

**7 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held on Monday, 7 September 2020

- \* Cllr Allan Glass (Chairman)
- \* Cllr Derek Tipp (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

- \* Alan Alvey
- \* Diane Andrews
- \* Ann Bellows
- \* Sue Bennison
- \* Geoffrey Blunden
- \* Hilary Brand
- \* Alex Brunsdon
- \* Fran Carpenter
- Louise Cerasoli
- \* Mark Clark
- \* Rebecca Clark
- \* Steve Clarke
- \* Jill Cleary
- \* Anne Corbridge
- \* Keith Craze
- \* Kate Crisell
- \* Jack Davies
- \* Steve Davies
- \* Arthur Davis
- \* Sandra Delemare
- \* Philip Dowd
- \* Jan Duke
- \* Barry Dunning
- \* Jacqui England
- \* Andrew Gossage
- \* Michael Harris
- \* David Harrison
- \* David Hawkins
- Edward Heron

**Councillors:**

- \* Jeremy Heron
- \* Alison Hoare
- \* Maureen Holding
- \* Christine Hopkins
- \* Mahmoud Kangarani
- \* Joshua Kidd
- \* Emma Lane
- Martyn Levitt
- \* Alexis McEvoy
- \* Ian Murray
- \* Alan O'Sullivan
- \* Stephanie Osborne
- \* Neville Penman
- \* Caroline Rackham
- \* Alvin Reid
- \* Joe Reilly
- \* Barry Rickman
- \* Tony Ring
- \* Steve Rippon-Swaine
- \* David Russell
- \* Ann Sevier
- \* Mark Steele
- \* Michael Thierry
- \* Beverley Thorne
- \* Neil Tungate
- \* Alex Wade
- \* Malcolm Wade
- \* Christine Ward
- \* John Ward

\*Present

**Officers Attending:**

Bob Jackson, Grainne O'Rourke, Colin Read, Daniel Reynafarje, Andy Rogers, Manjit Sandhu, Claire Upton-Brown, Karen Wardle and Matt Wisdom.

**Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Cerasoli, E Heron and Levitt.

**85 MINUTES****RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2020, be confirmed.

**86 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests, or any other interests by Members.

**87 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS****Former Councillor Christine Ford**

At the Cabinet meeting on 5 August 2020, the Leader of the Council announced with great sadness, that former New Forest District Councillor Christine Ford had sadly passed away on 1 August 2020.

As the first Full Council meeting following this date, the Chairman paid tribute to Christine, who had a long and distinguished record of service to the community and was a very much liked and respected Member of the Council. She would be sorely missed by all who knew her.

Due to current restrictions, the funeral arrangements were private and by invitation. However, it was hoped that a memorial service may take place in the New Year.

**Merchant Navy Day**

The Chairman reported that, to mark Merchant Navy Day, he was accompanied by his wife, Christine, the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to fly the Red Ensign at Appletree Court on 3 September 2020.

**88 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS****COVID-19**

The Leader of the Council highlighted that the pandemic had impacted on everyone's lives over the last six months. Local organisations including the Council had needed to adapt to be able to respond.

The recent work of the Council's Recovery Task and Finish Groups highlighted the huge amount of work taking place across the community. It was noted that the Council and local partners had responded to the closure of the New Forest campsites at short notice, with the Showground alone welcoming 38,000 visitors to 200 pitches. This had helped protect both the New Forest from the damage of wild camping and provided much needed help for many local businesses.

The Leader reported on the recent positive response to a Covid incident at one of the Council's Health and Leisure Centres, which was rapidly identified and successfully managed, minimising the impact on customers and the centre. Public Health England were satisfied that the Council had embedded proper arrangements for social distancing and avoiding individual contacts. Therefore, the Council was able to continue operating.

### **Return to Appletree Court**

The Leader confirmed that more officers would begin returning to Appletree Court offices in October, to work safely. The number working daily would be between 100 and 150, less than 50% of normal staffing numbers in the building.

In respect of Elected Members, it was reported that the Council continued to monitor Government guidance and at present, Virtual Meetings remained the safest way to continue with the business of the Council. Alternative arrangements such as Hybrid Meetings had been considered but presented significant operational and accessibility challenges, in addition to requiring further investment. The Leader highlighted the success of the Council's Virtual Meetings, although not without their challenges, they had attracted 3,614 views across all the Council, Cabinet, Committee and Panel meetings since May 2020. In the meantime, plans were underway in conjunction with the return of more officers to Appletree Court, to provide phased return options for Elected Members.

### **Milford on Sea – Sea Wall**

The Leader highlighted that the Council was very busy with normal business alongside that of responding to COVID-19. The storm damage at Milford that occurred at the start of the year would shortly have some emergency works carried out to provide winter protection both to Council assets and those of residents. The progress of the Council's applications for funding to the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (Levy Funding) was encouraging and further information was expected no later than November 2020.

## **89 REPORTS OF THE CABINET**

The Leader of the Council presented the reports of the Cabinet meetings held on 5 August and 2 September 2020 and moved the adoption of the recommendations.

Cllr Cleary seconded the motion.

### **Item 2 (2 September 2020) – Emergency Budget 2020/21 and Updated Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 – 2023/24**

Cllr Harrison, in highlighting his view on the use of Reserves at a time of crisis, moved the following amendment on this item:-

“To amend the budget to use £1 million from the General Reserve Fund, to be made available for any additional expenditure.”

Cllr J Davies seconded the amendment.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Investment and Corporate Services, Cllr J Heron, responded to the amendment. He highlighted that the full use of £3 million reserves remained available for any future uncertainties the Council faced. This was the primary purpose of holding such reserves. Having fully funded this year's budget, he did not consider the insertion of further reserves into the budget itself to be appropriate when these funds could serve the Council well in the future.

Cllrs J Davies and Rackham spoke in support of the amendment and hoped that some of the £1 million in reserves could be utilised in delivering some of the proposed outcomes from the COVID-19 Recovery work.

Some Members spoke in support of the original motion and the budget as presented to the Council, having participated in the work of the COVID-19 Recovery – Finance and Resources Task and Finish Group.

In responding to the debate on the amendment, Cllr Harrison suggested that it afforded the opportunity to respond more quickly to new budget requirements.

The Leader of the Council encouraged Members to support the original motion, highlighting the hard work of all Portfolio Holders, Task and Finish Group Members and officers to bring forward a balanced budget in significantly challenging circumstances.

The amendment was put to a recorded vote, the outcome of which was as follows:-

Voting for: Cllrs Brunsdon, M Clark, J Davies, Harrison, Osborne, Rackham, A Wade and M Wade.

Voting against: Cllrs Alvey, Andrews, Bellows, Bennison, Blunden, Carpenter, Clarke, Cleary, Corbridge, Craze, Crisell, S Davies, Davis, Duke, Dunning, England, Glass, Gossage, Harris, Hawkins, J Heron, Hoare, Holding, Kidd, Lane, McEvoy, O’Sullivan, Penman, Reilly, Rickman, Ring, Rippon-Swaine, Russell, Sevier, Steele, Thierry, Thorne, Tipp, Tungate, C Ward and J Ward.

Abstaining: Cllrs R Clark, Dowd and Kangarani.

The amendment was lost, 8 in favour, 41 against, 3 abstentions.

#### **Item 5 (2 September 2020) – Vision for the Waterside**

The Chairman highlighted his support in bringing forward a collective vision for the Waterside. Members spoke in support of the work of the Special Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel, which had influenced in a number of areas in the final vision document.

Some Members expressed their wish to see a more rounded vision, engaging directly with local communities.

The Chairman of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Cllr Rippon-Swaine, reported briefly on the work at the Special Panel meeting on this matter. He highlighted the engagement of local towns and parishes alongside ward councillors. As an overarching document, more detailed reports on specific subject matters such as those raised by councillors would be brought forward in due course.

#### **Item 6 (2 September 2020) – Electoral Review of New Forest District Council – Draft Recommendations – Consultation Response**

Cllr Corbridge moved an amendment on this item, a copy of which was circulated to the Council in advance of the meeting. The amendment concerned the ward boundaries in Lymington and Pennington as part of the Council’s consultation response to the Local Government Boundary Commission. A copy is attached to these minutes.

Cllr Dunning seconded the amendment.

Differing views were expressed on the area currently identified as the Buckland ward, as to whether it should be included in a warding pattern with Lymington, Pennington or other neighbouring areas.

Members speaking in support of the amendment highlighted the use of the majority of the linear geographical feature of the A337, as a clearly defined boundary between the proposed Pennington and Lymington wards. It was noted that some local concerns relating to the Belmore Estate had been addressed as part of the amendment.

The Leader of the Council in responding to the amendment, confirmed that he would be happy to support it, in recognition of the work undertaken by local Members to find the best solution for Lymington and Pennington, in the context of the overall District wide scheme.

The amendment was put to the vote and carried.

Cllr M Wade moved an amendment on this item, a copy of which was circulated to the Council in advance of the meeting. The amendment concerned the ward boundaries in Hythe and Dibden as part of the Council's consultation response to the Local Government Boundary Commission. A copy is attached to these minutes.

Cllr Dowd seconded the amendment.

Members spoke in support of the amendment, and placed on record their thanks to officers for the technical support required to produce the amendment.

The Leader of the Council in responding to the amendment, again confirmed that he would be happy to support it for the same reasons as the Lymington and Pennington amendment.

The amendment was put to the vote and carried.

Cllr Rackham wished for her dissent to be recorded in respect of the inclusion of Eling in a ward with Marchwood rather than with Totton.

Cllr Duke placed on record her thanks to Boldre Parish Council, alongside officers, for their hard work to produce a solution that did not split Boldre Parish across District wards.

The substantive motion of the reports of the Cabinet meetings held on 5 August and 2 September 2020 was put to a recorded vote, the outcome of which was as follows:-

Voting for: Cllrs Alvey, Andrews, Bellows, Bennison, Blunden, Brunsdon, Carpenter, M Clark, R Clark, Clarke, Cleary, Corbridge, Craze, Crisell, S Davies, Davis, Delemare, Dowd, Duke, Dunning, Glass, Gossage, Harris, Hawkins, J Heron, Hoare, Holding, Hopkins, Kidd, Lane, McEvoy, O'Sullivan, Penman, Reid, Reilly, Rickman, Ring, Rippon-Swaine, Russell, Sevier, Steele, Thierry, Thorne, Tipp, Tungate, A Wade, M Wade, C Ward and J Ward.

Voting against: None.

Abstaining: Cllrs England, Harrison, Kangarani, Osborne and Rackham.

The motion, as amended, was carried. 49 in favour, none against, 5 abstentions.

**RESOLVED:**

That the reports be received and the recommendations as amended, be adopted.

**90 REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Cllr Rippon-Swaine presented the report of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 12 March 2020, and moved the adoption of the recommendations, including a revised motion on the Waterside Rail Link.

Cllr Bennison seconded the motion.

Cllr Harrison, as the mover of the original motion before being considered by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel, spoke in support of the Panel's consideration, in recognition of the good debate and was delighted with the motion which reinforced the joined up approach on this issue from local public sector organisations.

Other Members spoke in support of the motion, citing enhancements to public transport as a key priority for the Council.

**RESOLVED:**

That this Council supports the principle of rail transport, and therefore supports the Hampshire County Council bid for the funding of a feasibility study into the resumption of a rail link along the Waterside as part of a strategic transport infrastructure in the light of planned development in the south waterside area. Officers will be tasked to work closely with HCC staff to ensure oversight on planning issues and economic and environmental viability are maintained and resolved.

**91 QUESTIONS**

There were none.

**92 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22A**

Questions were put and answered under Standing Order 22A as follows:-

- Cllr M Wade to the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services, Cllr Jill Cleary, on neighbour disputes during lockdown.
- Cllr J Davies to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure, Cllr E Heron, on changes to the planning system.
- Cllr Harrison to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Rickman, on commercial property investment.
- Cllr Rackham to the Portfolio Holder for Community Affairs, Cllr Andrews, on community grants.
- Cllr Kangarani to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Rickman, on Appletree Court and home working.
- Cllr M Clark to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Rickman, on virtual meetings.
- Cllr A Wade to the Portfolio Holder for Community Affairs, Cllr Andrews, on the future of customer services.

- Cllr Osborne to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure, Cllr E Heron, on the Vision for the Waterside.
- Cllr Brand to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Cllr Harris, on New Forest campsites.
- Cllr Bennison to the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services, Cllr Cleary, on the mother and baby unit in New Milton.
- Cllr Dowd to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Services, Cllr Hoare, on flood defences.
- Cllr McEvoy to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Cllr Harris, on Discretionary Grant Fund monies.
- Cllr M Clark to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Rickman, on 'no deal' Brexit lorry parks.

Note – a copy of the full questions and replies are attached to these minutes.

**93 DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS - MILFORD-ON-SEA, WESTOVER - SEA WALL FAILURE AND URGENT WORKS**

The Chairman moved the adoption of the recommendation as set out on the agenda, in connection with Milford-On-Sea, Westover – Sea Wall Failure and Urgent Works.

Cllr Tipp seconded the motion.

**RESOLVED:**

That the decision taken by the Section 151 Officer as set out in the decision notice and background report, be noted.

**94 DELEGATION OF POWERS TO OFFICERS**

The Chairman moved the adoption of the recommendations as set out on the agenda sheet, to update the Council's Delegation of Powers to Officers to take into account new legislation and changes to staffing structures.

Cllr Tipp seconded the motion.

**RESOLVED:**

That the changes to the Council's Delegation of Powers to Officers in Annex 1 – Delegation of Powers to Officers – New Powers and Annex 2 – Delegation of Powers to Officers – Changes to Existing Powers, be approved.

**95 MEETING DATES FOR THE 2021/22 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

**RESOLVED:**

That meetings be held on the following Mondays at 6.30pm:-

- 17 May 2021 (Annual meeting, already agreed)
- 12 July 2021
- 6 September 2021
- 11 October 2021

- 6 December 2021
- 21 February 2022
- 11 April 2022
- 16 May 2022 (Annual Meeting)

**96 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS**

There were no changes.

CHAIRMAN



**Proposed amendment to the Report of the Cabinet – 2 September 2020 – Item 6 –  
Electoral Review of New Forest District Council – Draft Recommendations –  
Consultation Response – Lymington and Pennington Wards**

*Cllr Corbridge will move, Cllr Dunning will second:-*

*To replace the Central section of the draft consultation response with the following:-*

### **3. CENTRAL**

3.1 The LGBC draft recommendations identify the following wards for this area:-

<b>Ward Name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Variance 2025</b>
Beaulieu, Boldre, East Boldre & Exbury & Lepe	1	3%
Brockenhurst & Denny Lodge	1	5%
Lymington Town	2	6%
Lyndhurst & Minstead	1	4%
Pennington	2	9%
Sway	1	-1%

#### **3.2 Beaulieu, Boldre, East Boldre & Exbury & Lepe**

3.2.1 The Council welcomes the adjustment made in other areas of the District, alongside a proposed Council Size of 48, to accommodate a ward which does not split Boldre Parish. The council confirms its support for the ward boundaries as it enables good electoral equality, strong boundaries and reflects local community identities and interests.

3.2.2 Having consulted local ward councillors, including comments from Boldre Parish Council, the Council requests that the ward name be amended to **Forest & Solent** to reflect the rural and coastal nature of the parishes it represents.

#### **3.3 Brockenhurst & Denny Lodge**

3.3.1 Whilst this ward does not support a single ward for Brockenhurst as a self contained community as proposed by the Council, the parishes are neighbouring and it facilitates the warding pattern well in the remaining area. The Council confirms its support for the ward boundaries and name.

#### **3.4 Lymington Town & Pennington**

3.4.1 As highlighted at 3.1.2, the Council welcomes the adjustment made in other areas of the District, alongside a proposed Council Size of 48, to accommodate a ward which does not split Boldre Parish. However, local ward councillors have not reviewed the proposed ward pattern based on a Council Size of 48 and the removal of the Buckland ward.

3.4.2 Following this review, an alternative warding pattern is proposed in the Lymington & Pennington Town area. The proposals and supporting evidence are outlined at section 4 below. If adopted, the proposals would not require any adjustment in other areas of the District warding pattern. Furthermore,

the Council requests that the ward name be amended to **Lymington** to reflect the two ward arrangements. The removal of the Buckland ward from the current arrangements removes the need for any distinction between the “town” centre of Lymington and other areas.

### 3.5 **Lyndhurst & Minstead**

3.5.1 The draft recommendations adopt the Council’s proposals for this ward without amendment. The Council confirms its support for the ward boundaries and name.

### 3.6 **Sway**

3.6.1 The draft recommendations adopt the Council’s proposals for this ward without amendment. The Council confirms its support for the ward boundaries and name.

## 4. **LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON PROPOSALS**

4.1 The Council’s proposals for this area in response to the LGBCE draft recommendations are as follows:-

<b>Ward Name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2025)</b>	<b>Variance 2025</b>
Lymington	2	6,639	8%
Pennington	2	6,560	7%

### 4.2 **Lymington & Pennington**

4.2.1 The proposed boundary changes accommodate the loss of Buckland ward and approximately divides equally the electorate between Lymington and Pennington wards, within parameters. Pennington ward remains a broad mix of rural and semi urban electorate spread between the coast and hinterland including some New Forest National Park designated area.

4.2.2 Lymington remains principally a ward for the town of Lymington. The boundary to the south of the A337 at Stanford Hill remains the same, moving the central section east to the clearly defined geographical linear feature of the A337. This enables the incorporation of the majority of the current Buckland ward into the proposed Lymington ward. The northern boundary remains the same. The small section west of the A337 to be included in the Lymington ward uses the clearly defined footpath off the A337, continuing to follow this behind Woodley Gardens before re-joining the existing boundary of polling district LA. These proposals address many of the local concerns in response to the draft recommendations and secure good electoral equality.

## Summary

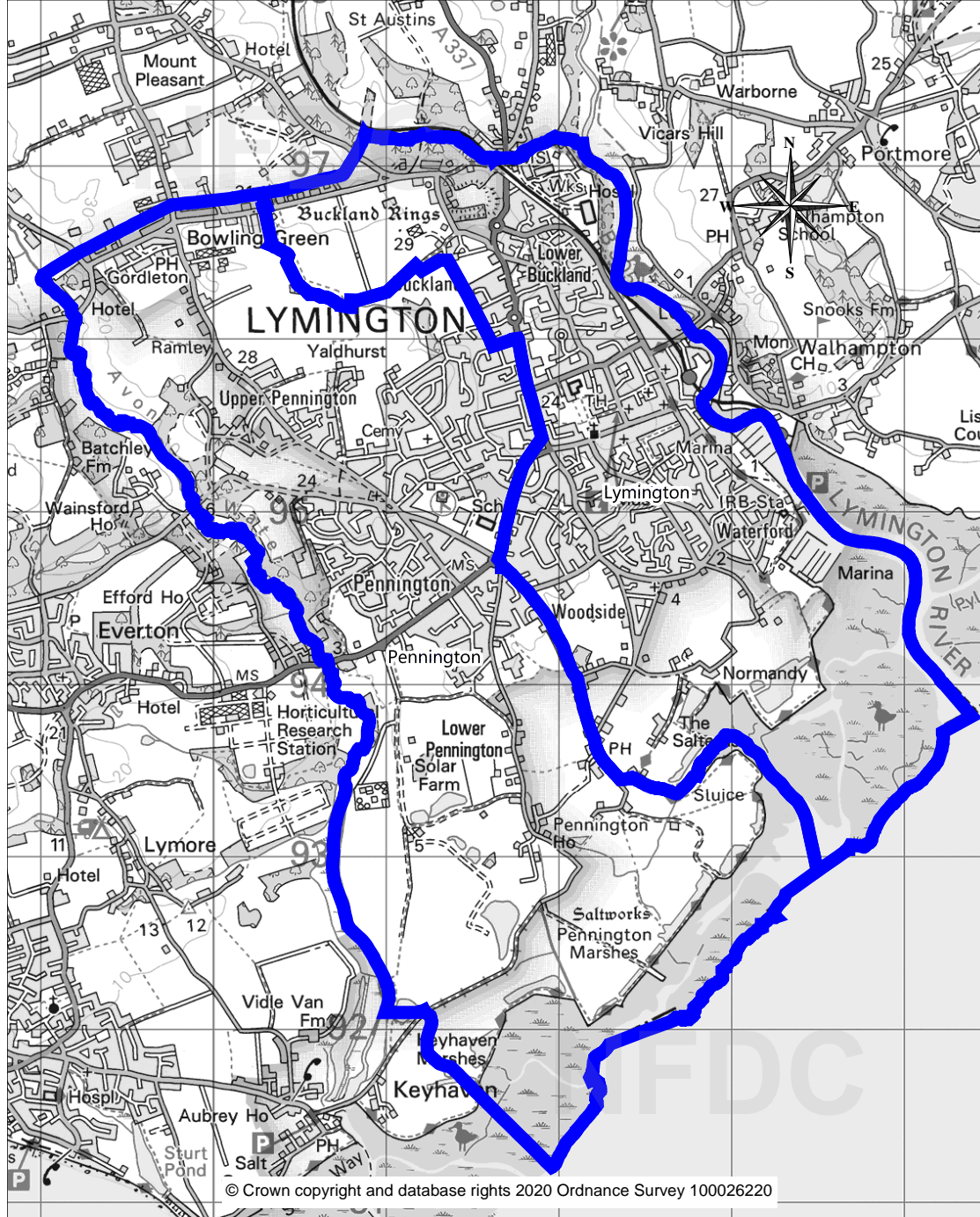
Ward Name – Draft Recommendations	Ward Name – Council Proposal (Bold & <i>Italic</i> where alternative is proposed)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2025)	Variance from average %
Lymington Town	<b><i>See alternative proposals below</i></b>	2	6,512	6%
Pennington	<b><i>See alternative proposals below</i></b>	2	6,682	9%


## Alternative warding pattern proposals

Ward Name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2025)	Variance from average %
Lymington	2	6,639	8%
Pennington	2	6,560	7%

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 <b>New Forest</b> DISTRICT COUNCIL Tel: 023 8028 5000 www.newforest.gov.uk	<b>Title</b>	
	<b>Date</b> 01/09/20	<b>Scale</b> 1:30000

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**Proposed amendment to the Report of the Cabinet – 2 September 2020 – Item 6 – Electoral Review of New Forest District Council – Draft Recommendations – Consultation Response – Hythe and Dibden Wards**

*Cllr M Wade will move, Cllr Dowd will second:-*

*To replace the South East section of the draft consultation response with the following:-*

**7. SOUTH EAST**

7.1 The LGBCE draft recommendations identify the following wards for this area:-

<b>Ward Name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Variance 2025</b>
Butts Ash, Dibden Purlieu, Furzedown & Langdown	3	-9%
Dibden & Hythe	3	-8%
Fawley, Blackfield, Calshot & Langley	2	-7%
Hardley, Holbury & North Blackfield	2	-8%

**7.2 Butts Ash, Dibden Purlieu, Furzedown & Langdown and Dibden & Hythe**

7.2.1 Whilst the draft recommendations adopt much of the Council's proposals for these wards, local ward councillors have reviewed the ward pattern based on a Council Size of 48.

7.2.2 Following this review, an alternative warding pattern is proposed in the Hythe & Dibden Parish area. The proposals and supporting evidence are outlined at section 8 below. If adopted, the proposals would not require any adjustment in other areas of the District warding pattern.

**7.3 Fawley, Blackfield, Calshot & Langley**

7.3.1 The draft recommendations adopt the Council's proposals for this ward without amendment. The Council confirms its support for the ward boundaries and name.

**7.4 Hardley, Holbury & North Blackfield**

7.4.1 The draft recommendations adopt the Council's proposals for this ward without amendment. The Council confirms its support for the ward boundaries and name.

**8. HYTHE & DIBDEN PROPOSALS**

8.1 The Council's proposals for this area in response to the LGBCE draft recommendations are as follows:-

<b>Ward Name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2025)</b>	<b>Variance 2025</b>
Hythe South	2	5,812	-5%
Hythe Central	2	5,548	-10%

Dibden & Dibden Purlieu	2	5,560	-10%
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## 8.2 Hythe South

8.2.1 This ward is in effect a suburb of Hythe and focuses around a number of large estates on the southern boundary of the community and makes a logical geographical ward covering the southern portion of Hythe and Dibden. It comprises polling districts HJ and HO, and the majority of polling districts HK1 and HN. In this ward, minor adjustments have been made where polling district HN meets HP, and where polling district HK1 meets HI and HM, to ensure electoral equality is achieved across the three wards in Hythe & Dibden. Further supporting evidence for this ward is noted below:-

- In ecclesiastical terms the St John's church of Hythe with its satellite place of worship in St Anne's, on Netley View, caters for the spiritual needs of the ward. Whilst for Dibden Purlieu and Dibden, it is St Andrew's church, in Dibden Purlieu, with its secondary church All Saints in Dibden. So the Hythe South ward is aligned within the spiritual boundary of St John's Church.
- Waterside Primary school, on Langdown estate, serves the eastern portion of the ward, whilst Wildground, located in Butts Ash, serves the western half of the ward, both schools' catchment areas are focused in this ward leaving Hythe primary to serve Hythe and the two Orchard schools to serve Dibden and Dibden Purlieu.
- The grouping of the larger older estates of Langdown, Netley View, Roseberry Avenue and Furzedown have a strong commonality in social make up, which in turn leads to a mutual set of community needs, which differ from other parts of the village.
- There are 3 Public Houses, which serve as social focal points in the ward and are used for the most part by locals within walking distance whilst other establishments serve the other parts of the community in both Hythe and Dibden/Dibden Purlieu.
- The shopping in this ward is done predominantly in Hythe, whilst in Dibden and Dibden Purlieu most of it is done in Tesco at Dibden or Dibden Purlieu centre. Netley View has its own Post Office and convenience store, which serves the northern section of the ward
- The play area facilities on the "Navy Fields", Blue Bell on the Birds estate and Forest Front plus the Skate Park on Forest Front are again mainly used by the children and youth of the adjoining estates.

## 8.3 Hythe Central

8.3.1 This ward comprises polling districts HI, HK2, HL, HM, and a small number of electors from HK1, south east of Langdown Lawn and South Street. Further supporting evidence for this ward is noted below:-

- It makes sense for Hythe to be unified and to avoid the confusing current boundaries, particularly at South Street.



- In ecclesiastical terms the St John's church of Hythe is located in the centre although most of its parish is in Hythe South. The other churches, which serve Hythe are Cornerstone, Saint Michael's Catholic Church and the Family Church.
- Hythe Primary School serves this ward and its catchment area is Hythe itself.
- This ward has a number of retirement homes and newer developments than in Hythe South, particularly on the water front, mixed with older 1960s developments, which were the beginning of Hythe's expansion.
- The community is served by two supermarkets, health centres, a Community Centre, cafés, pubs, restaurants, two NFDC car parks, transport links via bus and ferry, garages and MOT centres and a shopping centre with pedestrian zone which contains a high number of independent traders.
- The Tuesday market attracts a good mix of local and visiting shoppers.
- There is no real understanding of the arbitrary division into Hythe East and West and this proposal would make sense to residents in unifying the village to reflect the community. This falls mainly within the SO45 5 area.
- It has the largest play area in Ewart Recreation ground as well as the base for the village cricket team.

#### 8.4 **Dibden & Dibden Purlieu**

8.4.1 This ward comprises polling districts HG, HH, HP and a small number of electors from HN, as previously mentioned taking the boundary with Hythe South marginally south. Further supporting evidence for this ward is noted below:-

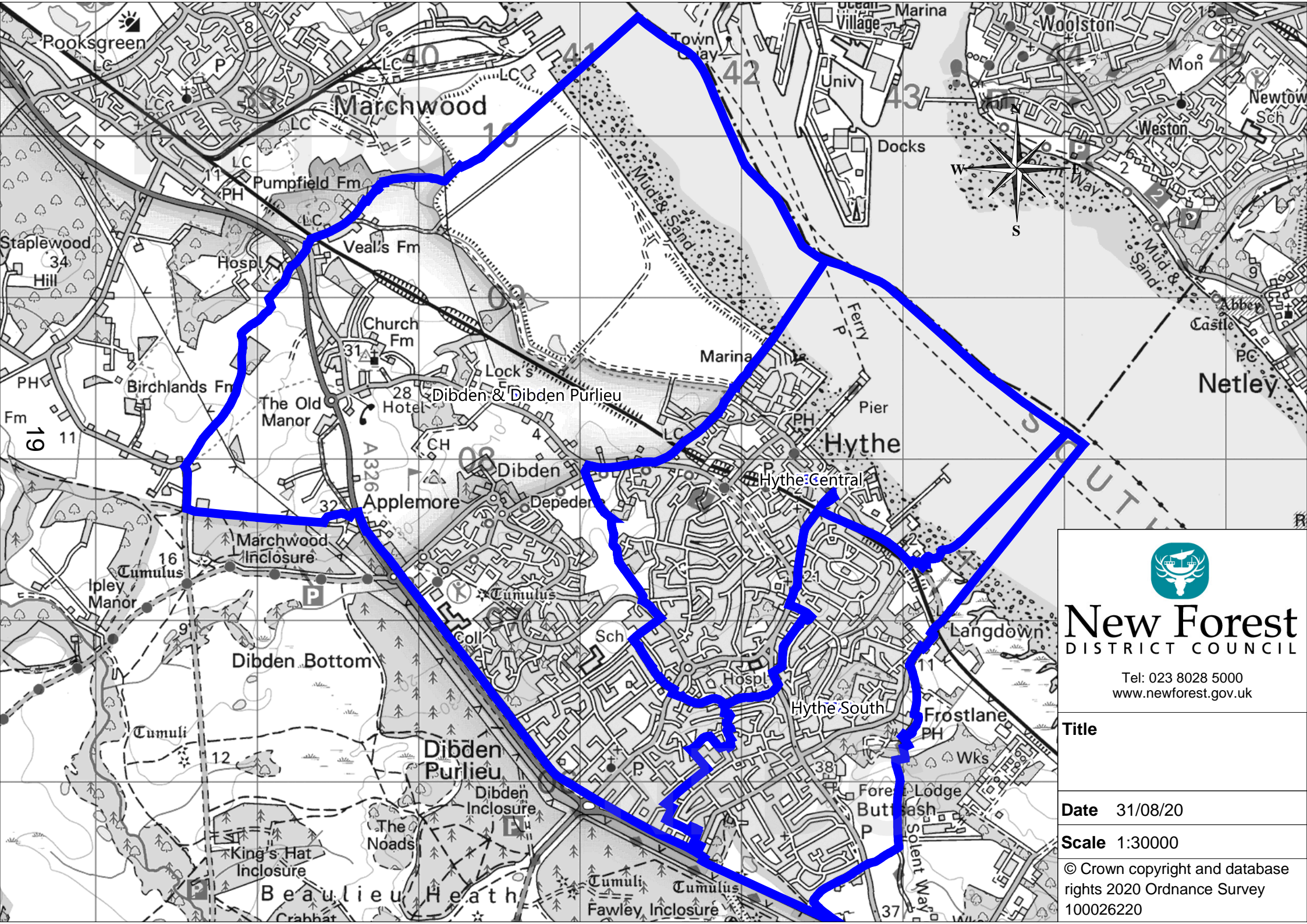
- Dibden Purlieu and Dibden is a distinct community with Orchard Infant and Junior schools, Noadswood and Applemore Secondary Schools along with Oaklodge and Greenwood Schools.
- In ecclesiastical terms St Andrew's church, in Dibden Purlieu, with its sister church All Saints in Dibden.
- Dibden Purlieu centre has the community hall (WI hall), medical centre (Forestsideside) , pub (Heath), garage (Tesco Express, Shawfix and Balmer Lawn, Dibden Purlieu) and viable independent shops (including a Butcher, Pharmacy, café, DIY store, hairdressers, Post Office etc.).
- Dibden has the Tesco super store, which is used by people from across the community however more so from those living outside Hythe Centre.
- The local Leisure Centre is in Dibden widely used and appreciated by the whole community.
- The housing developments in Dibden are newer than those in the other two proposed Hythe wards giving them a distinct community identity.
- There is a number of retirement homes in the Dibden Purlieu area.
- The two play areas, Fletcher Close and Orchard Wild Garden, both in Dibden are individually different from those in other areas reflecting the developmental design of their time.
- The golf course is one of the main social hubs within this ward, reflective of its more rural aspect than the other two proposed wards.

## Summary

Ward Name – Draft Recommendations	Ward Name – Council Proposal (Bold & <i>Italic</i> where alternative is proposed)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2025)	Variance from average %
Butts Ash, Dibden Purlieu, Furzedown & Langdown	<b><i>See alternative proposals below</i></b>	3	8,403	-9%
Dibden & Hythe	<b><i>See alternative proposals below</i></b>	3	8,517	-8%

## Alternative warding pattern proposals

Ward Name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2025)	Variance from average %
Hythe South	2	5,812	-5%
Hythe Central	2	5,548	-10%
Dibden & Dibden Purlieu	2	5,560	-10%



# New Forest

DISTRICT COUNCIL

Tel: 023 8028 5000  
www.newforest.gov.uk

**Title**

**Date** 31/08/20

**Scale** 1:30000

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## FULL COUNCIL – 7 SEPTEMBER 2020 – QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22A

### First Questions

#### Question 1

#### **From Cllr Malcolm Wade to the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services, Cllr Jill Cleary**

During the current pandemic with residents and tenants under lock down with the stress and strains that environment brings how many cases of neighbour disputes involving NFDC tenants has the authority dealt with from the lock down to the end of August? Also, how many were settled to the complainant's satisfaction?

Answer:

*The Government announced a national lockdown on March 23rd 2020 due to the Covid 19 Pandemic. This understandably has had a direct impact on all members of society. The enforced isolation, with household members having to spend almost all their time indoors together along with children being unable to access education, has exacerbated tensions within communities. This is evident in the increase of neighbour complaints received by the Council during the period from March 23rd to August 31st.*

*The Council's Housing Estates Team received 407 initial reports of nuisance incidents between March 23rd and August 31st.*

*Of these, 88 cases warranted further investigation. 57 of these cases remain active and the other 31 have been closed with a satisfactory resolution.*

*Additionally, during this period, 145 tenancy warning letters were issued to identified sources of nuisance.*

*The response to each complaint is dealt with on a case by case basis, recognising the particular complexity that each case brings. To achieve lasting and effective outcomes, the process and time required is often multi-faceted, and requires the support and intervention of other agencies including the Police, Children Services, Mental Health teams etc. During lockdown, the responses of these external support agencies have been varied. However the Council continued to provide its full services. Whilst this was a challenge, my Housing Teams continued to provide support to our tenants and the communities within which they live.*

*Even during lockdown, NFDC continued to build resilience within its Housing Support team by adding new staff including a Complex Support Co-ordinator who works alongside tenants, homeless households and public sector agencies to mitigate and resolve issues within communities. Within the Housing Teams, there is great expertise and experience in dealing with these sorts of issues to try and reach positive outcomes that allow people to live in harmony.*

*Members, I believe most sincerely that my Housing Teams have risen superbly to the challenge of dealing with an increase in neighbourhood disputes and complaints arising out of the Covid 19 Pandemic and we will continue to put our efforts into resolving these.*

*Note – in response to a supplementary question relating to local concerns in Hythe and Dibden, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that she would personally investigate the concerns outside of the meeting.*

## Question 2

### **From Cllr Jack Davies to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure, Cllr Edward Heron**

Does the Portfolio Holder agree with me that the Government's proposed changes to Planning law removes the right of local people to have a say in the planning process and will he write to both New Forest MPs urging them to oppose these proposals?

*Answer:*

*The Government has set out for consultation major proposals to reform the planning system. The deadline for response is 29 October. The proposals, if implemented, would arguably represent the most significant changes to the English planning system since its inception in 1947.*

*The Government is aiming to speed up the delivery of housing whilst enhancing quality. These aims are supported. However the proposals within the White Paper will not deliver these aims.*

*I have asked officers to prepare a detailed Cabinet paper setting out the changes proposed to the system, this will come to the October Cabinet meeting. The White Paper proposes that plans designate "growth", "renewal" and "protection areas". In addition to specifying uses, plans would specify heights / density and potentially more detailed design guidance. This would link to the proposals for 'permission in principle' in growth and possibly renewal areas. I believe that this approach will slow down the 'plan making' part of the process rather than speeding it up. It would also make it very difficult to set such guidance across urban areas, where such considerations are influenced by the local context. Once that Plan is adopted then permission in principle exists. Community engagement would need to occur at the Plan Making stage. Whilst the right for local people to have their say is not removed the radical changes to the system would mean that local residents would have much less opportunity to have its say on individual developments within their immediate area.*

*I have grave concerns about the White Paper and will write to both New Forest MP's setting out the Council's concerns after the meeting of the Cabinet.*

*Note – this question was dealt with in writing in the absence of the Portfolio Holder.*

## Question 3

### **From Cllr David Harrison to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Barry Rickman**

In the light of the financial stress to the Council of the post-Covid 19 situation can the Leader of the Council clarify their earlier plans to borrow £30m to invest in commercial property?

*Answer:*

*As we have seen from elsewhere on this Council agenda, despite the significance of the financial implications the coronavirus has had on the Council, we have produced a revised balanced budget for 2020/21. In support of the medium term financial plan, the Council's strategy to invest in commercial property for the purposes of achieving economic generation within the district and an additional income source to the Council is still a sound strategy for an administration who take a long term view. Yes the investments may be financed by borrowing if required, according to the adopted strategy.*

#### **Question 4**

##### **From Cllr Caroline Rackham to the Portfolio Holder for Community Affairs, Cllr Diane Andrews**

What will be expected in terms of service delivery for community grant recipients this year? How are they going to be reassessed?

*Answer:*

*We have two aspects of the community grant, capital and revenue. Both grant schemes directly benefit local people and meet the objectives set out in our corporate plan. All applications are assessed and go through a robust grants procedure to identify the positive contribution that they make to the local New Forest community.*

*There are certain stipulations and recipients must prove the grant is being used for the purpose that has been agreed. We will also undertake an appraisal of each grant to ensure the key objectives have been met. For capital grants, applicants have to provide regular monitoring reports.*

*If applicants are reapplying this year, they will be asked to give details on how they have used the grant that they have previously received and how it has benefitted our communities. This is part of the continuing grants procedure. Those that are eligible to apply will meet with the Community Grants Task and Finish Group.*

*If an organisation has received a grant but does not reapply, they too will be asked to submit a report on their activities and how the funding has contributed to their work and benefitted our communities.*

*We do have an excellent relationship with all our community and voluntary organisations, and this process of check and balance has been very thorough.*

*Note – in response to a supplementary question on the options for providing grant funds for more than a 12 month period, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that this would require the input of the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for finance.*

#### **Question 5**

##### **From Cllr Matt Kangarani to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Barry Rickman**

Can the Portfolio Holder give us some idea of the percentage of staff who have now returned to the office and whether working from home by staff is now accepted as part of the Council's long term strategy and will be reflected in staffing terms and conditions in the future?

*Answer:*

*Only essential staff have been working at Appletree Court, approximately 30/40 daily, about 10% of the total prior to the pandemic. Plans are being developed for more staff to return to ATC in a safe manner in October, the number on a daily basis is likely to be initially less than 50% perhaps growing over time. Our recent employee survey, indicated that 92% of staff were okay with working from home and 61% of staff found that they now actually enjoyed working from home. It is clear that the pandemic has identified that working from home is now, due to advancements in technology an acceptable part of the overall workspace and managers are working with staff to ensure they have the right ICT bundle to support working from home. The Council's Smarter Working strategy developed by the Council in 2018*

<https://democracy.newforest.gov.uk/documents/g6560/Public%20reports%20pack%2003rd-Oct-2018%2010.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

*highlighted the changing landscape of work, including how we use technology, space and working practices to deliver services to our residents and customers. How and where people work in the longer term will continue to be a focus. It is recognised that there are benefits, including financial to both the employer and the employee from staff working from home. These issues will be considered as part of the Councils' future recruitment and retention strategy.*

*Note – in response to a supplementary question on the financial impact of home working on the Council, the Leader of the Council confirmed that some of this analysis had started.*

#### **Question 6**

##### **From Cllr Mark Clark to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Barry Rickman**

Can we be given a total figure on monies saved on specifically Councillor travel and subsistence expenses since the lockdown began? Given the last Full Council on July 6th has gained 481 views on YouTube, more than a small sized hall could hold, can we expect virtual meetings across the whole range of Council business to now be a fixture of permanent Council activity, given this now clearly aids public accountability?

*Answer:*

*A total of £1,070.10 was paid in councillors' travel and subsistence claims for the period 1 April – 31 August 2020. That is down from £8,314.03 for the same period in 2019. Therefore, the Council has made a comparable saving of just over £7,200.*

*I am as encouraged as Cllr Clark by the views this Council is attracting on its online meetings. As I mentioned in my earlier announcements, across all the virtual Council, Cabinet, Committee and Panel meetings, there have now been a total of 3,614 views and I am sure we will add to that number this evening. This demonstrates the interest from within the community for engagement in the democratic process.*

*Whilst we must also recognise that there are benefits to holding physical Council meetings, for the time being Virtual Meetings remain the safest way to continue with the business of this Council and I am pleased in the way both Members and Officers have adapted to deliver these meetings.*

*Looking to the future and the longer term, it is clear that whatever "normal" looks like for local authority public meetings, the Council must look to maintain and enhance the accessibility to them by making the best use of technology.*

*The Council has already made the commitment, through the Smarter Working agenda, to modernise and make the best use of technology as part of the democratic process. It should now be recognised that one opportunity that this crisis has presented, has been to accelerate and continue with this work.*

#### **Question 7**

##### **From Cllr Alex Wade to the Portfolio Holder for Community Affairs, Cllr Diane Andrews**

With new ways of working likely to become part of how this Council moves forward, what consideration is being given to providing accessible and modern approaches to Customer Service? Will we look at having zoom meetings with residents who have to self isolate, or



unable to travel to Appletree court, offer flexible hours for our staff and residents. And consider more pop up service provision within our towns and villages as we try and maintain a high level of engagement with residents during the pandemic?

Answer:

*Reviewing how we deliver services to our customers is a priority for all areas of the Council. You will know we have recently invested in a new website that enables our customers to transact with us more effectively, when it is most convenient to them. During the pandemic, many changes have been made, we have a Skype facility at Appletree Court so that customers who need to have a face to face meeting with housing services can do this via Skype in our meeting room. We have opened three of our information offices, and a further five run by towns and parishes, all in a Covid safe way to ensure those residents who were not able to transact with us via phones or on-line, continue to be able to engage with the Council. In housing customers are able to upload documents easily using their phones, again enabling them to transact with the Council in the simplest way. This has proved popular and we will continue to innovate and endeavour as we move forward to keep the people we care about connected to this Council.*

*Note – in response to a supplementary question on further engagement opportunities, the Portfolio Holder highlighted the high levels of engagement undertaken by the Council despite the Covid challenges, but welcomed further engagement from councillors on any areas for improvement.*

#### **Question 8**

**From Cllr Stephanie Osborne to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure, Cllr Edward Heron**

The Vision for the Waterside shows a willingness to bring funding and improvements in to the area which are welcome. However, can the Portfolio Holder advise how we can ensure any future employment and skills opportunities for local residents can be as wide ranging as possible, and not limited to the organisations sat on the Vision working group? What actions can he and the Council take to help engage employers to consider the Waterside as a location?

Answer:

*The Vision document sets out the outcomes we are seeking to deliver across the Waterside. Significant further work will be required setting out in detail how these outcomes are going to be delivered and what work the Council needs to do.*

*Providing local jobs for local people is critical as well as the ensuring that there are training and upskilling opportunities for the local communities. An Employment and Skills Plan is already embedded in the draft Section 106 that is currently being agreed with the Fawley applicants. Looking at how Employment and Skills Plans are delivered across all development within the District is one of the matters that I have asked the Chief Planning Officer to do some further work on. I have also asked that a full report is prepared to identify all the council led workstreams that are needed to support the delivery of the outcomes set out in the Vision document.*

*Note – this question was dealt with in writing in absence of the Portfolio Holder.*

#### **Question 9**

**From Cllr Hilary Brand to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Cllr Michael Harris**

Please can the Economy Portfolio Holder explain to the Council what they are doing to ensure that Forestry England will have their 10 New Forest Campsites up and running by April 2021?

Answer:

*Together with all partners we are in discussions with Forestry England, to ensure all campsites are up and running for 2021. As a direct result of your question today I have asked the Chief Planning Officer to write directly to Forestry England and will copy you into the answer to that letter. It is so important to the whole economy in the New Forest to resolve this issue.*

*Note – in response to a supplementary question on the prospect of the Council running the campsites, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that he would ask this question of officers.*

**Question 10**

**From Cllr Sue Bennison to the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services, Cllr Jill Cleary**

Are you any nearer completing your hopes for a Mother and Baby Unit in New Milton?

Answer:

*Thank you for your question and it is very timely as I am visiting our almost complete new Mother and Baby facility this coming Friday with a small number of officers and immediate local members. I would have loved to have invited all Cllrs to see what great work is going on in creating these new facilities and other temporary accommodation but with the Covid 19 situation, this is not possible at this time. However following this visit, we will be arranging for Members to have a virtual tour of this new facility at 129 Ashley Road, New Milton and also of our newly refurbished cottages at Jones Lane, Hythe. Officers will be taking a video recording of these facilities and I look forward to presenting this to you shortly. I think Members will be very surprised and pleased with what we have done.*

*As Members will know, it has always been my desire to create a specific and bespoke facility for homeless young mothers and babies who, as we have seen around the country, are often placed in completely unsatisfactory accommodation. I am determined that this Council will give these young mothers a chance to get their lives back on track and enable them to pursue their own dreams and fundamental to this, is having a decent home. Our new facility at Ashley Road contains 4 ensuite spacious individual units and has 2 communal kitchens, all constructed to very good standards. Whilst this will be temporary accommodation, we will be actively engaging with other agencies as well as our own Support Team within Housing Services, to help these young mothers get the life skills they need to move onwards and upwards. My Housing Teams have worked hard to bring my vision alive and I am very pleased that we are on the cusp of opening this new facility.*

**Question 11**

**From Cllr Philip Dowd to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Services, Cllr Alison Hoare**

Will the Portfolio Holder reassure residents in my ward that the District Council has a comprehensive flood defence strategy covering all coastal and waterway land it has responsibility for? Where may residents access this information?

Answer:

*The councillor's ward is Dibden and Hythe East, within this ward there are no defences that are managed by the coastal team as the foreshore frontage is either undefended or privately owned.*

*However, across the district the Council has adopted two Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs), these identify the future flood and erosion risks that under various scenarios may happen over a 100 year period. The SMPs set out high level management policies for our coastline, they are however, non-statutory and independent of government funding.*

*The SMPs that take in the NFDC coastline are:-*

*Poole & Christchurch Bay, which covers Hurst Spit to Dursilton Head - <http://twobays.net/>*

*North Solent SMP, which covers Hurst Spit to Selsey Bill and the Member's ward - <http://www.northsolentsmp.co.uk/15867>*

*Both of these are available online and can be accessed via the NFDC website "coastal management" pages.*

*Coastal flooding falls under the responsibility of the Environment Agency, further information can be found under .gov.uk where there are many documents relating to national flood and coastal erosion risk management policy.*

*Of particular interest will be the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England. This a new document that was laid before Parliament on 14th July 2020. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-strategy-for-england--2>*

## **Question 12**

**From Cllr Alexis McEvoy to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Cllr Michael Harris**

*I recently read that HM Treasury was requiring local Councils to return any unspent Discretionary Grant Fund monies. These monies were intended to support businesses struggling with the economic impacts caused by Covid 19.*

*How much, if any of these monies will be returned to HM Treasury by this Council?*

*Answer:*

*We will not be returning any funds for this scheme. Of the discretionary grant monies we had just over £2m, getting that money to as many businesses that had fallen between the gaps of the other funds the Government made available to support businesses as a result of Covid-19.*

*I can confirm that following the final round which focused on those premises with a rateable value of above £51k, we spent our entire budget and therefore will not be returning any funds. In real numbers, this amounts to 351 grants paid to businesses.*

*It's worth mentioning that the Rates Related Grant Scheme has now also closed with the deadline to apply having been on Friday. Under this scheme we issued £41.1m to around 97.3% of those eligible businesses in the New Forest. Payments were made to 3410 business.*

*Note – in response to a supplementary question relating to the number of businesses NFDC was able to support across the various schemes, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that this was a total of 3,761.*

## **Second Questions**

### **Question 13**

#### **From Cllr Mark Clark to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Barry Rickman**

Is the Council aware of the last minute changes to the law to grant emergency planning permission for it to build a number of 'temporary' (up to five years) 'No Deal' Brexit lorry parks in 29 Council areas. These designated council areas include Hampshire County Council and Southampton City Council.

Does this Council therefore know of any such potential parks which might adversely affect the NFDC area and have there been any discussions with those Councils about the implications of these possible arrangements?

*Answer:*

*The Council is not aware of any such parks, within the New Forest area.*