

NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting: CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Date and Time: THURSDAY, 25 MARCH 2021, AT 9.30 AM*

Place: MICROSOFT TEAMS - ONLINE

Enquiries to: Email: andy.rogers@nfdc.gov.uk
Tel: 023 8028 5070

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

***Members of the public may speak in accordance with the Council's public participation scheme:**

- (a) immediately before the meeting starts, on items within the Panel's terms of reference which are not on the public agenda; and/or**
- (b) on individual items on the public agenda, when the Chairman calls that item. Speeches may not exceed three minutes.**

Anyone wishing to speak should contact the name and number shown above no later than **12.00 noon on Tuesday, 23 March 2021**. This will allow the Council to provide public speakers with the necessary joining instructions for the Microsoft Teams Meeting.

Bob Jackson
Chief Executive

Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, Hampshire. SO43 7PA
www.newforest.gov.uk

This Agenda is also available on audio tape, in Braille, large print and digital format

AGENDA

Apologies

1. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2021 as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To note any declarations of interest made by members in connection with an agenda item. The nature of the interest must also be specified.

Members are asked to discuss any possible interests with Democratic Services prior to the meeting.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To note any issues raised during the public participation period.

4. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' REPORTS AND PERFORMANCE DASHBOARDS (Pages 5 - 10)

To receive an oral update from the Portfolio Holders on developments within their Portfolio areas and with reference to the Performance Dashboards.

5. FINANCIAL UPDATE - PRESENTATION

To receive an update on:

- the Council's Financial Position; and
- a summary of the latest Business Grants administered by the Council

6. 'BREATHING SPACE' DEBT RESPITE PROTECTION

To receive a presentation on the new 'Breathing Space' regulations, which come into force on 4 May 2021, and will provide debt respite protection.

7. APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION TASK AND FINISH GROUP

To consider arrangements for the operation of the Council Tax Reduction Task and Finish Group.

8. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 11 - 14)

To consider the Panel's future Work Programme.

9. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL – VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Background

This meeting is being held virtually with all participants accessing via Microsoft Teams.

A live stream will be available on YouTube to allow the press and public to view meetings in real time and can also be found at the relevant meeting page on the Council's website, with this published agenda.

Principles for all meetings

The Chairman will read out Ground Rules at the start of the meeting for the benefit of all participants. All normal procedures for meetings apply as far as practicable, as the Government Regulations do not amend any of the Council's existing Standing Orders.

The Ground Rules for all virtual meetings will include, but are not limited to, the following:-

- All participants are reminded that virtual public meetings are being broadcast live on YouTube and will be available for repeated viewing. Please be mindful of your

camera and microphone setup and the images and sounds that will be broadcast on public record.

- All participants are asked to mute their microphones when not speaking to reduce feedback and background noise. Please only unmute your microphone and speak when invited to do so by the Chairman.
- Councillors in attendance that have not indicated their wish to speak in advance of the meeting can make a request to speak during the meeting by using the “raise hand” feature in Microsoft Teams. Requests will be managed by the Chairman with support from Democratic Services. Please remember to “lower hand” when you have finished speaking.
- The chat facility should not be used unless raising a point of order or providing the wording for a motion.
- All participants are asked to refer to the report number and page number within the agenda and reports pack so that there is a clear understanding of what is being discussed at all times.

Voting

When voting is required on a particular item, each councillor on the committee will be called to vote in turn by name, expressing their vote verbally. The outcome will be announced to the meeting. A recorded vote will not be reflected in the minutes of the meeting unless this is requested in accordance with the Council’s Standing Orders.

By casting their vote, councillors do so in the acknowledgement that they were present for the duration of the item in question.

Technology

If individuals experience technical issues, the meeting will continue providing that it is quorate and it is still practical to do so. The Chairman will adjourn the meeting if technical issues cause the meeting to be inquorate, the live stream technology fails, or continuing is not practical.

Public Participation

Contact details to register to speak in accordance with the Council’s Public Participation Procedures are on the front page of this agenda.

In order to speak at a virtual meeting, you must have the facility to join a Microsoft Teams Meeting. Joining instructions will be sent to registered speakers in advance of the meeting.

The Council will accept a written copy of a statement from registered speakers that do not wish to join a Microsoft Teams Meeting, or are unable to. The statement will be read out at the meeting and should not exceed three minutes. Please use the contact details on the agenda front sheet for further information.

To: **Councillors:**

Alexis McEvoy (Chairman)
Alan Alvey (Vice-Chairman)
Fran Carpenter
Keith Craze
Sandra Delemare

Councillors:

Mahmoud Kangarani
Martyn Levitt
Alan O'Sullivan
Beverley Thorne
Derek Tipp

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Leaders and Corporate Affairs - Portfolio Performance Dashboard

Relevant Service Area(s)		Portfolio Holder		
HR, Environmental & Regulation (Emergency Planning), Democratic Services.		Cllr Barry Rickman		
Key Priorities	Key Activities	Key Actions		
Portfolio Priorities 2020 - 24	Key Activity 2020 - 24	Key Actions 2020/21	Target Date	Status Update
Excellence in services to our residents and continuing to maintain front line services.	Deliver the Organisational Strategy and continued roll out of the smarter working initiative.	Implement actions to make the council an employer of choice.	Ongoing	Mar-21 - Engaging our staff during this very challenging year has been key. We undertook 2 employee surveys one before Covid-19 and one in the summer. We have taken steps to respond to key concerns including ensuring staff had the right tools at home which now includes an ICT Bundle (screens and keyboards). Staff have continued to work from home where it is effective for them to do so and we have ensured that managers have regularly communicated with their staff with wellbeing support being a key priority. Mental Health has also been a really key issue and we have supported both employees and managers with a wealth of information including links to external support organisations, running internal training sessions and providing advice on Forestnet, through emails and on posters. We have applied to have 18 placements on the Kickstart scheme and these are currently with the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce.
	Being an employer of choice.			
Working with regional partners to ensure the prosperity of the New Forest area.	Annual review of the economic investment in the New Forest.	Annual review of the economic investment in the New Forest.	Ongoing	Mar-21 - The primary focus in recent months has been the continued work to support existing businesses through the Covid-19 Pandemic both through financial support and other business development initiatives. New investment and re-investment of existing business will form an important element of the economic recovery programme as the focus moves toward this.
		In partnership with the LEP support funding bids to government to enable improvements in infrastructure.	Ongoing	Mar-21 - The District Council continues to work closely with the LEP and other local authorities in anticipation of and to consider forthcoming announcements from central government. At this time, specific details of the scope of such funding are not available. The Leader was appointed Public Authority Director of the Solent LEP company. The successful Freeport bid was announced in Chancellor's budget statement.
Ensuring effective democratic engagement and representation.	Work with the Local Government Boundary Commission to deliver the Electoral Review in support of electoral equality and effective local government for the New Forest area.	Council submission to the Boundary Commission on ward boundary proposals to support electoral equality by February 2020 and implement ward boundary changes for 2023 quadrennial District elections.	Jan-21	Mar-21 - The Council submitted its Council Size submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in October 2019, recommending a reduction in the number of councillors which was consequently agreed at 48. The Council went on to submit warding pattern proposals in February 2020. Following the publication of Draft Recommendations by the LGBCE, the Council responded to the consultation process in September 2020. In January 2021, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England published final recommendations for a Council Size of 48, with new ward boundaries. These will be implemented at the 2023 elections.

Key Performance Indicators									Financial Information - Budgets £'000									
KPIs	Unit	Freq.	Desired DOT	Target	Last Period	Actual	Actual DOT	Status	No changes have been made since Jan-2021, the next scheduled changes will be included after the Financial Monitoring Report in Apr-21.									
									Budget Description	Original Budget	Emergency Budget Adjustments	December Financial Monitoring	Revised Budget					
Proportion of service performance indicators above or on target	Further work required to ensure all service level indicators are being recorded appropriately in order to give an accurate indication of performance.								General Fund Revenue Position					68	100	7	175	
Vacancies filled first time	%	Quarterly	↑	TBC	87%	92%	↑		Variation Percentage						147%	10.30%	157.30%	
Increase in infrastructure investment in the New Forest	Further work will be required to establish baselines before increases can be quantified.								Support funding to Town & Parish Councils (£107k)									
									General Fund Capital Programme					0	0	0	0	
									Variation Percentage									

High Risks			
High Risk Area	Risk	Mitigation actions	New Risk
Sickness levels increasing due to Covid-19.		Where appropriate some staff have been able to self isolate and work from home, minimising the impact on service delivery. We were also able to redeploy staff during lockdown from Health and Leisure to Refuse to minimise the impact on service delivery.	
There is a long term negative impact on the local community and economy resulting from Covid-19.		During the pandemic the Council has worked with partners to support the local community. The operation of the Local Resource Hub, together with the voluntary sector and local community groups has supported many of the most vulnerable in the community. The use of Covid ambassadors to help keep residents & visitors safe together with the use of Applemore Health & Leisure Centre as a vaccination site are examples of the additional actions that the Council has taken to support the community and negate the impact of the pandemic. The work of the Council's Revenue & Benefit Services has enabled £XMs to be paid out to local business in order to protect the local economy. The support for the successful Solent Freeport provides an opportunity for future jobs.	

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Finance, Investment and Corporate Services - Portfolio Performance Dashboard

Relevant Service Area(s)		Portfolio Holder		
Finance, Revenue & Benefits, Estates & Valuation, ICT		Cllr Jeremy Heron		
Key Priorities	Key Activities	Key Actions		
Portfolio Priorities 2020 - 24	Key Activity 2020 - 24	Key Actions 2020	Target Date	Status Update
Protecting front line services through sound financial planning, including the collection of taxation with appropriate support for individuals and businesses.	Deliver the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).	Balanced budget agreed annually in February.	Feb 21	Mar-21 - Balanced Budget for 2021/22 agreed at Full Council on 25/02/21.
Modernisation and innovative use of ICT to enhance operational efficiencies across all services.	Modernise our corporate and line of business ICT applications.	Deliver the ICT strategy to modernise applications and infrastructure with an annual update to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel.	2021	Mar-21 - Work on ICT strategy not due to start until circa Oct-21. - Annual update was given to COSP Nov-20.
Using investments to support financial resilience and the local economy.	Identify sites and opportunities in line with the Commercial Property Investment Strategy.	Identify opportunities and progress the Commercial Property Investment and the Residential Property Investment Strategies for monitoring by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel.	14/04/2020 - 31/03/2021	Mar-21 - 1.To date during this period, 3 more commercial properties have been acquired and a further property is under offer. 2.The Crow Lane Ringwood development is progressing with the appointment of technical advisors and letting consultants and the procurement process for contractors has commenced. 3.The lettings at south wing LTH have been completed (save for a small amount of office space on the first floor) with completion of the Police station letting on the ground floor. 4.To date, Appletree Property Lettings have purchased 7 properties with offers accepted on a further 2. The company has let 5 properties and is confident of letting the 2 newly acquired properties in the near future. NFDC approved additional £2M tranche of funding (£4M release altogether). The projects have been affected by Covid. Regular reports are provided to the property investment panel on these matters.
	Commence trading and acquire properties through the Council's Residential Property Company.			
	Deliver improved infrastructure to support operational services.			Deliver new depot facilities to support operational services during 2021.
Supporting the migration to universal credit.	Continue to manage the impact of Universal Credit and related welfare reforms and the migration from Housing Benefit.	Continue to work closely with the Department for Work and Pensions, New Forest Citizens Advice and stakeholders on supporting residents through the migration to Universal Credit reporting to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel.	Ongoing	Mar-21 - Due to Covid-19 the migration date for Universal Credit has been deferred, with no announcement from DWP, but it is anticipated migration will start in 2022/23. We continue to liaise with DWP and local organisations and inform existing working age claimants.

Key Performance Indicators									Financial Information - Budgets £'000				
KPIs	Unit	Freq.	Desired DOT	Annual Target	Last Period	Actual	Actual DOT	Status	No changes have been made since Jan-2021, the next scheduled changes will be included after the Financial Monitoring Report in Apr-21.				
									Budget Description	Original Budget	Emergency Budget Adjustments	December Financial Monitoring	Revised Budget
Maintain high level of Council Tax collected *	%	Monthly	↑	98.24%	-1.36%	-1.52%	↓		General Fund Revenue Position	3863	-459	-329	3075
NNDR collected *	%	Monthly	↑	98.19%	-3.84%	-2.20%	↓			Variation Percentage		-11.9%	-8.5%
Achieve a balanced budget with reasonable Council Tax increases.		Annual		Greater of 2% or £5**	£5 / 2.88%	£5 / 2.8%	→		New Burdens Funding (-£170k) Emergency Assistance Grant (-£134k) ICT Project Rephasings (-£354k)				
Increase the value of commercial investment.	£M	Annual	↑	20		9	↑		General Fund Capital Programme	5182	3308	-2649	5841
Increase the value of residential investment.	£M	Annual	↑	4		1.43	↑		Variation Percentage		63.8%	-51.1%	12.7%
Availability of NFDC Website.	%	Monthly	↑	100%	100%	100%	→		Rephasings include delivery of new Depot Site, Vehicle and Plant Replacement Programme and Smarter Working.				

High Risks			
High Risk Area	Risk	Mitigation actions	New Risk
Lack of suitable commercial property investment opportunities in the District.		Good links with local agents, responsiveness to opportunities that arise.	
Lack of suitable residential property opportunities.		Good links with local agents, responsiveness to opportunities, stronger residential property market than expected during the period of restrictions.	
Delays in the delivery of new depot facilities.		Contingent on operational needs being clarified as part of the proposed waste strategy.	

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Economic Development - Portfolio Performance Dashboard

Relevant Service Area(s)	Portfolio Holder
Economic Development	Cllr Michael Harris

Key Priorities	Key Activities	Key Actions		
Portfolio Priorities 2020 - 24	Key Activity 2020 - 24	Key Actions 2020	Target Date	Status Update
Continuing to work with partners and businesses to grow the New Forest economy.	Work in partnership to increase the uptake of apprenticeships and upskilling opportunities.	Work in partnership to increase the uptake of apprenticeships and upskilling opportunities, including Solent Apprenticeship Hub and New Forest Training Academy.	Ongoing	In the wake of Covid-19 there has been an increasing focus on initiatives to promote training and skills opportunities. The Economic Development Team have worked closely with Solent Apprenticeship Hub and specific scheme like KickStart to ensure that takeup in New Forest District is maximised.
		Work with Development Management to roll out Employment and Skills Plans on all major development.	Ongoing	No update at this time.
	Identify all businesses within the district and target.	Using County Intelligence Unit identify all businesses within the District and prioritise engagement activity.	Ongoing	The Economic Development Team have from various sources now compiled a comprehensive employer database listing detailed information on local businesses. By definition, this work programme is ongoing and will continue to build, providing an ever more detailed list.
	Establish one online point of entry to the council for businesses.	Establish an online single point of entry to the council for businesses by 2020.	31/12/2020	The ED Team has embarked upon the first phase of this work programme focused on engaging with Service Managers from other business facing services. This work programme has been paused as the focus has switched to supporting businesses in wake of the National Government Restrictions.
Supporting improvements in broadband and mobile connectivity.	Work with partners and other council services to improve broadband and mobile connectivity.	Identify options for improved connectivity in the District and develop an Action Plan.	Ongoing	The Economic Development Team continue to work with the Hampshire Superfast Broadband Team to promote community broadband funding programmes.
Helping businesses, industries and High Streets respond to social, environmental and technological changes and innovation.	Encourage inward investment for the New Forest.	Create an 'Invest in the New Forest' Website during 2020/21 to support inward investment to the area.	31/12/2021	The focus for this project has altered owing to the creation of the new NFDC website. As such the work programme has delivered a full review and fully updated content of the Economic Development web pages.
Continuing to promote the New Forest as a filming destination.		Continue to actively promote the New Forest as a filming destination for the wider creative digital industries.	Ongoing	Economic Development continue to attract high profile filming projects including but not limited to The Crown in February. Covid-19 has seen a downturn in enquiries through much of 2020 but work is now focused on broadening the scope of the Film New Forest project.

Key Performance Indicators									Financial Information - Budgets £'000				
KPIs	Unit	Freq.	Desired DOT	Target	Last Period	Actual	Actual DOT	Status	Budget Description	Original Budget	Emergency Budget Adjustments	December Financial Monitoring	Revised Budget
Increase in S106 agreements containing employment and skills plan.	Number	Annual	↑	TBC		TBC	TBC		Economic Development	299	-30	0	269
Increase in apprenticeships within the District.	Number	Quarterly	↑	TBC		-29%	TBC		Variation Percentage		-10.03%	0	-10.03%
Increase in Businesses engaged in economic development programme.	Number	Quarterly	↑	TBC		24	TBC		<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Original Budget Make-up</p> <p style="text-align: center;">■ Employee Costs ■ Supplies and Services ■ Support Services</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Breakdown of Adjustments</p> <p>Removal of NF Show Budget -15</p> <p>Reduction in Initiatives Budget -10</p> <p>Reduction in Support Services -5</p> </div> </div>				
Increased uptake in investment platform.	%	Monthly	↑	TBC		0.0%	TBC						
Increase in broadband connectivity.	%	Monthly	↑	TBC		0.0%	TBC						
Increase in subscribers to 'Helping local businesses grow' e-news.	Number	Monthly	↑	TBC		198	TBC						

High Risks			
High Risk Area	Risk	Mitigation actions	New Risk
Covid-19 impact on the local economy		Close liaison and working with the business partnership	

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CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2021/2022

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
24 JUNE 2021			
Portfolio Holders' Updates and Performance Dashboard			Portfolio Holders
Annual Performance and Provisional Budget Outturn			Alan Bethune
Annual Commercial and Residential Property Investment Update - Presentation			Alan Bethune / Andrew Smith
ICT Update - Strategy Delivery / Business Website / App Development - Presentation			Rob Beere
Procurement Update			Gary Jarvis
Work Programme			
23 SEPTEMBER 2021			
Portfolio Holders' Updates and Performance Dashboard			Portfolio Holders
Council Tax Empty Homes Premium			Ryan Stevens

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Agenda Item 8

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
Council Tax Reduction Scheme			Ryan Stevens
Complaints Annual Report			Karen Grimes
Procurement (Supply Chain Update)			Ritchie Thompson
Work Programme			
18 NOVEMBER 2021			
Portfolio Holders' Updates and Performance Dashboard			Portfolio Holders
ICT Strategy & Budget Update			Rob Beere
Work Programme			

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
20 JANUARY 2022			
Asset Maintenance and Replacement Programme			Alan Bethune
Capital Strategy			Alan Bethune
Portfolio Holders' Updates and Performance Dashboard			Portfolio Holders
Work Programme			
24 MARCH 2022			
Portfolio Holders' Updates and Performance Dashboard			Portfolio Holders
Work Programme			

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
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DATES TO BE ALLOCATED			
Universal Credit update	To be aware of issues arising	Regular update from Finance, Investment & Corporate Services Portfolio Holder/Service Manager – Revenues & Benefits	TBC
Staff Efficiency/Innovation Ideas Survey		TBC	TBC
Economic Development Performance Indicators		TBC	Claire Upton-Brown
Website/App Update		TBC	Matt Callaghan/Cllr Harris