

3 JUNE 2020

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Wednesday, 3 June 2020

- * Cllr Barry Rickman (Chairman)
- * Cllr Edward Heron (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- * Diane Andrews
- * Jill Cleary
- * Michael Harris

Councillors:

- * Jeremy Heron
- * Alison Hoare
- * Mark Steele

*Present

In attendance:

Councillors:

Sue Bennison
Geoffrey Blunden
Steve Clarke
Anne Corbridge
Keith Craze
Steve Davies
Philip Dowd
Barry Dunning
Jacqui England
Allan Glass
David Hawkins

Councillors:

Christine Hopkins
Martyn Levitt
Alan O'Sullivan
Caroline Rackham
Alvin Reid
Joe Reilly
Steve Rippon-Swaine
Beverley Thorne
Derek Tipp
Christine Ward

Officers Attending:

Alan Bethune, Bob Jackson, Grainne O'Rourke, Elaine Olden, Colin Read,
Manjit Sandhu, Claire Upton-Brown, Karen Wardle and Matt Wisdom

Apologies:

There were no apologies for absence received from Cabinet Members.

84 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2020, be confirmed and signed.

85 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests made by Cabinet Members.

86 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no issues raised during the public participation period.

87 RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS - COVID-19 - UPDATE

Portfolio Holders gave a presentation with an update on the Council's response to the Coronavirus – COVID-19 pandemic. The slides from the presentation are attached to these minutes for reference.

Community Affairs

- The Council's Local Response Centre continued to operate, with over 1,000 referrals received. 850 deliveries of food and essential items had been made.
- Future arrangements were being considered in partnership with local food banks, to ensure support could continue to be provided to vulnerable residents.
- Preparations continued for the reopening of information offices in Lymington and New Milton during June. Public offices would be following strict safety guidance for both staff and customers.

Housing Services

- The restoration of all Housing Services continued, in addition to the emergency work that had continued throughout the peak of the Coronavirus.
- All work in tenant's homes was being undertaken with regard to social distancing, good hygiene and in accordance with Government guidance.
- The re-letting of Council properties had commenced, to ensure people in unsatisfactory accommodation or those facing homelessness were rehoused at the earliest opportunity.

Economic Development

- The new Discretionary Business Grants Scheme would support particular business types that did not qualify for other schemes, including some Bed and Breakfasts, businesses in shared offices spaces, some charities and also market traders.
- A total of £50,000 had been awarded via the Rural Resilience Fund in partnership with the Solent Local Economic Partnership, protecting vital local jobs in the District.
- Business Needs Surveys were taking place to understand the key challenges facing local businesses, which would be essential to effectively address the Council's recovery plan in this area.

Finance, Investment and Corporate Services

- Business Grants totalling over £39 million had been administered and paid to over 3,200 businesses.
- An ICT workplan was underway in response to recent events to ensure the benefits of a remote workforce were realised and business continuity was achieved.

- The future success of commercial property opportunities would continue to be important to securing much needed income, in the overall context of reviewing expenditure.

Environment and Regulatory Services

- The past nine weeks had seen an increased demand for waste and recycling services, with increases from last year as follows:-
 - 8% increase in waste collected in black sacks.
 - 13% increase in recycling.
 - 21% increase in kerbside glass.
 - 15% increase in garden waste customers, with over 2,000 new customers.
- Public toilets were beginning to open on a phased basis, where it was safe to do so for both visitors and staff.
- Food safety teams remained exceptionally busy advising businesses on their preparations for reopening, whilst enforcing against those who had breached the Government guidance.

Leisure and Wellbeing

- Dibden Golf Course reopened on 16 May 2020 under new course rules set by Golf England, ensuring social distancing. The clubhouse remained closed and the new arrangements were working well with the course fully booked most days.
- Approximately 400 members of Health and Leisure staff had been furloughed until the end of June, whilst some continued to be redeployed into other service areas such as the Council's Local Response Centre.

Planning and Infrastructure

- Three virtual Planning Committees were successfully held throughout May.
- The Council continued to work with Hampshire County Council to identify projects for Government grants to support safe places to walk and cycle as part of the overall strategy to reopen high streets.

88 THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF CORONAVIRUS - COVID-19 - APRIL - MAY 2020

RESOLVED:

1. That the Cabinet note the financial implications as set out throughout the report.
2. That the Cabinet recommend to Council that the budget for 2020/21 be updated to take into account;
 - (a) the income losses and expenditure pressures sustained by the Council during April and May 2020;
 - (b) the emergency support funding received to date; and
 - (c) the use of reserves to bridge the gap between the income and expenditure pressures and emergency support funding.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

Report to Cabinet and Full Council.

PORTFOLIO:

Finance, Investment and Corporate Services.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:

As set out in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):

None.

DISCUSSION:

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report and highlighted the impact of Coronavirus, in financial terms totalling a net increase of £2.052 million throughout April and May to the General Fund budget requirement. It would be unclear and to what extent the loss of income would have on service delivery in the medium to long term. Given that the Council could not continue to deplete its reserves, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that he had asked the Chief Executive and the Council's Executive Management Team to bring forward options to reduce expenditure.

89 COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN - ROLE OF TASK AND FINISH GROUPS**RESOLVED:**

That the Cabinet approves the approach to recovery from the Coronavirus – COVID-19 pandemic as outlined within the report, including the establishment of the following four Task and Finish Groups:-

- Finances & Resources (including Health & Safety, Workforce Wellbeing & Digital Transformation)
- Local Economy
- Community Stakeholder engagement (including the Voluntary Sector)
- Council Services

REASONS FOR DECISION:

As set out in the report.

KEY DECISION:

No.

PORTFOLIO:

Leader and Corporate Affairs / All.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:

As set out in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):

None.

DISCUSSION:

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and encouraged all Members of the Council to join one of the four Recovery Task and Finish Groups.

The Chief Executive highlighted that the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum had changed the wording of objectives 8 and 13 as part of their recovery plan to read as follows:-

“To reinforce and restore public confidence in the resilience of public agencies to protect the public from critical incidents.

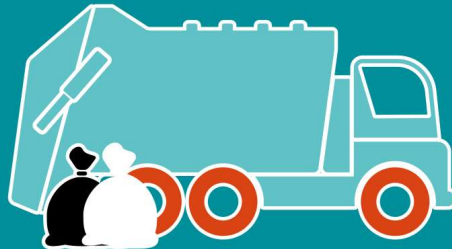
To establish effective protocols for public involvement and liaison and restore public engagement and confidence in all levels of the democratic process.”

CHAIRMAN

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Cabinet

3 June 2020



Leader's portfolio

- “Our Plan to Rebuild” – government strategy next stage of returning to a “new” normal
- We are setting up four recovery task and finish groups, we listen to our staff and engaging with our residents and business and all in our community
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- We have maintained regular communication and engagement with Town and Parish Councils
- We have offered to support Town and Parish Councils who find themselves in financial distress.



Community Affairs portfolio



- Local Response Centre has continued to operate from Applemore Health and Leisure centre. We have now received over 1000 referrals and made 860 deliveries.
- We are working with our partners to consider future arrangements for the Response centre and discussions are progressing well.
- We are preparing to open some of our information offices during June. The public offices will be following strict working safely guidance for both our staff and customers.
- The development of our new website is progressing well and this will be launched in mid July.
- The overall net financial impact to April and May totals £25,000

Housing portfolio



- Emphasis is now on restoring all housing services including routine repairs and maintenance of council properties.
- All works in tenants' homes is being undertaken with regard to social distancing and hygiene in accordance with Government published advice.
- Reletting of council properties has now commenced – ensuring that all priority families waiting, are rehoused at the earliest opportunity.
- Additional work is being carried out on those homeless households housed in temporary accommodation as a direct result of the Covid-19 – the objective being to find suitable longer term accommodation.
- The overall net financial impact April to May totals £119,000

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Economic development portfolio



- Economic Development Team have continued to work well with Revenues colleagues and have established a joint approach in the administration of the new Discretionary Business Grant Scheme
- Initial Rural Resilience Fund of £25k now distributed
- Further £25k Rural Resilience Fund received from LEP
- Re-opening the High Street Fund launched working with partners to develop a strategy for our towns and larger villages.
- Business needs survey being carried out this will inform Recovery Plan

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Finance, investment and corporate services portfolio



- Business Grants totalling over £39M now paid to over 3,200 businesses.
- Discretionary Scheme for an additional £2M set up and open for applications.
- ICT workplan is under review in light of recent events and learning from remote working and business continuity experiences.
- Treasury Management incomes have reduced, but we have completed on a Commercial Property Purchase; we are an administration which takes a long term view.
- The overall net financial impact to April and May totals £141,000

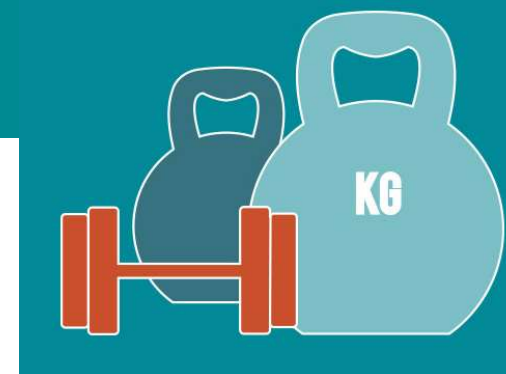
Environment portfolio



- Waste and Recycling collection tonnages have increased during lockdown. The Garden Waste Service has over 2,000 **New** customers.
- ↪ • Where possible Public Toilets are being re-opened on a phased basis, but only where it is safe to do so and social distancing can be achieved.
- Signage has been installed at all of our open spaces and coastal amenity sites to remind people of the social distancing guidance.
- Food safety teams have been exceptionally busy advising businesses in preparation for re-opening.
- The overall net financial impact to April and May totals £197,000

Leisure and wellbeing portfolio

- Dibden Golf Course re-opened on Saturday 16th May – under new course rules set by Golf England. These arrangements are working very well with the Course fully booked most days. The Clubhouse remains closed awaiting further guidance.
- Health and Leisure staff have now been furloughed until the end of June, other staff continue to be redeployed on the hub.
- Some of the Health and Leisure team are working on a recovery plan to be presented at Recovery Task and Finish group.
- The overall net financial impact to April and May totals £835,000



Planning and infrastructure



- Three Virtual Planning Committee held to date
- Working with HCC on Covid 19 Social Distancing safe places to walk and cycle including helping Reopen the High Streets
- All coastal car parks reopened 13 May 2020 charging re-introduced
- All Council owned car parks re-introduced charging 1 June 2020
- The overall net financial impact to April and May totals £635,000

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