

21 JUNE 2018

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 June 2018

* Cllr M A Steele (Chairman)
Cllr A K Penson (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

* A R Alvey
* W G Andrews
* G C Beck
M J Kendal

Councillors:

* Mrs A E McEvoy
* A D O'Sullivan
* D B Tipp
* C A Wise

*Present

In attendance:

Councillors:

M R Harris, Local Economic Development, Property and Innovation Portfolio Holder
J D Heron, Finance, Corporate Services and Improvement Portfolio Holder
B Rickman, Leader and Corporate Affairs Portfolio Holder

Officers Attending:

R Beere, A Bethune, M Callaghan, Mrs R Drummond, G Jarvis, A Kinghorn, Miss G O'Rourke and Mrs M Sandhu

Apologies:

Cllr Penson

4 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 15 March and 14 May 2018 be signed by the Chairman as correct records.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

7 PANEL/PORTFOLIO HOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Panel noted the Panel's/Portfolio Holders' responsibilities under the new arrangements and discussed related issues.

8 PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' UPDATES

The Panel received oral updates from:

Cllr J D Heron, Portfolio Holder, Finance, Corporate Services and Improvement. reported that the Council had recently been working on the selection of new software for Finance and Human Resources/Payroll. The implementation would take place over the next 12 months. There had been a number of presentations by possible providers over the last 4 weeks and decisions on preferred suppliers would be made shortly.

The end year budget outturn had been more positive than expected and allowed some room for manoeuvre in the coming year, but there was still much work to do in meeting the reduced funding challenges in following years.

Cllr M Harris, Portfolio Holder, Local Economic Development, Property and Innovation, outlined recent activities, which included:

- A meeting with Ofcom in London on the topic of local broadband and telecoms, which had been informative
- A meeting with the Chief Executive of the Solent LEP and continued liaison with the EM3 LEP.
- A recent meeting with the Forestry Commission concerning restrictions on timber sales in the context of the SSSI environmental protection, which needed to be pursued.
- Continued dialogue with a view to furthering relationships with the New Forest Business Partnership and collaboration with the National Park Authority on local economic development.
- Lobbying for housing provision for local business workers, especially properties for young people.
- The success of the Film New Forest project, which had been very successful, with £2 million having been invested in the local economy through filming activity in the area. A notable example of this was the filming of Star Wars Solo at Fawley. The Council would continue to work with Creative England in this area. It was noted that a Forest Film Festival was being arranged for 2019.
- His suggestion that the Council could earn revenue from advertising and marketing space on Council property. However, the idea had met with a mixed reception and could be the topic of a future task and finish group project.

Cllr Rickman, Portfolio Holder, Leader and Corporate Affairs, echoed Cllr Harris' comments. He gave a number of updates on business, the New Forest Show, and the Forestry Commission.

9 BUDGET TASK AND FINISH GROUP - UPDATE

The Panel at its January meeting had accepted the recommendations of the Budget Task and Finish Group and had requested an update on progress with the recommendations at their June meeting. This was set out in the report circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

10 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND BUDGET OUT-TURN REPORT 2017/18

The Panel noted the Annual Performance and Budget Out-turn Report for 2017/18.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

11 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Panel considered the Council's proposed Economic Development Strategy for 2018/23.

The Strategy set out a vision and related activities to tackle the identified barriers to growth in five key themes as follows:

- Developing a Skilled Workforce
- Increasing Growth and Productivity
- Developing Local Infrastructure
- Facilitating Vibrant Towns and Villages
- Promoting the Unique New Forest Offer

Members emphasised the need for the strategy to recognise the variety and difference between towns and villages across the District, which all required a tailored approach.

The Panel underlined the importance of ensuring that suitable communication and transport infrastructure was delivered to support key new developments. Consequently there would be a need to engage and influence the associated bodies to bring about the necessary changes and to make representations to them as required.

RESOLVED:

That the Economic Development Strategy 2018-23 be recommended for approval to the Cabinet and the Council, subject to the amendments suggested above.

12 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

The Panel considered the Council's Procurement Strategy for 2018-22.

RESOLVED:

That the Procurement Strategy 2018-22 be recommended to the Cabinet for approval.

13 ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY

The Panel considered the proposed Organisational Strategy.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed Organisational Strategy for 2018-22 be recommended to the Cabinet for approval.

14 ICT STRATEGY

The Panel considered the ICT Strategy and received a related presentation setting out the background. Members noted the tremendous pace of global change in ICT, and the Council's need to adapt to it whilst at the same time ensuring that it continued to cater for all forms of communication used by its residents.

In supporting the document, members suggested a minor amendment to the Business ICT Vision within the strategy, to emphasise that the Council's key aim was helping residents and businesses access services.

RESOLVED:

That the ICT Strategy 2018-22 be recommended for approval by the Cabinet, subject to the suggested amendments set out above.

15 HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY

The Panel considered the proposed Human Resources Strategy.

RESOLVED:

That the Human Resources Strategy 2018-22 attached as Appendix 1 to the report be recommended to the Cabinet for approval.

16 WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel considered its future Work Programme. The Panel agreed that a Council Tax Reduction Task and Finish Group be formed to meet over the summer. Cllrs Steele, Penson and J Heron were nominated to serve on the Group, and it was agreed that a further 2 places be sought from the wider membership of the Council.

The Panel agreed that a Budget Task and Finish Group be set up. Cllrs McEvoy, Steele and O'Sullivan volunteered to serve on the Group, and it was agreed that a further 3 spaces be sought from the wider membership of the Council.

It was agreed that:

- The Citizens' Advice New Forest T&F Group and the Customer Services Strategy T&F Group would in future report to the Community & Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel.
- That the Democratic Engagement Task and Finish Group be wound up.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be amended as set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

CHAIRMAN