

**26 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel held in the Bradbury Room, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Thursday, 26 September 2019

\* Cllr Alexis McEvoy (Chairman)  
Cllr Alan Alvey (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

\* Fran Carpenter  
\* Keith Craze  
\* Sandra Delemare  
\* Mahmoud Kangarani

**Councillors:**

Martyn Levitt  
\* Alan O'Sullivan  
\* Beverley Thorne  
\* Derek Tipp

\*Present

**In attendance:**

**Councillors:**

Barry Rickman, Leader & Corporate Affairs Portfolio Holder  
Jeremy Heron, Finance, Investment & Corporate Services Portfolio Holder  
Michael Harris, Economic Development Portfolio Holder

**Officers Attending:**

Manjit Sandhu, Rebecca Drummond, Karen Grimes, Andrew Kinghorn and Andy Rogers

**Apologies:**

Cllr Alvey

**14 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2019 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**16 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

**17 PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' UPDATES**

Cllr Rickman reminded members that the Electoral Review was still under way, resource plans for each portfolio were still being prepared for the Budget Task and Finish Group process, and work was under way with the review of the Corporate Plan.

Cllr Heron reported that the Elections Team were preparing for the Police and Crime Commissioners Elections next May as well as a possible General Election.

On ICT, Cllr Heron reported that the Office 365 roll out was well under way and the roll out for members would be after Christmas. The new accounting software implementation project was ongoing. The Meridio Document Storage system was also being improved.

Cllr Harris gave an update on the following issues:

- Local economic development
- Rural broadband (Government monies to bid for)
- Economic Development Team vacancies
- Film New Forest (£40k spent and £3 million spend in New Forest economy. Looking at TV and digital entertainment)
- Second New Forest Film Festival September 2020
- High streets - Cllr Harris reported on various factors affecting support for local businesses including business rates, the Open Doors pilot to help regenerate high streets and support community groups, encouraging flats in town centres to stimulate town centre growth, through dialogue with owners of properties.
- Forestry industry – Cllr Harris spoke of the importance of the local forestry industry and private concerns locally in the timber industry
- The NFBP – 300 members of 8,000 in the Forest and the need to increase this.

Cllr Harris suggested a number of items for future meetings:

- High streets/economic development – to be discussed at the November Panel meeting
- Forestry – it was agreed that discussions take place with the Forestry Commission at the annual meeting with the Council
- Small businesses – Cllr Harris was requested to report back to a future meeting on progress
- Cllr Harris suggested that a staff suggestion scheme be introduced, though it was acknowledged that staff were encouraged to suggest improvements at team meetings and these were regularly fed through to EMT and Service Managers as a matter of course. It was suggested though that staff suggestions could be invited at the upcoming Employee Survey. Members supported this.

Cllr Harris would also report back as appropriate on developments with broadband in the Forest. It was agreed that a report would be brought to the January Panel meeting on staff suggestions.

**18 THE CORPORATE PLAN 2020/2024 - DEVELOPMENT TIMETABLE**

The Panel received details of the Corporate Plan 2020/2024 Development Timetable.

**RESOLVED:**

That the timetable be noted.

**19 COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT**

The Panel received an overview of complaints received and dealt with by the Corporate Complaints Team during the period 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019.

Members asked that, if possible, a more detailed and longer term graph/assessment be brought to Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel, when the next report was submitted.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That Service Managers and Executive Heads be encouraged to ensure that employees respond appropriately to customers who appear not to have received an expected standard of service from the Council; and
- (c) That Service Managers and Executive Heads be reminded to review complaints about their services regularly, and to implement any learning from them.

**20 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Work Programme was reviewed. Staff suggestions were added to the January Panel agenda. It was suggested that if a staff suggestion scheme were operated annually, the suggestions should be reported annually to the Panel.

Panel members were invited to forward agenda items to Cllr Mrs McEvoy.

CHAIRMAN