

1 JULY 2020

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Wednesday, 1 July 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  
Fran Carpenter  
Steve Clarke  
Keith Craze  
Jack Davies  
Steve Davies  
Jacqui England  
Allan Glass

**Councillors:**

David Harrison  
David Hawkins  
Maureen Holding  
Christine Hopkins  
Alan O'Sullivan  
Alvin Reid  
Steve Rippon-Swaine  
Derek Tipp  
Christine Ward

**Officers Attending:**

Alan Bethune, Louise Evans, Bob Jackson, Grainne O'Rourke, Manjit Sandhu, Claire Upton-Brown and Matt Wisdom

**Apologies:**

There were no apologies for absence received from Cabinet Members.

**90 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2020, be confirmed and signed.

**91 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**92 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no issues raised during the public participation period.

**93 RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS - COVID-19 - UPDATE**

The Leader of the Council highlighted the need to stay alert in light of recent local lockdown measures introduced in other areas of the country. A COVID-19 incident control outbreak plan was being prepared in collaboration with local partners, which would be shared with councillors in due course.

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.

Housing Services

- Services were now operating “business as usual” with Housing Maintenance in particular working hard to reduce the backlog of non-essential repairs. It was noted that an increasing number of trade operatives were being allowed into homes which was a sign that confidence was returning within the community.
- Suitable accommodation for homeless households continue to be sought following the impact of the height of the pandemic through April and May.
- Work continued at pace to support the Council's ambitions of delivering greater numbers of affordable homes for those with housing need in the New Forest.

Environment and Regulatory Services

- Guidance was being offered to the food industry as lockdown measures were relaxed, whilst support for public carriage drivers to install appropriate protective screens was taking place.
- The increased demand for garden waste services continued, with a total of over 3000 new customers now subscribed to the service.
- In response to significant littering, particularly along the coastline, both messaging and enforcement were being increased.
- 20 out of 23 public toilets would be open before the end of the weekend.

Planning and Infrastructure

- All car parks were now open. Arrangements were being progressed for those residents who had purchased either quarterly or annual parking clocks and had been unable to use them for the period within which the car parks were closed.
- The cumulative lost income in parking receipts was now in excess of £0.5 million.

**94 COVID-19 RECOVERY - REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

The Leader of the Council reported briefly on the first meetings of the Council's four COVID-19 Recovery Task and Finish Groups, which engaged a total of 41 councillors across a broad range of issues. These included the internal challenges faced by the Council in respect of finance and resources, and running essential services, to the more outward looking Groups assessing the impact of the crisis on the local voluntary and business sectors.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Investment and Corporate Services thanked Members and Officers for their initial work on finance and resources. It would be the focus of the Group to bring forward proportionate responses to address the Council's financial position and the impact COVID-19 will need to have on other strategies such as ICT and HR.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Affairs highlighted the breadth of local community organisations impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. The Community Stakeholder Engagement Task and Finish Group would seek to collect information from local community organisations in a themed way. It was expected that a Position Statement would be ready by September 2020.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Wellbeing reported on the significant impact of COVID-19 on Health and Leisure Centres. He expressed his sincere thanks to the Task and Finish Group which considered in detail the plans for a phased reopening, alongside the associated financial implications. It was noted that income losses in Health and Leisure could be as much as £5 million by the end of the year.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development highlighted the need for a strong understanding of the impact of the lockdown period has had on the local economy. The resilience and adaptability of local businesses has been a real success. Whilst grants and advice had been well delivered throughout the height of the crisis, ongoing support would be crucial and the Group would look to hear evidence from a range of partners in the business sector to inform recovery plans for the local economy.

## **95 COVID-19 RECOVERY - FINANCE AND RESOURCES**

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That measures to control employee costs around a Vacancy Control procedure, to ensure only essential staffing posts are filled including considerations for redeployment of existing staff where roles have been impacted by COVID-19, be implemented.
2. That the COVID-19 RECOVERY – Finance and Resources Task and Finish Group focus on an immediate review of 2020/21 budgets, including, but not limited to:-
  - a. Review of the Asset Maintenance Budgets
  - b. Review of savings generated in 2019/20
  - c. Review of Capital Programme financing and Reserve transfers
  - d. Review of Service budgets, such as Travel and Subsistence and Fees and Charges which have been directly impacted by COVID-19
3. That the re-opening of Health and Leisure Centres be managed in a way that does not present further increases in net costs beyond those currently being incurred as a result of COVID-19.
4. That non-essential Capital Schemes be postponed.
5. That up to £80,000 of the existing £500,000 Smarter Working budget be utilised to support the democratic role of Members.

6. That the impact that COVID-19 has had on the income generation at Dibden Golf Centre be noted, and that the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Wellbeing would in due course enter into discussions with the provider over future rents.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

As set out in the report.

**KEY DECISION:**

No.

**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 that COVID-19 was not a single event whereby actions quickly moved towards recovery. An ongoing response to the crisis and continual assessment of the impact on the Council's finances would be crucial. It was confirmed that the £80,000 funds from the existing Smarter Working budget would cover all councillors standard ICT equipment if required, although it was not anticipated that the full amount would need to be utilised.

**96 COVID-19 RECOVERY - COUNCIL SERVICES - HEALTH AND LEISURE**

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Council's Health and Leisure Centres are re-opened on a phased basis, when Government guidance allows.
2. That in respect of the revised Government National Furlough Scheme, all NFDC Council staff who have been placed on Furlough are aligned to the national scheme from 1 August 2020 to 31 October 2020, whereby the Council will pay 80% of wages subject to a cap of £2,500 for the hours an employee is on furlough and the Council will pay ER NICs and pension contributions for the hours the employee is on furlough.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

As set out in the report and recommendations from the Task and Finish Group.

**KEY DECISION:**

No.

**PORTFOLIO:**

Leisure and Wellbeing.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:**

As set out in the report and recommendations from the Task and Finish Group.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):**

None.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Portfolio Holder proposed that, in respect of the revised Government National Furlough Scheme and in response to the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group, all NFDC Council staff who have been placed on Furlough should be aligned to the national scheme from 1 August 2020 to 31 October 2020, whereby the Council will pay 80% of wages subject to a cap of £2,500 for the hours an employee is on furlough and the Council will pay ER NICs and pension contributions for the hours the employee is on furlough. The Cabinet unanimously supported the proposal.

**97 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND PROVISIONAL BUDGET OUTTURN 2019/20**

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the updated position statement, including the highlights from 2019/20 be noted;
2. That the development of the new performance framework in progress be noted;
3. That the provisional outturn of the General Fund revenue and capital budgets for 2019/2, be noted; and
4. That the provisional outturn of the Housing Revenue Account for 2019/20, be noted.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

As set out in the report.

**KEY DECISION:**

No.

**PORTFOLIO:**

Leader and Corporate Affairs

**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 highlighted that it was a transitional document this year as the Council moved into the period covered by the new Community Matters Corporate Plan. It was noted that the report had been well considered by the Council's four Overview and Scrutiny Panels and their support for the report was included within the covering paper.

**98 UPDATE TO THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

**RESOLVED:**

On the basis that the Council formally adopt the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy at its meeting on 6 July 2020:-

1. A six week consultation on the proposed amendments (Appendix 1 of the Cabinet Report shown in red) to the Statement of Community Involvement, be agreed; and
2. That the outcome of the consultation be reported back to Cabinet for it to consider whether to adopt the amended document.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

As set out in the report.

**KEY DECISION:**

No.

**PORTFOLIO:**

Planning and Infrastructure.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:**

As set out in the report.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):**

None.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report and highlighted its importance to the Council and those engaged locally in the planning process. The Chief Planning Officer highlighted that it would also provide clarity to all those involved in neighbourhood planning.

**99 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN**

**RESOLVED:**

On the basis that the Council formally adopt the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy at its meeting on 6 July 2020:-

1. That a requirement for 10% Biodiversity Net Gain to all planning permissions granted on or after 7th July 2020 be introduced;
2. The net gain requirement be set as a minimum of 10% increase in biodiversity; and
3. The requirements be applied to all new build developments, except householder applications.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

As set out in the report.

**KEY DECISION:**

No.

**PORTFOLIO:**

Planning and Infrastructure.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:**

As set out in the report.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):**

None.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report and highlighted that the recommendations did not retract from requirements within the Local Plan, therefore the 10% biodiversity net gain was in addition to these requirements and should be welcomed as a positive step for all new build developments.

**100 RE-APPRAISAL OF RECREATION MITIGATION PROJECTS - FAWLEY**

**RESOLVED:**

That the revised recreation mitigation project for the Fawley area be agreed as follows, to replace projects fa1 and fa3:-

Ref	Location	Summary Description	Provisional Cost Estimate
Fa1R	Land west of Gang Warily	Off-lead dog exercise and activity area and recreational walking routes	£100,000 plus design, management and maintenance costs

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

As set out in the report.

**KEY DECISION:**

No.

**PORTFOLIO:**

Planning and Infrastructure.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:**

As set out in the report.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(S):**

None.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report and welcomed the proposed change which had been studied in great detail, and would create a far better facility than previous plans.

CHAIRMAN



# Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Stay alert. Control the virus. Save lives.

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## Portfolio Holder updates



# Housing Services



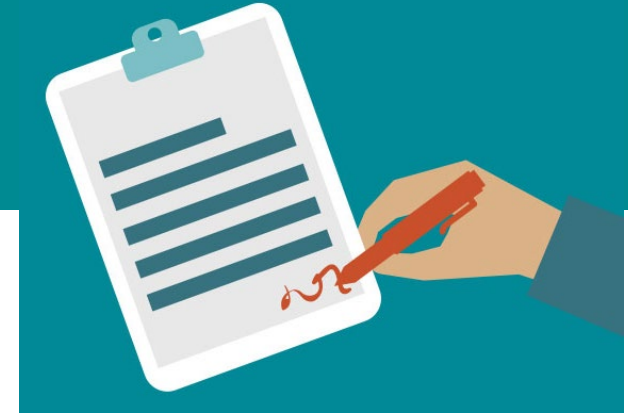
- All Housing services have resumed normal business activity
- Good progress on tackling backlog of non-urgent housing maintenance work
- Seeing a change in people's perceptions - now more willing to allow trades into homes
- Plans in place to move majority of all homeless households, including rough sleepers, who were temporarily rehoused during the height of the COVID-19 outbreak, into longer term suitable accommodation
- Working with private landlords, registered providers and utilising our own council owned stock to achieve this.
- Tenancy management teams busy within our estates and communities
- Work continues with our own housing development projects as well as working with developers to bring about more affordable homes.

# Environment and Regulatory Services



- The food and safety team have been offering guidance on risk assessments for the hospitality industry, hairdressers, and retailers in order for them to be able to open safely from 4 July.
- Taxi drivers are being provided with advice on fitting screens in their vehicles to protect themselves and passengers.
- The garden waste service has seen over 3000 **new** customers since the start of May, with an additional 400 joining every week.
- Litter continues to be an issue as more people go outside for exercise, especially on the coast. Increased messaging now in place to educate.
- 19 out of 23 public toilets have been reopened with social distancing measures being put in place.

# Planning and infrastructure



- As all of our car parks were open for business from 13 May with charging recommencing in our town and village car parks from 1 June, we have made arrangements to credit anyone who purchased a quarter 2 long-stay clock with a rebate off of their quarter 3 clock.
- We are currently selling parking clocks very successfully on line, via telephone calls to customer services or very recently in person from Appletree Court or Lymington Town Hall.
- Despite all of our coastal car parks operating at near capacity during June due to the recent hot weather the overall financial impact of businesses not fully opening until the 4 July will impact on our budgeted town and village centre income for June.
- Parking receipts for June are down £103k, making a cumulative loss in parking receipts of £556,000 for the year so far.