

21 SEPTEMBER 2017

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel held in Committee Room 1, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Thursday, 21 September 2017

\* Cllr M R Harris (Chairman)  
\* Cllr M A Steele (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

\* A R Alvey  
\* W G Andrews  
\* M J Kendal  
\* Mrs A E McEvoy

**Councillors:**

\* A D O'Sullivan  
\* A K Penson  
\* D B Tipp  
C A Wise

\*Present

**Officers Attending:**

Miss G O'Rourke and Mrs H Aylett

**Apologies:**

Cllr Wise

**13 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2017 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

**16 ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY**

The Panel noted and discussed the draft Organisational Strategy for 2017-2022.

The aim of the Organisational Strategy is to set out the Council's approach and plans for future delivery of services. Following the Cabinet approval of the draft strategy, it had been proposed to consult with the Employee Engagement Panel as well as this Panel before a final draft was submitted to Cabinet. A briefing session for members and officers had been given by the Chief Executive.

The Chairman felt that staff concerns about future changes needed to be taken into account. He suggested the Council should look at other ways of working, for example employee ownership in the public sector (the John Lewis model). He felt this should be examined perhaps using a Task and Finish Group.

Members made a number of comments, including the cost of health and leisure centres, in-sourcing and out-sourcing services.

**RESOLVED:**

That the draft Organisational Strategy 2017-2022 attached as Appendix 1 to the report be approved to form the basis for consultations.

**17 FINANCIAL UPDATE 2017/18 AND MEDIUM TERM OUTLOOK**

The Panel noted an update on the latest position with regards to the 2017/18 budget, as well as forecasts for future years, together with the treasury management position.

A deficit of £441,000 was forecast for 2018/19, which needed to be met from savings yet to be identified, or additional income.

Some members expressed caution on out-sourcing, as it was important to ensure the Council was clear on actual savings and the quality of service being offered, as well as the track record of the contractor.

A member referred to increases in capital expenditure for projects at Ringwood Health and Leisure Centre, beach huts and Eling Tide Mill. It was explained that these had been reported in full and agreed at Cabinet, and had come about as a change in requirements as the projects progressed or with the complexities of the scheme. Members would arrange to meet with Mr Read, Executive Director, to discuss related issues.

It was suggested that the Council could increase its income by capital expenditure through purchasing property or renting out surplus accommodation. Other examples given were at Hampshire County Council, which had invested in number plate recognition at car parks in order to improve income. Another example was the digitalisation of some job roles, which reduced staff therefore freeing up office space and leasing out surplus space to public ethos groups such as the CQC.

Members were assured that all of these options were being investigated.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**18 KEY ACTIONS AND SERVICE REVIEW PROGRAMME - UPDATE REPORT**

The Panel received an update on work being undertaken under the delivery plan.

Members received an update on progress with the customer strategy. A lot of work was being undertaken in the background to improve customer transactions, technology and workflow. The ICT infrastructure was being upgraded and related resources being brought forward to improve new ways of working. A further meeting of the Customer Strategy Task and Finish Group would be held at the end

of October, by which time the Peer Review findings on the Council's future plans should be known and would inform the customer strategy.

Reference was made to the Building Control Service and the perceived difference in quality between the Council run service and private provision. A member raised a query about St. Georges Hall regarding responsibility for funding repairs of the building. This would be followed up and the member would be informed.

## **19 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel reviewed its Work Programme.

The Chairman suggested the creation of a task and finish Group to look at employee owned services (the John Lewis model), and this was agreed.

It was noted that the Electoral Review Task and Finish Group was in abeyance pending projected housing figures in the Local Plan. The Panel Chairman had written to the Task and Finish Group Chairman to enquire about progress and felt that the Group should meet again in the near future. It was agreed that the Council Tax Reduction Task and Finish Group would advise the Portfolio Holder on submission of a proposed Local Business Rate Relief Scheme Policy to the Cabinet.

Panel members would be sent a copy of the imminent Peer Review position statement for information.

## **20 PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' UPDATES**

There were none.

## **21 MEETING DATES 2018/2019 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the following dates be agreed as meeting dates in 2018/19 municipal year (all Thursdays at 9.30 a.m.):

21 June 2018  
20 September 2018  
22 November 2018  
17 January 2019  
14 March 2019

CHAIRMAN