlements;
- (iii) To remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carer Element) to look after them;
- (iv) To use the gross Universal Credit payment as income in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction;
- (v) To award council tax reduction if there is an active Housing Benefit claim or for a period up to 6 months following nil entitlement to Universal Credit, without the need to make a new application; and
- (vi) To establish a Hardship Fund to assist those suffering exceptional financial hardship.

**RECOMMENDED:**

***That, in so far as it is empowered to do so by law, the Council agrees that the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme be amended with effect on 1 April 2017 as follows:***

- (i) ***To remove the Work Related Activity Component in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction for new claims;***
- (ii) ***To limit the number of dependent children within the calculation for Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of 2 for new claims and entitlements;***
- (iii) ***To remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carer Element) to look after them;***
- (iv) ***To use the gross Universal Credit payment as income in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction;***
- (v) ***To award council tax reduction if there is an active Housing Benefit claim or for a period up to 6 months following nil entitlement to Universal Credit, without the need to make a new application; and***

- (vi) *To establish a Hardship Fund to assist those suffering exceptional financial hardship*

#### 42 THE COUNCIL TAX BASE 2017-18

The Cabinet considered the Tax Base for 2017/18, which was an important step in setting the Council Tax payable for that period. The factors taken into account in the calculation of the tax base were set out in Report Item 7 to the Cabinet and a summary of the tax base in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17 was attached as Appendix 3 to that report.

A prudent approach continued to be taken to forecasting the tax base, which was expected to increase slightly in 2016/17. The calculation also took a realistic view of the likely collection rate. It was important the tax base was not overstated as any shortfall would result in interest costs falling on the Council's General Fund.

#### RESOLVED:

That, in so far as it is empowered to do so by law, the Cabinet agrees that:

- (a) The calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2017/18 be approved; and
- (b) Pursuant to Report item 7 considered by the Cabinet and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by this Council as its council tax base for the year 2017/18 be as follows and as detailed in Appendix 1 to that report.

| PARISH/TOWN                   | TAXBASE 17/18 |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Ashurst & Colbury             | 922.7         |
| Beaulieu                      | 511.2         |
| Boldre                        | 1062.4        |
| Bramshaw                      | 344.8         |
| Bransgore                     | 1816.9        |
| Breamore                      | 181.2         |
| Brockenhurst                  | 1865.8        |
| Burley                        | 780.4         |
| Copythorne                    | 1211.5        |
| Damerham                      | 231.7         |
| Denny Lodge                   | 152.1         |
| East Boldre                   | 382.3         |
| Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley | 605.7         |
| Exbury & Lepe                 | 112.9         |
| Fawley                        | 4534.6        |
| Fordingbridge                 | 2251.5        |
| Godshill                      | 224.7         |
| Hale                          | 260.6         |
| Hordle                        | 2395          |
| Hyde                          | 522.8         |
| Hythe & Dibden                | 7360.1        |
| Lymington & Pennington        | 7045.5        |
| Lyndhurst                     | 1444.4        |

|                       |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Marchwood             | 2056         |
| Martin                | 197.6        |
| Milford on Sea        | 2787.8       |
| Minstead              | 366.6        |
| Netley Marsh          | 814.9        |
| New Milton            | 10388.1      |
| Ringwood              | 5225.7       |
| Rockbourne            | 163.1        |
| Sandleheath           | 282.6        |
| Sopley                | 293.1        |
| Sway                  | 1688.9       |
| Totton & Eling        | 9148.2       |
| Whitsbury             | 101.5        |
| Woodgreen             | 252.1        |
| <b>Whole District</b> | <b>69987</b> |

**RECOMMENDED:**

*That, in so far as it is empowered to do so by law, the Council agrees that:*

- (a) *The calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2017/18 be approved; and*
- (b) *Pursuant to Report item 7 considered by the Cabinet and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by this Council as its council tax base for the year 2017/18 be as follows and as detailed in Appendix 1 to that report.*

| PARISH/TOWN                   | TAXBASE 17/18 |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Ashurst & Colbury             | 922.7         |
| Beaulieu                      | 511.2         |
| Boldre                        | 1062.4        |
| Bramshaw                      | 344.8         |
| Bransgore                     | 1816.9        |
| Breamore                      | 181.2         |
| Brockenhurst                  | 1865.8        |
| Burley                        | 780.4         |
| Copythorne                    | 1211.5        |
| Damerham                      | 231.7         |
| Denny Lodge                   | 152.1         |
| East Boldre                   | 382.3         |
| Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley | 605.7         |
| Exbury & Lepe                 | 112.9         |
| Fawley                        | 4534.6        |
| Fordingbridge                 | 2251.5        |
| Godshill                      | 224.7         |
| Hale                          | 260.6         |
| Hordle                        | 2395          |
| Hyde                          | 522.8         |
| Hythe & Dibden                | 7360.1        |
| Lymington & Pennington        | 7045.5        |
| Lyndhurst                     | 1444.4        |

|                |         |
|----------------|---------|
| Marchwood      | 2056    |
| Martin         | 197.6   |
| Milford on Sea | 2787.8  |
| Minstead       | 366.6   |
| Netley Marsh   | 814.9   |
| New Milton     | 10388.1 |
| Ringwood       | 5225.7  |
| Rockbourne     | 163.1   |
| Sandleheath    | 282.6   |
| Sopley         | 293.1   |
| Sway           | 1688.9  |
| Totton & Eling | 9148.2  |
| Whitsbury      | 101.5   |
| Woodgreen      | 252.1   |
| Whole District | 69987   |

#### 43 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET REQUIREMENT

The Cabinet was advised that the Council's budget for 2016/17 included a sum of £500,000 for the renovation of the public conveniences at New Milton and at Bath Road in Lymington, using the very successful modular system. This system had, over the last 10 years, markedly reduced the running and maintenance costs of public conveniences, and vandalism had also been reduced. It was envisaged that combining the two projects into one tender would achieve economies of scale. Following surveys, it had been concluded that both blocks need to be replaced, rather than refurbished, and the opportunity was also being taken to include a "changing places" facility to assist those with disabilities. The tenders had now been received and the total value of works was £632,000. Offsetting savings within the Portfolio's budget totalling £97,000 had been identified to reduce the supplementary estimate required in order to proceed to £35,000.

**RECOMMENDED:**

***That in order for the replacement of the public conveniences at New Milton and Bath Road, Lymington to continue, an additional budget requirement of £132,000 be approved, noting that £97,000 of that will be offset within the Portfolio's budgets.***

CHAIRMAN