

**5 DECEMBER 2018**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday, 5 December 2018

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

**Councillors:**

- \* Mrs D E Andrews
- \* J E Binns
- \* Mrs J L Cleary

**Councillors:**

- \* M R Harris
- \* J D Heron
- \* Mrs A J Hoare

\*Present

**In attendance:**

**Councillors:**

W G Andrews  
P J Armstrong  
Mrs S M Bennison  
G R Blunden  
Mrs F Carpenter  
S P Davies  
A T Glass

**Councillors:**

A A Gossage  
A D O'Sullivan  
A K Penson  
Mrs C V Ward  
M L White  
C A Wise

**Also In Attendance:**

Mr P Woodroof, Tenants' Representative

**Officers Attending:**

R Jackson, Miss G O'Rourke, C Read, Mrs M Sandhu, R Archibald, Mrs J Bailey, R Beere, A Bethune, Mrs R Drummond, Mrs S Hamilton, Miss J Moles, A Smith, Mrs J Stainer, R Stevens and Ms D Tenner

**Apologies:**

No apologies for absence were received.

**49 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2018 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**50 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**51 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No issues were raised in the public participation period.

**52 HOUSING STRATEGY**

The Cabinet considered a new overarching Housing Strategy to cover all aspects of housing in the District, including its role in facilitating new development and also its own build and acquisitions programme. A draft had been subject to consultation in September to November 2017 and had been updated in the light of the responses received and also changes in legislation and the emerging local plan for the period 2016-2036. The Strategy identified four key priorities:

- To accelerate and maximise future housing development that meets local need and leads to sustainable growth;
- To increase the supply of high quality affordable homes through an ambitious council house building and acquisitions programme;
- To improve the housing circumstances of those within our communities most in housing need;
- To make the best use of housing to meet the housing needs of local people, including supporting a strong and quality private rented sector.

The actions to address the identified challenges were directly connected to the Council's corporate plan and other key strategies and plans. High priority would be given to council housebuilding, to include homes for social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership. This mixed tenure programme would allow the Council to meet a wider range of housing needs and fund up to 600 new affordable homes up to 2026. A proactive approach would be taken to using existing sites in the Council's ownership and also acquiring additional land or working with developers to provide additional opportunities.

Three additional posts would be created in the Housing Development and Strategy Team to assist in the delivery of the Strategy, as set out in paragraph 4.1 of Report Item 4 to the Cabinet.

Mr Woodroof, the Tenant's Representative, confirmed that the tenants were happy with all of the housing reports under consideration at this meeting and recognised the large amount of work that had been done in their preparation.

**RECOMMENDED:**

***That the Housing Strategy, as attached as Appendix 1 to Report Item 4 to the Cabinet, be approved.***

**53 HOMELESSNESS TASK AND FINISH GROUP - REPORT OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

The Cabinet received the report of the Homelessness Task and Finish Group who had undertaken detailed research to understand the issues and problems associated with being homeless and developed recommendations to help improve the lives of those who found themselves without a home. The report contained 6 recommendations which had been carried forward into the other strategy documents under consideration at this meeting (Report Items 4, 6, 7 and 8 on the agenda).

The Cabinet noted the findings of the Task and Finish Group and their recommendations.

**54 HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019-2023**

The Cabinet considered a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to respond to homelessness in the District, new legislation and Central Government policy. In particular the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 placed new duties on local authorities to provide effective advice and assistance to all applicants who approached the Council, whether they were considered to be vulnerable or not. It also introduced new duties to prevent and relieve homelessness. The Government's own Rough Sleeping Strategy, published in August 2018, declared the intention of ending all rough sleeping by 2027 and required local authorities to amend their homelessness strategies, by the end of 2019, to include specific measures to address rough sleeping.

The Strategy identified 4 priorities for addressing homelessness through responding to the challenges faced in the New Forest. The priorities recognised the need to increase the provision of council-owned emergency accommodation across the District to minimise disruption to the households involved and also to reduce the cost to the Council.

In accordance with the legislative requirements the Strategy needed to be subject to consultation with those authorities and organisations the Council deemed appropriate. It was proposed that this consultation would take place early in the New Year with the responses being considered by the Cabinet and the Council in April 2019.

***RECOMMENDED:***

***That the Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy, as attached as Appendix 1 to Report Item 6 to the Cabinet, be approved for consultation.***

**55 NEW HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY**

In accordance with the recommendations of the Homelessness Task and Finish Group, and to respond to new duties imposed by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Council's Housing Allocation Policy had been reviewed.

The key changes from the existing policy were set out in paragraph 3.2 of Report Item 7 to the Cabinet. In particular, the introduction of defined bands would give a more realistic picture of the level of housing need and consequent priority of that need being met. In addition, in future only those people with a housing need (as defined within one of the Council's bands); were over 16; had a local connection (as

defined within the policy); and lacked the financial means to resolve their housing need would be eligible to join the housing waiting list. Other criteria, such as anyone that had deliberately worsened their circumstances, would also exclude applicants from the waiting list.

In accordance with the legislative requirements the Housing Allocations Policy needed to be subject to consultation with existing applicants and private registered providers of social housing in the District for a 4 week period. It was proposed that this consultation would take place early in the New Year with the responses being considered by the Cabinet and the Council in April 2019.

Members noted the detailed health and wellbeing assessment that had been undertaken, recognising that mental and physical wellbeing could be prejudiced by poor or inappropriate housing.

**RECOMMENDED:**

***That the new Housing Allocations Policy, as attached as Appendix 1 to Report Item 6 to the Cabinet, be approved for consultation.***

**56 NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL PROPERTY HOLDING COMPANY - BUSINESS PLAN 2018**

The Cabinet considered the Business Plan for the Council's new property holding company which would implement the Council's Residential Property Investment Strategy. This included the company's operating arrangements and articles of association. The Business Plan was attached as Appendix 1 to Report Item 8 to the Cabinet.

It was proposed that there would be two subsidiary companies, a lettings company and a development company, to implement the Strategy. Further details of the role of each subsidiary were set out in paragraph 2.2 of Report item 8 to the Cabinet. The Council would be the sole shareholder.

The proposed articles of association confirmed the governance arrangements, with each company having its own board, which would initially consist of the same 4 directors, who would be 2 officers, one of whom would act as company secretary; and 2 councillors, one of whom would be the Chairman.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) That the business plan for the new company together with the proposed articles of association for the company and its subsidiaries, as attached as Appendix 1 to Report Item 8 to the Cabinet, be approved;***
- (b) That the appointment of 2 members and 2 officers of appropriate seniority to the board of directors of the company and its subsidiaries be approved, such individuals to be agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, and that consideration be given to use of external, specialist, non-executive positions where appropriate;***

- (c) *That authority be delegated to the Cabinet in respect of those matters set out in paragraph 4.4 of the company's proposed articles of association, as set out in Appendix 1 to Report Item 8 to the Cabinet;*
- (d) *That the Property Investment Task and Finish Group be discontinued, but that regular progress updates be taken to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel as required, and at least every 12 months;*
- (e) *That the Council's indemnity to members and officers be applied to the activities as directors of the company, with the Executive Head Governance and Regulation to arrange for the company to have additional directors' and officers' liability insurance likewise to cover the activities of the directors of the company; and*
- (f) *That the gearing of the company not be fixed at 67%, but instead the debt to equity mix be fluid and evaluated as opportunities arise, to ensure the maximum return to the Shareholder.*

## 57 ICT INVESTMENT UPDATE

The Cabinet was advised of the ICT investment that had taken place since April 2017 and advised of the implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan of delivering the ICT Strategy 2018-2022.

A major strand of investment had been the replacement of old and "out of support" infrastructure and important software systems. In addition, the Wifi at Appletree Court and Marsh Lane Depot had been extended to allow staff to work anywhere within those buildings. The display equipment in the conference rooms had also been upgraded with large, modern monitors that allowed Wifi connection. These projects, costing around £1.6 million, would be completed by September 2019. An additional £100,000 would be required in 2019/20 to complete this work.

Members noted progress being made on the change to mobile devices for all staff to assist with the introduction of "Smarter Working". Work on the new ICT infrastructure, including the replacement of the current e-mail/calendar system with Office 365; the replacement of the current telephone system with Skype for Business; and the replacement of the Meridio document management system with SharePoint, would take place in 3 phases between April 2019 and September 2020. The finance for these projects had already been improved.

Plans for a further 4 year programme of future requirements were set out in Section 6 of Report item 9 to the Cabinet, together with the financial implications of each strand of work, as set out in Section 8 of the report.

### RESOLVED:

- (a) That an additional budget requirement of £100,000 be approved in order to complete the delivery of the Protect and Maintain Frontline Services programme; and
- (b) That the ICT strategy future requirements detailed in section 8 of Report Item 9 to the Cabinet, be approved for inclusion in the Medium Term Financial Plan, subject to the approval of individual business cases.

**58 HEALTH AND LEISURE REVIEW**

The Cabinet considered the recommendations of the Community and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel with respect to the future management and delivery of the Council's health and leisure provision. The Panel had appointed a Task and Finish Group which had undertaken extensive research on the various options that were available in order to formulate their findings and recommendations.

The strategic objectives and key drivers to the process were set out in Section 2 of Report item 10 to the Cabinet. It was emphasised that the retention and improvement of social and community benefits, such as improved physical and mental wellbeing for local people, had been an essential part of the evaluation process. It was however also important to achieve additional savings. The current operational review would achieve savings of £600,000 by 2020/21, and the review of future delivery models would need to achieve at least an additional £400,000 by that time.

The Task and Finish Group's findings in respect of the potential delivery options were set out in Section 4 of the report. The Panel had concurred with their conclusion that maintaining the status quo was not a viable option and would lead to the loss of the existing level of service as health and leisure remained exposed to the continuing financial constraints upon the Council and consequent restrictions on future business planning and investment. Of the other options available, entering into a partnership arrangement with one of the established third party private providers already operating in this area would offer the greatest benefits and safeguards for the service and should open opportunities for greater investment and business development. The Council's aspirations for social and community benefits could be secured through a detailed specification and contract for the arrangement. The establishment of an "arms-length" Council owned company would also bring a number of benefits, although it was likely there would be less access to additional investment or the expertise in this field already developed by the private partners. A market engagement exercise had established that there was potential interest from third party private providers in entering into a partnership arrangement with this Council and that such an arrangement had the potential to achieve all the Council's objectives.

The Cabinet was advised of the comments submitted by Unison on behalf of the Employee Side. They raised objections to the proposal to seek a partnership arrangement and considered that this represented privatisation that would prejudice the future services for local residents and the conditions of service of the employees in the health and leisure centres. They also raised concerns about some procedural aspects.

The Cabinet concurred with the conclusions of the Community and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel that a partnership arrangement, based upon a carefully developed specification and contract, had the potential to offer the most benefits for the future. The only way to establish whether the Council's own specific requirements could be met by such an arrangement would be to initiate a procurement exercise to establish exactly what could be achieved, which could only be properly established through the negotiations that formed part of the procurement exercise. This process would also provide the essential preparatory work for the establishment of an arms-length council owned company should the partnership proposal not, in the event, meet the Council's requirements.

The Cabinet was advised of the next stages that would be necessary in the process, which included the preparation of a contract specification that met this Council's objectives. It was also proposed that a staff representative from each of the health and leisure centres and trade union representatives would be involved in the procurement process.

**RESOLVED:**

That a formal tendering process be undertaken to identify a preferred partner for the future operation of the Council's five health and leisure centres.

**59 COUNCIL TAX 2019/20 - SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX BASE**

The Cabinet considered the Council Tax Base for 2019/20.

**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 2019/20 be approved.
- (b) Pursuant to this report 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 2019/20 be as follows and as detailed in Appendix 1 to Report Item 11 to the Cabinet.

<b>PARISH/TOWN</b>	<b>TAX BASE 19/20</b>
Ashurst & Colbury	932.6
Beaulieu	515.5
Boldre	1064.1
Bramshaw	342.8
Bransgore	1812.6
Breamore	182.5
Brockenhurst	1862.4
Burley	792.1
Copythorne	1214.2
Damerham	242.2
Denny Lodge	158.2
East Boldre	377.9
Elingham, Harbridge & Ibsley	610.7
Exbury & Lepe	116.8
Fawley	4571.1
Fordingbridge	2281.6
Godshill	227.2
Hale	262
Hordle	2416.1
Hyde	514.2
Hythe & Dibden	7404.5
Lymington & Pennington	7355.5
Lyndhurst	1459.6
Marchwood	2069.2

Martin	198.4
Milford on Sea	2820.4
Minstead	374.8
Netley Marsh	819.5
New Milton	10486.4
Ringwood	5285.2
Rockbourne	163.4
Sandleheath	279.6
Sopley	403.4
Sway	1709.3
Totton & Eling	9394
Whitsbury	102
Woodgreen	252.4
<b>Whole District</b>	<b>71074.4</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 2019/20 be approved.*
- (b) *Pursuant to this report 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 2019/20 be as follows and as detailed in Appendix 1 to Report Item 11 to the Cabinet.*

<b>PARISH/TOWN</b>	<b>TAX BASE 19/20</b>
<b>Ashurst &amp; Colbury</b>	<b>932.6</b>
<b>Beaulieu</b>	<b>515.5</b>
<b>Boldre</b>	<b>1064.1</b>
<b>Bramshaw</b>	<b>342.8</b>
<b>Bransgore</b>	<b>1812.6</b>
<b>Breamore</b>	<b>182.5</b>
<b>Brockenhurst</b>	<b>1862.4</b>
<b>Burley</b>	<b>792.1</b>
<b>Copythorne</b>	<b>1214.2</b>
<b>Damerham</b>	<b>242.2</b>
<b>Denny Lodge</b>	<b>158.2</b>
<b>East Boldre</b>	<b>377.9</b>
<b>Elingham,</b>	<b>610.7</b>
<b>Harbridge &amp; Ibsley</b>	
<b>Exbury &amp; Lepe</b>	<b>116.8</b>
<b>Fawley</b>	<b>4571.1</b>
<b>Fordingbridge</b>	<b>2281.6</b>
<b>Godshill</b>	<b>227.2</b>
<b>Hale</b>	<b>262</b>
<b>Hordle</b>	<b>2416.1</b>
<b>Hyde</b>	<b>514.2</b>
<b>Hythe &amp; Dibden</b>	<b>7404.5</b>



<i>Lymington &amp; Pennington</i>	<b>7355.5</b>
<i>Lyndhurst</i>	<b>1459.6</b>
<i>Marchwood</i>	<b>2069.2</b>
<i>Martin</i>	<b>198.4</b>
<i>Milford on Sea</i>	<b>2820.4</b>
<i>Minstead</i>	<b>374.8</b>
<i>Netley Marsh</i>	<b>819.5</b>
<i>New Milton</i>	<b>10486.4</b>
<i>Ringwood</i>	<b>5285.2</b>
<i>Rockbourne</i>	<b>163.4</b>
<i>Sandleheath</i>	<b>279.6</b>
<i>Sopley</i>	<b>403.4</b>
<i>Sway</i>	<b>1709.3</b>
<i>Totton &amp; Eling</i>	<b>9394</b>
<i>Whitsbury</i>	<b>102</b>
<i>Woodgreen</i>	<b>252.4</b>
<i>Whole District</i>	<b>71074.4</b>

## 60 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT - BASED ON PERFORMANCE TO OCTOBER 2018

Members were updated on the current performance of the General Fund, Capital and Housing Revenue Account budgets, based on performance to the end of October 2018.

The Cabinet was pleased to note that additional savings and income generation totalling £351,000; new budget requirements and income shortfall of £50,000; together with the rephasing of £240,000 expenditure from future years resulted in an updated General Fund budget of £16.707 million, compared to the original budget of £17.243 million. Further details were set out in Table 1 and Sections 3.4 and 3.5 of Report Item 12 to the Cabinet.

The Capital programme, having been increased in the report to Cabinet in August, had now been reduced to £25.130 million as a result of the rephasing of £2.855 million to future years, as set out in Table 2 and paragraph 4.2 of the report. Much of the variation arose from the likelihood that there would be no significant expenditure on the Hardley depot within the current financial year.

The changes to the Housing Revenue Account largely reflected the variation of £815,000 to the Capital budget which was funded by the Housing Revenue Account.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the latest forecasts for the General Fund, Capital and Housing Revenue Account budgets, as set out in paragraphs 3.2, 4.1 and 5.1 respectively of Report Item 12 to the Cabinet, be noted.

**61 SCHEME OF DELEGATION OF POWERS TO OFFICERS**

**RESOLVED:**

That all delegations of powers to officers under the Planning and Infrastructure Portfolio to the Planning Policy Officer (CIL) be now delegated to the Planning Implementation and Enforcement Officer.

CHAIRMAN