

26 FEBRUARY 2018

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held in the Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 26 February 2018

- * Cllr Mrs C V Ward (Chairman)
- * Cllr M J Kendal (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- * A R Alvey
- * Mrs D E Andrews
- * W G Andrews
- * P J Armstrong
- * G C Beck
- * 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
- Mrs M D Holding

Councillors:

- * Mrs P Jackman
- * Mrs E L Lane
- Mrs P J Lovelace
- * B D Lucas
- Mrs R Matcham
- * 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 Davis, Ms Ford, Mrs Holding, Mrs Lovelace, Mrs Matcham, Olliff-Cooper, Rippon-Swaine, Mrs Rostand, Miss Sevier, Tungate and Wappet.

46 MINUTES**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2017 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

47 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Kendal in Minute No. 53, Report of the Cabinet dated 7 February 2018.

All members of the Council had been granted dispensations to speak and to vote on Minute No. 56, the 2018/19 Council Tax.

48 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs Morgan and Mrs Alarcon from First Opportunities, one of the Chairman's chosen charities, gave a brief presentation on the work of the charity. First Opportunities was an independent charity providing therapeutic play and education for babies and young children with special needs. The charity was based in New Milton but served the wider District. The charity not only provided valuable support for the children, but also their parents and carers.

It cost the charity in the region of £70,000 a year to run the group. Only 25% of the charity's income came in the form of statutory grants; for the other 75%, the charity relied on the generosity of individuals, various voluntary organisations, businesses and churches etc. The charity, along with other organisations, was facing financial challenges with a decline in grants. The generosity of the Chairman and former Chairman Cllr Beck, in fundraising for the charity was greatly appreciated.

- The Chairman reminded members that she would be hosting a charity music concert at Ringwood School on Saturday 10 March 2018, in conjunction with the Hampshire Music Service. The concert would be dedicated to the memory of former Cllr Sophie Beeton who had recently died.
- The Chairman reminded members that in accordance with the law, recorded votes would be taken under the budget items.

49 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council reported that the latest forecasts were that the weather would turn exceptionally cold later in the week with anticipated snowfall.

The Council was prepared for the inclement weather, with Senior Managers meeting on a daily basis to assess the situation, and officers being in daily contact with other agencies including Hampshire County Council, to ensure that any disruption that might occur was kept to a minimum. Should services be disrupted, plans were in place to ensure that the Council was able to return to normal operations as soon as possible.

The cold weather could be particularly challenging to those in the community sleeping rough. The Council's Homelessness Team had been working hard to get rough sleepers off the streets in the freezing temperatures. The Council had helped approximately 15 rough sleepers to get off the streets. Some were reluctant to leave the streets, but officers had persevered and ensured that these individuals had a room for the duration of the extreme weather. The Leader of the Council thanked officers for their dedication.

50 REPORT OF AUDIT COMMITTEE

Cllr O'Sullivan, Chairman of the Audit Committee, presented the report of the meeting held on 26 January 2018.

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.

51 REPORT OF GENERAL PURPOSES & LICENSING COMMITTEE

Cllr Clarke, Chairman of the General Purposes & Licensing Committee, presented the report of the meeting held on 12 January 2018.

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.

52 REPORT OF PLANNING COMMITTEE

Cllr W G Andrews, Chairman of the Planning Committee, presented the report of the meeting held on 10 January 2018.

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.

53 REPORT OF THE CABINET

Cllr Kendal disclosed a pecuniary interest in item 1 of the report of the Cabinet dated 8 February, on the grounds that the area in question was visible from his home. There was no discussion on this item.

The Leader of the Council, as Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the report of the meeting held on 8 February 2018.

Item 3 – Members Allowances 2018/19 – 2022/23 – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group referred to the increase in the number of Cabinet members from 6 to 8 shortly after the Independent Remuneration Panel had met. He requested that the Panel be asked to review the special responsibility allowance for Portfolio Holders, as, in his view, the workload of the Cabinet was being shared between more individuals leading to greater costs in members' allowances. He had sought clarification from the independent author of the report, Dr Hall, who had confirmed that the recommendation before members had been based upon the Cabinet structure at the time of the review (namely 6 Portfolio Holders). Cllr Harrison felt the additional cost of the increase in Cabinet Portfolio Holders (approximately £20,000) was hard to justify.

The Deputy Leader, in disagreeing with this view, stated that the workload of the Leader and other Cabinet members had increased substantially, in light of key legislation (such as the Homelessness Reduction Act) and other external pressures, which underlined the need for additional Cabinet posts.

Item 5 – The Medium Term Financial Plan – Setting the Budget for 2018/19

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, she would allow more than one amendment to be proposed and discussed at the same time.

The Leader of the Council made a statement on the Administration's proposed budget supported by visual aids, attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes. He also showed a promotional film made by Creative England, which highlighted the District's special characteristics and unique area as a filming location.

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, and proposed the following: -

That this authority, when sending out council tax bills, includes an invitation to residents living in Band H properties to pay a voluntary additional sum of £100, £250 or £500 which the council will use to support programmes that maintain and improve public services, especially those that have most impact on the poorest, most vulnerable members of our community.

Cllr Wade seconded.

Members discussed the Cabinet's budget proposals together with the Liberal Democrats' proposal.

Some members expressed the view that the Liberal Democrat Leader had not researched the contents of his speech, as some statements, particularly his comments pertaining to the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), were incorrect. It was pointed out that the budget proposed by the PCC had not been rejected, but following scrutiny had been presented in a transparent way, improving on the previous Commissioner's approach.

Other members spoke against the principle of a PCC, suggesting that the role should be abolished.

Members were also of the view that the balanced budget proposed by the Leader of the Council addressed future pressures on and aspirations of the Council.

The Deputy Leader of the Council expressed the view that the proposal put forward by the Opposition did not take into account the large number of elderly persons living in high tax band properties across the District. However, he felt that the suggestion could be explored further by a Task & Finish Group. Other members spoke in support of the budget recommended by the Leader of the Council.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group said that that the lives of New Forest residents could be improved with greater partnership working. He was satisfied with the proposal that a task and finish group be established, as suggested by the Deputy Leader, to examine his suggestion of inviting residents in Band H properties to make a voluntary contribution, over and above their Council tax, to support local services.

The Leader of the Council commended the budget to the Council. A recorded vote was taken on the budget recommended by the Cabinet. The outcome was:

Members voting for: 46
Members voting against: 2
Abstentions: 0

Details are shown in Appendix 3 to these minutes.

The motion was carried.

Item 7 – Electoral Review of the District Council

Cllr Ward, as Chairman of the Electoral Review Task & Finish Group, thanked all members of the Task & Finish Group for their contributions. Cllr Ward also thanked the Service Manager, Democratic Services & Member Support and the Electoral Services Team for their hard work and assistance to the Group. Cllr Ward commended the recommendations set out in the Cabinet Report.

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Cabinet dated 8 February 2018 be received and the recommendations be adopted.

54 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22

There were none.

55 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22A

There were none.

56 COUNCIL TAX 2018/19

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

The Council considered the Council Tax for 2018/19.

A recorded vote was taken on the recommendation.

The outcome was:

Members voting for: 46
Members voting against: 2
Abstentions: 0

Details are shown in Appendix 4 to these minutes.

The motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That it be noted that on 11 December 2017 the Council calculated the Council Tax Base for the year 2018/19:
- (i) for the whole Council area as 70,621.0 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; and
 - (ii) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates.
- (b) To calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2018/19 (excluding Parish Precepts) is £11,889,750.
- (c) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2018/19 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: -
- (i) £144,878,430 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.
 - (ii) £127,250,230 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
 - (iii) £17,628,200 being the amount by which the aggregate at (c)(i) above exceeds the aggregate at (c)(ii) 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).

- | | | |
|-------|------------|--|
| (iv) | £249.62 | being the amount at (c)(iii) above (Item R), all divided by the Council Tax Base, Item T ((c)(i) 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). |
| (v) | £5,738,450 | being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act. |
| (vi) | £168.36 | being the amount at (c)(iv) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (c)(v) above by Item T ((c)(i) 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. |
| (vii) | | |

LOCAL COUNCIL AREA

	£
ASHURST & COLBURY	202.37
BEAULIEU	183.99
BOLDRE	193.53
BRAMSHAW	188.56
BRANSGORE	223.20
BREAMORE	192.91
BROCKENHURST	210.85
BURLEY	185.38
COPYTHORNE	183.80
DAMERHAM	205.61
DENNY LODGE	203.35
EAST BOLDRE	207.72
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY	199.97
EXBURY & LEPE	168.36
FAWLEY	285.79
FORDINGBRIDGE	255.48
GODSHILL	214.52
HALE	213.49
HORDLE	213.76
HYDE	187.57
HYTHE & DIBDEN	264.25
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	271.79
LYNDHURST	223.82
MARCHWOOD	283.44
MARTIN	204.07
MILFORD-ON-SEA	204.99
MINSTEAD	195.37
NETLEY MARSH	189.58
NEW MILTON	247.27
RINGWOOD	260.65
ROCKBOURNE	243.38
SANDLEHEATH	195.52
SOPLEY	225.04
SWAY	204.66
TOTTON & ELING	296.50
WHITSBURY	185.73
WOODGREEN	198.69

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at (c)(vi) 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 (c)(ii) 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.

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

LOCAL COUNCIL AREA	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
ASHURST & COLBURY	134.91	157.40	179.88	202.37	247.34	292.31	337.28	404.74
BEAULIEU	122.65	143.11	163.54	183.99	224.87	265.76	306.64	367.98
BOLDRE	129.01	150.53	172.02	193.53	236.53	279.54	322.54	387.06
BRAMSHAW	125.70	146.66	167.61	188.56	230.46	272.36	314.26	377.12
BRANSGORE	148.79	173.61	198.40	223.20	272.79	322.40	371.99	446.40
BREAMORE	128.60	150.05	171.47	192.91	235.77	278.65	321.51	385.82
BROCKENHURST	140.56	164.00	187.42	210.85	257.70	304.56	351.41	421.70
BURLEY	123.58	144.19	164.78	185.38	226.57	267.77	308.96	370.76
COPYTHORNE	122.53	142.96	163.38	183.80	224.64	265.49	306.33	367.60
DAMERHAM	137.07	159.92	182.76	205.61	251.30	296.99	342.68	411.22
DENNY LODGE	135.56	158.17	180.75	203.35	248.53	293.73	338.91	406.70
EAST BOLDRE	138.47	161.57	184.64	207.72	253.87	300.04	346.19	415.44
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY	133.31	155.54	177.75	199.97	244.40	288.84	333.28	399.94
EXBURY & LEPE	112.23	130.95	149.65	168.36	205.77	243.19	280.59	336.72
FAWLEY	190.52	222.29	254.03	285.79	349.29	412.81	476.31	571.58
FORDINGBRIDGE	170.31	198.71	227.09	255.48	312.25	369.03	425.79	510.96
GODSHILL	143.01	166.85	190.68	214.52	262.19	309.86	357.53	429.04
HALE	142.32	166.05	189.77	213.49	260.93	308.37	355.81	426.98
HORDLE	142.50	166.26	190.01	213.76	261.26	308.76	356.26	427.52
HYDE	125.04	145.89	166.73	187.57	229.25	270.93	312.61	375.14
HYTHE & DIBDEN	176.16	205.53	234.89	264.25	322.97	381.69	440.41	528.50
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	181.19	211.40	241.59	271.79	332.18	392.58	452.98	543.58
LYNDHURST	149.21	174.09	198.95	223.82	273.55	323.29	373.03	447.64
MARCHWOOD	188.95	220.46	251.94	283.44	346.42	409.41	472.39	566.88
MARTIN	136.04	158.73	181.39	204.07	249.41	294.77	340.11	408.14
MILFORD-ON-SEA	136.65	159.44	182.21	204.99	250.54	296.10	341.64	409.98
MINSTEAD	130.24	151.96	173.66	195.37	238.78	282.20	325.61	390.74
NETLEY MARSH	126.38	147.46	168.51	189.58	231.70	273.84	315.96	379.16
NEW MILTON	164.84	192.33	219.79	247.27	302.21	357.17	412.11	494.54
RINGWOOD	173.76	202.73	231.69	260.65	318.57	376.49	434.41	521.30
ROCKBOURNE	162.25	189.30	216.34	243.38	297.46	351.55	405.63	486.76
SANDLEHEATH	130.34	152.08	173.79	195.52	238.96	282.42	325.86	391.04
SOPLEY	150.02	175.04	200.03	225.04	275.04	325.06	375.06	450.08
SWAY	136.43	159.19	181.92	204.66	250.13	295.62	341.09	409.32
TOTTON & ELING	197.66	230.62	263.55	296.50	362.38	428.28	494.16	593.00
WHITSBURY	123.81	144.46	165.09	185.73	227.00	268.28	309.54	371.46
WOODGREEN	132.45	154.54	176.61	198.69	242.84	287.00	331.14	397.38

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (c)(vii) 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.

- (d) 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 2018/19 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	800.64	934.08	1,067.52	1,200.96	1,467.84	1,734.72	2,001.60	2,401.92
POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR HAMPSHIRE AUTHORITY	118.31	138.02	157.74	177.46	216.90	256.33	295.77	354.92
HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY	43.83	51.13	58.44	65.74	80.35	94.96	109.57	131.48
	962.78	1,123.23	1,283.70	1,444.16	1,765.09	2,086.01	2,406.94	2,888.32

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.

- (e) That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (c)(viii) and (d) 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 2018/19 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	1,097.69	1,280.63	1,463.58	1,646.53	2,012.43	2,378.32	2,744.22	3,293.06
BEAULIEU	1,085.43	1,266.34	1,447.24	1,628.15	1,989.96	2,351.77	2,713.58	3,256.30
BOLDRE	1,091.79	1,273.76	1,455.72	1,637.69	2,001.62	2,365.55	2,729.48	3,275.38
BRAMSHAW	1,088.48	1,269.89	1,451.31	1,632.72	1,995.55	2,358.37	2,721.20	3,265.44
BRANSGORE	1,111.57	1,296.84	1,482.10	1,667.36	2,037.88	2,408.41	2,778.93	3,334.72
BREAMORE	1,091.38	1,273.28	1,455.17	1,637.07	2,000.86	2,364.66	2,728.45	3,274.14
BROCKENHURST	1,103.34	1,287.23	1,471.12	1,655.01	2,022.79	2,390.57	2,758.35	3,310.02
BURLEY	1,086.36	1,267.42	1,448.48	1,629.54	1,991.66	2,353.78	2,715.90	3,259.08
COPYTHORNE	1,085.31	1,266.19	1,447.08	1,627.96	1,989.73	2,351.50	2,713.27	3,255.92
DAMERHAM	1,099.85	1,283.15	1,466.46	1,649.77	2,016.39	2,383.00	2,749.62	3,299.54
DENNY LODGE	1,098.34	1,281.40	1,464.45	1,647.51	2,013.62	2,379.74	2,745.85	3,295.02
EAST BOLDRE	1,101.25	1,284.80	1,468.34	1,651.88	2,018.96	2,386.05	2,753.13	3,303.76
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY	1,096.09	1,278.77	1,461.45	1,644.13	2,009.49	2,374.85	2,740.22	3,288.26
EXBURY & LEPE	1,075.01	1,254.18	1,433.35	1,612.52	1,970.86	2,329.20	2,687.53	3,225.04
FAWLEY	1,153.30	1,345.52	1,537.73	1,729.95	2,114.38	2,498.82	2,883.25	3,459.90
FORDINGBRIDGE	1,133.09	1,321.94	1,510.79	1,699.64	2,077.34	2,455.04	2,832.73	3,399.28
GODSHILL	1,105.79	1,290.08	1,474.38	1,658.68	2,027.28	2,395.87	2,764.47	3,317.36
HALE	1,105.10	1,289.28	1,473.47	1,657.65	2,026.02	2,394.38	2,762.75	3,315.30
HORDLE	1,105.28	1,289.49	1,473.71	1,657.92	2,026.35	2,394.77	2,763.20	3,315.84
HYDE	1,087.82	1,269.12	1,450.43	1,631.73	1,994.34	2,356.94	2,719.55	3,263.46
HYTHE & DIBDEN	1,138.94	1,328.76	1,518.59	1,708.41	2,088.06	2,467.70	2,847.35	3,416.82
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	1,143.97	1,334.63	1,525.29	1,715.95	2,097.27	2,478.59	2,859.92	3,431.90
LYNDHURST	1,111.99	1,297.32	1,482.65	1,667.98	2,038.64	2,409.30	2,779.97	3,335.96
MARCHWOOD	1,151.73	1,343.69	1,535.64	1,727.60	2,111.51	2,495.42	2,879.33	3,455.20
MARTIN	1,098.82	1,281.96	1,465.09	1,648.23	2,014.50	2,380.78	2,747.05	3,296.46
MILFORD-ON-SEA	1,099.43	1,282.67	1,465.91	1,649.15	2,015.63	2,382.11	2,748.58	3,298.30
MINSTEAD	1,093.02	1,275.19	1,457.36	1,639.53	2,003.87	2,368.21	2,732.55	3,279.06
NETLEY MARSH	1,089.16	1,270.69	1,452.21	1,633.74	1,996.79	2,359.85	2,722.90	3,267.48
NEW MILTON	1,127.62	1,315.56	1,503.49	1,691.43	2,067.30	2,443.18	2,819.05	3,382.86
RINGWOOD	1,136.54	1,325.96	1,515.39	1,704.81	2,083.66	2,462.50	2,841.35	3,409.62
ROCKBOURNE	1,125.03	1,312.53	1,500.04	1,687.54	2,062.55	2,437.56	2,812.57	3,375.08
SANDLEHEATH	1,093.12	1,275.31	1,457.49	1,639.68	2,004.05	2,368.43	2,732.80	3,279.36
SOPLEY	1,112.80	1,298.27	1,483.73	1,669.20	2,040.13	2,411.07	2,782.00	3,338.40
SWAY	1,099.21	1,282.42	1,465.62	1,648.82	2,015.22	2,381.63	2,748.03	3,297.64
TOTTON & ELING	1,160.44	1,353.85	1,547.25	1,740.66	2,127.47	2,514.29	2,901.10	3,481.32
WHITSBURY	1,086.59	1,267.69	1,448.79	1,629.89	1,992.09	2,354.29	2,716.48	3,259.78
WOODGREEN	1,095.23	1,277.77	1,460.31	1,642.85	2,007.93	2,373.01	2,738.08	3,285.70

57 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

There were no changes.

CHAIRMAN

Attachments: Appendices 1 – 4

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Leader of the Council – Budget Presentation

Slide Number	Slide	Notes
1	“Meeting the needs of our Community – Securing a better future for the New Forest”	Meeting the needs of our Community – Securing a better future for the New Forest.
2	INTRODUCTION	<p>More than 170,000 in our community expect us to help make their lives better.</p> <p>My budget speech this year offers the opportunity for me to reflect on what we have achieved for our residents and businesses and will endeavour to deliver for them in the future.</p>
3	PEER CHALLENGE	<p>LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION</p> <p>In October 2017 we invited the improvement focused independent Peer Challenge to come to the Council and review how we perform for our community.</p>
4	<i>The Peer Team said: “The Council delivers services that.....are valued by residents.”</i>	Providing good services to residents is important but a priority is to support business, which in turn “creates jobs in our community for our community”
5	We provide over 100 Services to our Community	The council provides 100’s of services but recognises that our community expects us to provide visible services that keep the New Forest special
6	Our refuse and recycling services continues to be provided weekly	The weekly refuse and recycling collection is a visible service that our community wants and works well in harmony with the animals and the special features of our area.
7	We continually look to improve services	We are happy to work with both traditional methods and modern requirements to meet the needs of our community
8	We prioritise the need to provide more homes for local people	Finding homes in our community for local people is a top priority. We recognise this is a challenge with over 3,000 in our community waiting for a Council home.
9	We recognise that housing is more than bricks and mortar - it is about community	We have established a member Task and Finish group to look at how we can avoid homelessness for so many in our community.
10	We play a significant role in the Health of our community	Our Health & Leisure centres are valued by many in our community. They help many of our young people to learn to swim and encourage health lifestyles across all ages.
11	We will continue to invest in our 5 Health & Leisure Centers	We are committed to our 5 Health & Leisure centres that operate on school sites. The Council’s recent investment of £650,000 at Ringwood Health and Leisure means that all of our centres are now at the same high standard of facility.

12	We will continue to make the New Forest a safer place to “Eat Well” by	I was pleased to present the first Eat Out Eat Well gold awards to Walhampton School, Paultons Park and Forres Sandle Manor in Fordingbridge for providing healthy options in their food businesses. There is also another school that has won the gold award - Ballard School, and their presentation will be in early March.
13	....ensuring those in our community maintain high standards	Initiatives that create high standards is our approach to work with business helps to ensure we both protect our community and encourage the many high standard culinary delights available in the New Forest.
14	We will continue to ensure the New Forest is kept a tidy place to live	The Community engages well with us. Next weekend March 3 rd and 4 th is the first of the annual Spring Clean Events. To date we have 20 community events taking place across this weekend with 478 people taking part.
15	<i>The Peer Team said: “The Council works well with local partners”</i>	For our community to get the best it is important that we work closely with the many forms of governance in the New Forest. This includes Hampshire county Council, our 37 local Town and Parish councils, the National Park Authority, Police and Fire Services. Indeed, we will be seeking to progress better working relationships with the National Park Authority.
16	We have good local partnerships with other local organisations ...	We have good local partnerships with other local organisations.....
17	...as well as supporting the important role played by our many volunteers	It was good to see that the Byron Road Group in New Milton achieved national recognition for their dazzling display of festive spirit by winning £10,000 from Christopher Biggins and the Daily Mail.
18	We are prepared to share our successes worldwide!	Representatives from the Bangladesh Water Development Board met with representatives from the council to hear the process behind the design of the Milford Beach Huts and to learn about local coastal management. The visit to the UK was to look at examples of coastal engineering, infrastructure development, and emergency management.
19	We are supportive of all who have served the community	We acknowledge that within our community there are many people who have served our country, we will continue to ensure they are recognised.
20	....and share pride in our place with other communities	Our chairman this year Cllr. Christine Ward has demonstrated the importance of the role. She has shown much Civic Pride in the way she has carried out her role as our ambassador. Thank you Christine.

21	The Peer Team said: <i>“The Council has recognised the importance of partnership in promoting the economic development of the district”</i>	Promoting our economy which supports our community is a priority and we are putting a great deal of effort into developing our Economic Development Strategy, through consultation, engagement with business as well as detailed research to ensure it supports our business and delivers for our community.
22	Our priority is to help local business grow	The 2018 Business Show will take place at the New Forest Show in a special new business area of the showground.
23	We work closely with the New Forest Business Partnership	This builds on the success of the 2017 Show which saw over 50 local business exhibiting and provided an excellent platform for new business relationships
24	We aim to support local business to be successful for the benefit of our community	We are fortunate that here in the New Forest we have such a high quality of local business as well as national and international business. NFDC sponsored the Customer Care Category won by Lymington Yacht Haven
25	We have created new organisations that work in partnership to benefit business	I am pleased to be part of the Board of Go New Forest which has seen a successful first year in developing its strategies to encourage more tourism related revenue into the district. The recent AGM of the British Guild of Travel Writers was a great success for the New Forest.
26	<i>The Peer Team said: “The Council engages well with service users and residents.”</i>	The Council engages well with service users and residents.
27	We will continue to be accessible to all our community	Customer services are an integral part of our commitment to putting the customer first. It is often the only point of contact for many in our community with over 100,000 visits annually to our information offices. We recognise changing demands and are committed to enabling ease of access to all that want to contact our services. Modernisation and technology is changing the way many organisations engage with their community. Our approach will be to ensure that no one is excluded from meeting the new demands of customers.
28	We helped our community elect a new National Government & County Council	We helped our community elect a new National Government and County Council.

29	We have consulted widely on the development of our Local Plan	Local Plan - Significant increase in Housing provision - From 200 to 520 per annum - Working with the community and development industry to ensure the right type of houses to address local needs. - Formal Council approval June 2018 - Public Examination Winter 2018
30	The Peer Team said: “(The) Council has an excellent understanding of its local context.”	We listen to the needs of local people in providing services.
31	Providing services in a local context New Public Convenience in New Milton	New public toilets at New Milton recreation ground and Bath Road in Lymington have a dedicated changing facility with ceiling hoist and a height adjustable changing bed. Hadley’s Heroes has now named NFDC as one of their ‘heroes’ for its response to their campaign to provide improved “changing places” facilities.
32	Finding innovative solutions	This award winning design has received national recognition at the Concrete Society Awards where is receive a highly commended and this design has also been shortlisted for the Civic Trust awards which will be judged in May
33	<i>The Peer Team said:</i> “(The Council) is on the cusp of change”	We recognise that we need to change and modernise but not forgetting the past. “Old yet ever New”
34	I together with the Chief Executive have been making the case for change	I enjoyed meeting our staff to talk about the organisation of the future when “Barry and Bob went talkabout”
35	I have made changes to Cabinet to ensure councillors’ skills are used more widely	The changes I made to Cabinet enables me to bring even more breadth of knowledge into the Cabinet which is needed to help us meet the challenges ahead.
36	We recognise in the budget the need for investment in technology and smarter working.	We have provided budgets of £2.1m over a 3 year period to bring our ICT up to today’s needs and enable us to build an organisation that is fit for the future. The recent improvements in “wifi” are an example of the improvements we have already made.
37	<i>The Peer Team said:</i> “The Council enjoys a healthy financial position relative to many of its peers”	Despite the challenges we are in a healthy financial position because we have planned wisely not for the short term with “gimmicks” but for the long term which is sustainable.

38	This is despite reductions in Government Funding	Government funding is reducing but we have not and will not whinge about this fact. It is something faced by nearly all of the public sector. Instead we will get on and plan sensibly for future manifesto's in the knowledge we will likely have less resources.
39	Council Tax will need to increase this year by £5 to £168.36	Council Tax will rise this year but given what we will be providing I believe it provides excellent value for money given the range of services we provide.
40	Maintaining all these services and more with a <u>Council Tax increase of less than 10p per week</u>	We will continue to deliver all of these services, and more, for a Council Tax increase of less than 10p per week.
41	Looking ahead we have more to do to fund future budget gaps	We have much to do in the future and our manifesto will set out our realistic ideas to take us forward to 2023.
42	We will look to generate new sources of income ...	Our approach to investment in the District has both been sensible and financially beneficial. I hope we will find more good deals for our community in our community in the future. This is all part of our Treasury Investment Strategy and the continued diversification of our cash investments.
43	....and invest in working smarter	And invest in working smarter.
44	The Peer Team said: <i>"The Council has a committed workforce who are happy ....and take pride in New Forest"</i>	This observation is so very true. Without the commitment of our workforce we would not achieve so much.
45	I believe we have staff that are prepared to do that bit extra...	I believe we have staff that are prepared to do that bit extra...
46	.... my thanks to the Chief Executive and all his team on the "frontline"....	... my thanks to the Chief Executive and all his team on the "frontline"...
47	.... and in the back office of the council	I have been particularly pleased with the progress we have made with the Employee Engagement Panel (EEP) over the last year. Our interface with employees and Trade Unions feels much of a team New Forest than the "old" Industrial Relations Committee approach.
48	Before I finish I would like to acknowledge the sad passing of Cllr. Sophie Beeton, we will all miss her positive contribution	It is with great sadness that we lost Cllr. Sophie Beeton, her happy smile and enthusiasm will be missed by us all.
49	Thank you to all councillors and cabinet members for helping get to this positive position and be optimistic about the future	Thank you to all councillors and cabinet members for helping get to this positive position and be optimistic about the future.

50	Finally, before we debate the budget I would like us to reflect on this special place and the community we represent	In developing the Film New Forest Project, the Council have worked in partnership with Creative England to produce a promotional film which outlines the various opportunities and benefits to filming in the District. With a valuable contribution from Observer and BBC Film Critic Mark Kermode, the film 'Through the Wardrobe' highlights in particular the huge versatility of filming locations including open forest, coastal and industrial. I would like to introduce this film to you now.
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Liberal Democrat Leader - Budget Speech 2018

Some of my fellow members will be sad to learn that this will be my final budget speech.... for this year.

Only last week, I spoke at Hampshire County Council, making the point that conservatives have nobody else to blame but themselves for increasing council tax and cutting services.

The Conservative Chairman of the Local Government association, Lord Porter, expressed his view of the Chancellor's Autumn budget.

"It's hugely disappointing that the budget offered nothing to ease the financial crisis facing local services". I could not have put it better myself.

Local Government should be valued. I think the public value what we do, more than central government does.

It talks about devolving power, but look what it does in practice. On something we all care very deeply about... **crime and anti-social behaviour**. It's put all the decision making in the hands of one man, the Police & Crime Commissioner. Now I don't like to personalise politics, but when he behaves the way he does, it's hard not to. The phrase "Remote arrogant and out of touch" with what we need doesn't come close.

When he tried setting a budget recently, it was voted down by the Police Panel, including all the conservative Councillors who could see that the absolute stupidity in what he was trying to do, doubling the size of his office operation, whilst losing 110 front line police officers.

Leader, whatever you proposed in your budget this evening, it would not have topped his efforts. It is high time that we dropped the whole idea of Police & Crime Commissioners and got back to local Councillors holding the Chief Constable to account and setting the budgets.

So my **first plea**, is for you to start lobbying for this to happen. Otherwise, our communities, already hit by crime and lack of police resources are only going to suffer more.... and I note that the governments answer to overcrowded prisons is to release prisoners early. What impact do we suppose that will have?

My **second plea** is about **housing**. We know that good, secure, well-maintained housing is a pre-requisite to living any sort of quality life. We have a housing waiting list of over three thousand people for the best part of twenty years whilst we have lost half our council housing.

I acknowledge that, for some, home ownership is something to be applauded. But it should never have been allowed to happen at the expense of depriving others of no home at all to live in. Can it be right that we have so many families forced to endure living in Bed & Breakfast accommodation and others homeless, even "sofa surfing". I cannot be the only Councillor who regularly receives pleas of help from people with really serious housing issues.

I applaud the work of the housing officers. They do an incredible job without the means to fulfil demands for housing, whether it be those without any housing or those with housing that doesn't meet their needs. Meeting housing need must be a corporate priority, not beach huts, or even super beach huts, but housing.

What sort of crazy government is it that has decided Councils can borrow money to speculate on commercial property deals, including shopping centres elsewhere in the country, whilst denying you the ability to replace the council housing lost under the "Right to buy" scheme here in the New Forest, where we have people desperately frustrated on long waiting lists for any housing for years and years?

Third plea; On recycling waste,

South Oxfordshire District Council, also run by the Conservatives, came first in the 2015/16 municipal waste recycling tables. Their recycling, reuse and composting rates are a phenomenal 67.3%. By contrast, our recycling rate was 29.8%.

Come on folks, let's get our act together. We are in **317th** place out of 351 local authorities when it comes to performance.

I think the public here are confused about what items can be recycled. I think we have made it more difficult for them. Removing most of the well-used "Bring Back" sites across the New Forest has only reduced the amounts of recycling and all the new charges and threats to close or restrict access to the Household Waste recycling Centres, hasn't helped at all.

Fourth plea: Be Pro-active

It's right that this authority has downsized and is working smarter. We Liberal Democrats show just what can be done with small numbers.

Members will know that I have always been supportive of moves that would improve the operational efficiency of this Council. Let me say, at this point, that I am immensely impressed by the quality of our Council employees. It's very clear to me that they are hard-working, professional and have shown huge commitment to public service in all the different areas they operate in.

I am glad that you have finally agreed to ask the Electoral Commission to look at downsizing the number of members. It doesn't matter that it was my proposal originally. However, I don't accept that it will take five years or more for it to be implemented. There is a large sum of public money at stake here. Tell them that we expect them to be able to review this within months and that we want a smaller authority for the next administration.

So, what, I hear you ask, would be different under a Liberal Democrat administration?

I will start by pledging that there will be a lot less of doing things without thought for the consequences to others. It's good to talk. Even the Conservative led Peer Review recognised the need to work better with the National Park Authority.

You will also see a lot more lobbying for a better deal from government. This Council almost never troubles the postbag of our two MP's, or even plays any active role within the Local Government Association. We can therefore hardly expect to get a better deal than we do. We need to grow a spine and start asserting ourselves with the powers that be.

My party has a clear vision for reforming things in the New Forest and I hope to publish the detailed manifesto in the next few weeks.

Fifth plea: Good Governance - Sometimes, good governance is about what you don't do, rather than what you do. Please no more, time, energy and expense in dealing with reviews and proposals for changing local government structures. It's already cost taxpayers about £1 million, with nothing to show for it.

And don't send letters out to residents informing them that they owe one penny on council tax. I have an example of that here. It surely makes no sense at all to incur costs a hundred times greater than the size of the debt you seek to recover. Let's make sure our computer systems are programmed not to waste money.

Sixth plea: Let's help where it is most needed....

Whether this issue is lack of adequate housing, subsidised transport, an absence of support for children in the early years, mental health issues, crime and anti-social behaviour or lonely, isolated older people, I think that this Council should and could be doing much more to support the people who need it.

With long waits on housing lists with thousands of people, we have taken away hope. We have taken away a quality of life everyone should feel entitled to. We are not offering hope and a home to young families. We are only offering yet more years in cramped and difficult conditions.

Members, we should be ashamed of ourselves. We have let down a generation of New Forest residents who look to us, their Council, their elected representatives to do something for them.

I am really pleased that you have decided to focus on the issue of homelessness. Frankly, it is a scandal that things have been allowed to get to as bad as they are. We need to look at the new obligations being placed upon us by new legislation and embrace it as an opportunity to help those who have been abandoned. It's why I have agreed to work cross-party and join the panel.

I think we can look towards the positive approaches taken by Winchester City Council and well away from the really negative things that Bournemouth Council have tried.

I have a specific proposal, an amendment to your budget plans that I would like to offer for consideration.

I think we all recognise that the way council tax works is unfair. It's a regressive tax. Every time it increases above inflation, it has a disproportionate impact on lower income residents.

Reform isn't going to happen anytime soon, so as a temporary measure, I would like you to consider this.

I am not claiming this as our own, unique, idea. In fact, I have taken this initiative from Westminster Council, who – like us – have a large number of wealthy people living in their area, many of whom say that they are concerned about public services and particularly issues such as homelessness and foodbanks and that they would be willing to pay a bit more council tax if it was used to alleviate the worst impacts of poverty in their area.

Westminster Councillors, have decided to write to all owners of "Band H" properties, worth more than £1 million and above, asking that they pay a voluntary extra sum. I cannot think of any good reason why we shouldn't at least try such an initiative here in the New Forest.

So the motion is "This authority, when sending out council tax bills, includes an invitation to residents living in Band H properties to pay a voluntary additional sum of £100, £250 or £500 which the council will use to support programmes that maintain and improve public services, especially those that have most impact on the poorest, most vulnerable members of our community".

Thank you for listening. I so move.

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APPENDIX 3

RECORDED VOTE MINUTE NO. 53 – SUBSTANTIVE MOTION ON ITEM 5 OF THE REPORT OF THE CABINET DATED 8 FEBRUARY 2018

Votes For		Votes Against	Abstentions
Cllr Alvey	Cllr J Heron	Cllr Harrison	
Cllr Mrs Andrews	Cllr Mrs Hoare	Cllr Wade	
Cllr Andrews	Cllr Kendal		
Cllr Armstrong	Cllr Mrs Jackman		
Cllr Beck	Cllr Mrs Lane		
Cllr Mrs Bennison	Cllr Lucas		
Cllr Binns	Cllr Mrs McEvoy		
Cllr Blunden	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 Steele		
Cllr Ms Crisell	Cllr Thierry		
Cllr Davies	Cllr Mrs Thorne		
Cllr Dow	Cllr Tipp		
Cllr Frampton	Cllr Mrs Ward		
Cllr Glass	Cllr Ward		
Cllr L Harris	Cllr White		
Cllr M Harris	Cllr Wise		
Cllr E Heron	Cllr Mrs Wyeth		

Total:

46

2

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APPENDIX 4

RECORDED VOTE MINUTE NO. 56 - THE 2017/18 COUNCIL TAX

Votes For		Votes Against	Abstentions
Cllr Alvey	Cllr J Heron	Cllr Harrison	
Cllr Mrs Andrews	Cllr Mrs Hoare	Cllr Wade	
Cllr Andrews	Cllr Kendal		
Cllr Armstrong	Cllr Mrs Jackman		
Cllr Beck	Cllr Mrs Lane		
Cllr Mrs Bennison	Cllr Lucas		
Cllr Binns	Cllr Mrs McEvoy		
Cllr Blunden	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 Steele		
Cllr Ms Crisell	Cllr Thierry		
Cllr Davies	Cllr Mrs Thorne		
Cllr Dow	Cllr Tipp		
Cllr Frampton	Cllr Mrs Ward		
Cllr Glass	Cllr Ward		
Cllr L Harris	Cllr White		
Cllr M Harris	Cllr Wise		
Cllr E Heron	Cllr Mrs Wyeth		

Total:

46

2

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