

NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting: CABINET

Date and Time: WEDNESDAY, 7 JULY 2021, AT 10.00 AM*

Place: COUNCIL CHAMBER - APPLETREE COURT, BEAULIEU ROAD, LYNDHURST, SO43 7PA

Enquiries to: karen.wardle@nfdc.gov.uk
Tel: 023 8028 5071 - Karen Wardle

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Members of the public may listen to this meeting live on the Council's website at the following link:-

<https://democracy.newforest.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=7294>

*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 Cabinet'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 Thursday 1 July 2021.

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 2 June 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. WESTOVER URGENT WORKS - MILFORD-ON-SEA - UPDATE REPORT
(Pages 3 - 12)

5. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND PROVISIONAL BUDGET OUTTURN 2020/21
(Pages 13 - 36)

6. WORKSMART (Pages 37 - 52)

To:

Councillors

Edward Heron (Chairman)
Jill Cleary (Vice-Chairman)
Diane Andrews
Steve Davies

Councillors

Michael Harris
Jeremy Heron
David Russell
Mark Steele

CABINET – 7 JULY 2021

PORTFOLIO: ENVIRONMENT AND COASTAL SERVICES

UPDATE REPORT – URGENT WORKS SEAWALL, WESTOVER MILFORD-ON-SEA

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 That Cabinet:

- a) Note the completion of the urgent works and the latest expected financial contribution required from the Council (subject to successful confirmation and receipt of third-party funding)

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 This report provides an update to Cabinet on the delivery and outcome of the urgent coastal protection works undertaken at Westover, Milford – on – Sea in 2020.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Following the failure of the seawall at Westover in February 2020 and subsequent reports to the Chief Executive, Cabinet and Full Council an executive decision was made by the Council's Section 151 Officer to approve expenditure of up to £1.5M to carry out urgent works to the sea wall at Milford.

3.2 Urgent work commenced as described in Section 3 of the report.

3.3 Following commencement of the works, storms in August 2020 impacted on the construction works, resulting in additional damage. A further report was considered by Full Council at its meeting of the 12th October 2020. Full Council approved:

- additional supplementary expenditure of £325,000 to fund the additional urgent works required as a result of storm events that impacted the site since works commenced, be approved.
- That a new contingency of £300,000 to be held by the Council's Section 151 Officer, be approved: and
- That all opportunities for third party funding be maximised to minimise the Council's residual financing requirement, be noted. This gave the project a total budget of £2.125m.

3.4 Following the executive decision made of 23rd July 2020 to undertake urgent works a contractor was appointed under an already established procurement framework for the delivery of flood & coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) services.

3.5 The broad delivery of the urgent works undertook the form of:

| Date | Activity |
|------------------------------|--|
| 19 th August 2020 | Site setup commences |
| 19 th August 2020 | Storm Ellen impacts site |
| 24 th August 2020 | Delivery of 1,600t of rock commences for access road |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 3 rd September 2020 | Plant access road construction commences |
| 8 th September 2020 | 1 st delivery of 4,500t of rock to Southampton docks |
| 10 th September 2020 | 1 st barge delivery of 400t of rock to site |
| 11 th September 2020 | Revetment construction commences |
| 21 st September 2020 | 2 nd delivery of 4,500t of rock to Southampton docks |
| 31 st October 2020 | Storm Aiden impacts site |
| 2 nd November 2020 | Delivery of 3,000t of rock to Southampton Docks |
| Late December 2020 | Coast protection works completed |
| March 2021 | Coastal footpath licence agreements signed |
| April 2021 | Footpath completed and site cleared |

3.6 During the construction phase a number of issues were encountered, as detailed:

- Further erosion of access to the site requiring additional Portland rock to be imported to construct an access road. This was further impacted by weather conditions experienced throughout the works.
- Further beach lowering, resulting in the need for additional rock to be delivered to the site over the initial planned volume of 9,000t.
- Changes to the seabed requiring an additional specialist vessel to enable the barge to access the beach.
- A further 38m of seawall failed during storm Ellen on 19th August 2020.
- Behind the failed section of seawall further cliff erosion resulted in the loss of a section of the cliff top, with 7 metres of cliff top lost after the start of the emergency works.
- Further cracking and movement identified in the seawall towards the White House.
- Continuing unsettled weather conditions resulted in delays of rock delivery by sea, resulting in only one delivery in a two-week period.
- Rock delivery from the berth in Southampton being supplemented by road. 50% of the rock being delivered in this way. This was unplanned but required due to the continued unsettled weather at the site, preventing delivery by sea.

3.7 In summary the final works consisted of:

- 12,000 tonnes of armourstone being imported from Norway
- 3,000 tonnes of Portland armourstone being imported by road
- 268m of rock revetment being constructed
- 200m of new coastal footpath being constructed

3.8 The financial outcome of the urgent work is summarised within the Financial Implications Section of this report.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The final outturn costs of the urgent works that commenced in August are £1.9m.

4.2 The funding stream to finance this £1.9m expenditure is expected to be:

| Body | Value | Status |
|--|----------|-----------------------|
| Southern RFCC via the Environment Agency | £600,000 | Confirmed |
| Grant Aid via the Environment Agency | £775,000 | Awaiting Confirmation |
| NFDC Capital Programme Reserves | £525,000 | Balancing Requirement |

4.3 The Council report of October 2020 identified that the eventual funding position for the Council was anticipated at £400,000, although the ultimate potential range to be funded by the Council may have been between £400,000 - £1.525M. The latest anticipated NFDC funding requirement at £525,000 is above the previous expectation, but at the lower end of the overall potential range.

4.4 It should be noted that although the Business Case to support the funding has been submitted to the Environment Agency that it has not yet been approved. Extensive work has been undertaken in developing a robust economic assessment of the scheme benefits to secure the appropriate level of Environment Agency funding. However, the applicable benefit values that may be used in the complex funding calculator have resulted in an expected increase in the balancing requirement of NFDC from the lower estimate of £400,000 to £525,000. Dialogue is continuing with the Environment Agency to respond to queries raised within the Business Case, but at this point the final amount of external funding or timing of likely approval cannot be confirmed.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There were no environmental impacts in relation to these works.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None arising directly from this report.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None arising directly from this report.

8. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

8.1 This project was completed under very trying circumstances during an exceptional year. Project delivery was completed in spite of a pandemic and two severe storms, Ellen and Aiden. The project led by NFDC's Coastal team was made possible only by using funds made available from NFDC reserves – a one-time cost that cannot be sustained again.

For further information contact:

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Background Papers:

None.

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and Economy
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Appendix 1 – Works Progress & Completion Photographs











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CABINET – 7 JULY 2021

PORTFOLIO: LEADER/ALL

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND PROVISIONAL BUDGET OUTTURN 2020/21

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
- a) Note the Annual Performance Statement for 2020/21, including the impact of Covid-19 on performance;
 - b) Note the provisional outturn of the General Fund revenue and capital budgets for 2020/21; and
 - c) Note the provisional outturn of the Housing Revenue Account for 2020/21.

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 2.1 This report provides an overview of performance and delivery of the corporate plan for 2020/21. It is a backward-looking report that reflects the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and sets out provisional outturn results for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account.
- 2.2 The Council's statutory Statement of Accounts will be completed and signed by the Responsible Financial (S151) Officer by 30 September and will be presented to Audit Committee following external audit. Should there be any significant variations from the figures presented in this report, they will be highlighted at that Committee. The Outturn now presented is in management format.

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 Community Matters, the Council's Corporate Plan for 2020-2024, sets out the overarching commitments and vision for the Council and focuses on the challenges faced and the plans to address them, including priorities for each Portfolio. It was approved in March 2020, just prior to the first lockdown. The Annual Performance Statement reflects the progress in delivering the corporate plan and the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- 3.2 Understandably some of the priorities of the corporate plan were overshadowed by the more immediate and necessary response to the pandemic and this is reflected in the Annual Performance Statement appended to this report. Performance for each Portfolio has also been presented to overview and scrutiny panels during the year in the form of Portfolio Dashboards, which reflect the progress of specific activities within the corporate plan.
- 3.3 In light of the impact of the pandemic there is a need to revisit the corporate plan to ensure that priorities continue to reflect the needs of the community, to update associated actions and to align responsibilities with the new Cabinet structure that came in to effect in April 2021. This will be reported back to Cabinet later in the year.
- 3.4 The Council's financial planning process further supports the delivery of the corporate objectives and the annual budget, and its performance is an important element of the overall corporate plan.
- 3.5 The provisional outturn report was presented to Cabinet in April 2021. This followed the adoption of the emergency budget in September 2020, and subsequent financial monitoring report in December 2020.
- 3.6 The latest budgets for 2020/21 as reported to the Cabinet resulted in revised General Fund, Capital Programme and Housing Revenue Account budgets as follows:

| | Original Budget | Latest Budget April Cabinet | Reported Variations |
|--|------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | £'m | £'m | £'m |
| General Fund | 19.194 | 20.211 | 1.017 |
| Capital Programme | 25.694 | 27.238 | 1.544 |
| Housing Revenue Account (Income) | (28.199) | (28.077) | 0.122 |
| Housing Revenue Account (Expend.) | 19.726 | 19.796 | 0.070 |

4. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

- 4.1 The pandemic dominated the Council's delivery of services during 2020/21 and this is reflected in the performance overview. Some services were significantly impacted and were unable to be offered, whilst other services saw demand increase or new responsibilities arise, directly linked to supporting individuals and businesses during the crisis.
- 4.2 The Annual Performance Statement (Appendix 1) illustrates the performance for 2020/21, highlighting the Council's Covid-19 response and providing an overview of the performance for each Portfolio, including an assessment of performance for key service areas in terms of the availability of staff, the impact on budget and overall service delivery impact.

5. BUDGET OUTTURN

- 5.1 The Annual Budget is an important element of the delivery of the Council's financial strategy which supports the delivery of core services and provides value for money to local taxpayers. Financial Monitoring Reports and Medium-Term Financial Plan updates are presented to Cabinet throughout the year, providing up to date information on current performance and the budget outlook over a medium-term period.
- 5.2 The mitigating factors put in place by this Council during the emergency budget process, and subsequent savings identified through financial monitoring, identified savings of around £1.5m. The updated General Fund revenue outturn position confirms a spend of £23.200m. Retained Business Rates income was originally budgeted at £7.287m, with the provisional outturn being £6.437m. When combined, these two variations result in a total adverse variation for the year as against the original budget of £4.856m. Government support of £6.472m has been received during the year; £4.235m through the Sales, Fees and Charges compensation scheme, and £2.237m in general support funding. The Financial Monitoring reports presented through Cabinet during the year confirm the reasoning for the significant variations and the summarised position is shown within Appendix 2. The overall resultant balancing position allows for a transfer to Capital Programme reserves of £1.515m.
- 5.3 The original Capital Programme budget was set at £25.694m. This was increased via financial monitoring to take into account the scheme rephasing's from 2019/20 and updated for new requirements, including £5.25m for investment in economic regeneration and employment projects as well as £1.825m for Emergency Works to the sea wall at Milford. The Capital Programme outturn position confirms a spend for the year of £26.959m. This is a yearend variation in comparison to the revised budget of £279,000, and results in a total variation for the year as against the original budget of +£1.265m.
- 5.4 The updated Housing Revenue Account position confirms income for the year of £28.131m and revenue spend for the year of £19.818m. After a transfer to an earmarked reserve of £72,000, this

results in an overall deficit for the year of £88,000, with this sum being transferred from the Acquisition and Development reserve.

5.5 The following table summarises the positions as explained above (although all stated positions are still subject to change during the course of External Audit):

| | Original Budget | Outturn Position | Total Variation |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| | £'m | £'m | £'m |
| General Fund – Portfolio Budgets | 19.194 | 23.200 | 4.006 |
| General Fund – Business Rate Retention | (7.287) | (6.437) | 0.850 |
| General Fund – Financial Support | 0.00 | (6.472) | (6.472) |
| Capital Programme | 25.694 | 26.959 | 1.265 |
| Housing Revenue Account (Income) | (28.199) | (28.131) | 0.068 |
| Housing Revenue Account (Expend.) | 19.726 | 19.818 | 0.092 |

6. CRIME & DISORDER / EQUALITY & DIVERSITY / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

7. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

7.1 In an extraordinary year with unprecedented challenges, this Council has continued throughout to deliver key frontline services to our residents, while also playing its part in the national response to the pandemic. I would take this opportunity to again thank our officers for the exceptional way in which they have adapted to new ways of working, overcome challenges and continued to dedicate themselves to the service of our community.

8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL COMMENTS

8.1 The report has been considered by each of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels, with particular focus on the performance of the relevant Portfolio's for that Panel. Panel members thanked members of staff for their hard work in maintaining service delivery during the year, under difficult circumstances.

Further Information:

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Background Papers

The Corporate Plan 2020-2024
'Community Matters'
Cabinet 4 March 2020

Financial Monitoring Report –
2020/21 Provisional Outturn
Cabinet 7 April 2021

POSITION STATEMENT 2021

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT



Foreword from the Leader of New Forest District Council



2020/21 has been dominated by the Covid-19 Pandemic. The impact on all communities could never have been envisaged when plans and budgets were first agreed.

Many services had to be halted - some for the whole year, some in part - as we moved in and out of lockdowns. The impact on our wide

range of services has been varied as they all faced different circumstances and challenges.

Some of our frontline services, such as waste & recycling collection, continued throughout the pandemic, ensuring they followed social distancing guidelines, but at a cost that had not been budgeted for.

Our Health and Leisure Centres were closed for most of the year with staff on furlough. This created a significant budget cost as well as impacting the health and wellbeing of our residents.

Our 350 office-based staff were predominately working from home. Many were performing new tasks - like our Revenue & Benefits teams that distributed over £60 million of business support grants - or working in the community undertaking new roles like our Environmental Health teams that were undertaking Covid-19 work for Public Health England and not carrying out normal business inspections as premises were closed.

New Covid-19 services had to be delivered, like the Local Response Centre established to support those most vulnerable in our community. This service was set up rapidly,

using staff from all areas of the Council, including Elections, Coastal, Car Parking and Health and Leisure.

Some of our usual services, like Housing Estates Management and Homelessness saw their workload increase significantly.

The following annual report tries to identify how we have got on delivering services during the pandemic. To help understanding, Covid-19 impact on services has been flagged and a traffic light system provided to indicate general performance.

Overall, the Council has done remarkably well thanks to the efforts and dedication of staff from across our services. The investment in ICT enabled many services to carry on as it enabled office-based staff to deliver through home working. The budget position has been maintained with the help of approximately £8 million of central government grants. Service performance, where it has been able to continue, has been largely unaffected despite a significant increase in staff absences created by self-isolating and Covid-19.

Looking ahead there are some areas that will come under more pressure. Environmental Health teams face a backlog of inspection work, the Housing Estates Management team face resolving many neighbourhood issues that arose, and the budget will face pressure from rising costs, particularly housing materials. The wellbeing of staff will remain a priority. Monitoring our performance and achievement has never been more important. I hope you find the reports of my portfolio holders interesting on a year like no other.

Edward Heron

Leader of New Forest District Council

Introduction

The New Forest

The New Forest is an area of southern England which includes one of the largest remaining tracts of unenclosed pastureland, heathland, and forest in the heavily populated south east. It is a unique place of history, wildlife and beauty and was established as a royal hunting preserve.

The local government administrative area of New Forest District Council (290 square miles) includes the New Forest National Park (206 square miles) and within the district there are 145 square miles of Crown land, managed by Forestry England.

The New Forest is a working forest that has prospered for nearly 1,000 years. Many of the historical agricultural practices are still retained overseen by the Verderers. The most significant of these is the depasturing of ponies, cattle, pigs and donkeys in the open forest by authorised inhabitants known as Commoners.

The District Council was created on 1 April 1974 and is one of the most populated non-unitary authorities in England (179,753 - in 2018). Within its boundaries there are 37 active town and parish councils.

Hampshire County Council are responsible for upper tier services and operating within the heart of the District Council area is the National Park Authority (NPA) established in

2005. The NPA is the planning authority for its area, and other services share responsibilities and work in close collaboration with New Forest District Council.

Approximately 70% of the population of the district live in the New Forest District Council authority area in several medium-sized towns. To the south and east of the district border there lies 40 miles of coastline. The broad range of organisations and community groups that exist means that the Council works collaboratively with and in the community to deliver solutions.

At the start of 2020 the New Forest was home to the third largest economy in Hampshire, with a total Gross Value Added of £4.4bn. The district contained just under 8,000 businesses in total. Leisure, tourism and marine along with their associated supply chains are significant employment and economic sectors within the district.

The very special nature of the New Forest, coupled with its excellent transport connections to the rest of the UK and to Europe, makes it an extremely attractive place to live, both for those in work and those wishing to retire (28.4% of the population is over 65). Housing development is made more difficult by many of the environmental constraints of the area.

Community matters and performance 2020/21

Community Matters, the Council's Corporate Plan for 2020-2024, sets out the overarching commitments and vision for the Council and focuses on the challenges faced and the plans to address them. A summary of Community Matters can be read on page 4 of this document. It recognises the ongoing financial constraints, whilst building on the strong financial position created and sets priorities that matter to the people of the district to deliver a prosperous New Forest and put the community first.

Although Community Matters was only approved in March 2020, the Council had to respond and adapt to unprecedented events which altered priorities during the year that followed. Critical services were all maintained with some areas more significantly disrupted or experiencing new pressures in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The majority of office-based staff worked remotely throughout the entire year, and members meetings moved online. Staff were redeployed, and new tasks and responsibilities were delivered including the Local Response Centre to support those under the Government's shielding measures, additional homelessness support during the pandemic, paying business support grants, administering self-isolation payments, supporting public health and enabling businesses to reopen or trade safely, and encouraging social distancing and Covid-19 safe behaviour. Page 5 of this document summarises the Council's response to Coronavirus pandemic.

As such the Coronavirus pandemic dominates the Council's performance for 2020/21, its service delivery and the impact on the community.

This annual performance statement is a backward-looking document that serves to reflect upon the performance of each Portfolio outlined in the Corporate Plan for 2020/21, whilst acknowledging the necessary redirecting of resources to deal with the more immediate response to the Coronavirus crisis.

Performance Summary

A summary of the performance for each Portfolio is accompanied by an assessment of the performance of key service areas, supported by relevant performance indicators. This considers:

- 1) **Staffing** - the availability of staff over the past year, factoring in absences as a direct result of Covid-19, including self-isolation and shielding, and re-deployment where the resources have been needed elsewhere;
- 2) **Budget** - the impact on costs and income; and
- 3) **Service delivery impact** - the impact on the overall delivery of services to the public.

The assessment of performance is shown as red amber or green which represent the following:

● significant impact ● slight impact ● as planned

Where services have been unable to deliver their existing functions because of new Covid-19 responsibilities then an assessment has been made of the performance of these existing functions and of the new responsibilities.

In light of the impact of the pandemic, and the changes to Portfolios, Community Matters 2020-2024 will now be revisited to ensure that priorities continue to reflect the needs of the community, to update associated actions and to align responsibilities with the new Cabinet structure.

Community Matters

Corporate Plan 2020-2024

Delivering a prosperous New Forest and putting the community first

Leader and Corporate Affairs PORTFOLIO



- Excellence in services to our residents and continuing to maintain front line services.
- Being an employer of choice.
- Working with regional partners to ensure the prosperity of the New Forest area.
- Ensuring effective democratic engagement and representation.

Planning and Infrastructure PORTFOLIO



- Delivering the vision of the local plan and encouraging development that meets local needs and delivers positive, economic, social and environmental outcomes.
- Working with partners, applicants and developers to ensure a positive, timely and enabling attitude to development.
- Using contributions to deliver projects that mitigate the impact of development on the natural environment.
- Ensuring building control are engaged at the earliest stage to make future in development projects safe.
- Working with Partnership for South Hampshire authorities on a Joint Strategy and Statement of Common Ground to address future growth and unmet housing need.

Finance, Investment and Corporate Services PORTFOLIO



- Protecting front line services through sound financial planning, including the collection of taxation with appropriate support for individuals and businesses.
- Modernisation and innovative use of ICT to enhance operational efficiencies across all services.
- Using investments to support financial resilience and the local economy.
- Supporting the migration to universal credit.

Leisure and Wellbeing PORTFOLIO



- Working with partners to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents.
- Ensuring that public health prevention principles are embedded within core services of the Council.
- Increase the levels of physical activity within the district.
- Providing affordable and accessible leisure facilities.

Housing Services PORTFOLIO



- Meeting local housing needs and promoting sustainable growth.
- Increasing the supply of high quality affordable homes.
- Improving the housing circumstances of those most in need.
- Enabling the best use of housing to meet the needs of local people, including support for a strong high quality private rented sector.

Community Affairs PORTFOLIO



- Putting customers at the centre of what we do and how we do it.
- Modernising customer services and responding to changing needs.
- Engaging with partners and the community to inform and contribute towards wider service outcomes.
- Ensuring the New Forest remains a safe place to live, work and visit.

Environment and Regulatory Services PORTFOLIO



- Taking actions that address the impact of climate change locally.
- Working with others to protect and enhance our natural environment.
- Reducing waste and increasing recycling.
- Ensuring regulatory services are delivered for the benefit of our residents, businesses and visitors.

Economic Development PORTFOLIO



- Continuing to work with partners and businesses to grow the New Forest economy.
- Supporting improvements in broadband and mobile connectivity.
- Helping businesses, industries and High Streets respond to social, environmental and technological changes and innovation.
- Continuing to promote the New Forest as a filming destination.

CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE

CUSTOMER SERVICES

78,985 CALLS
39,557 EMAILS
5,136 CHATS



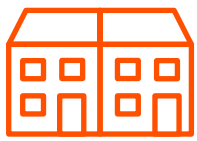
VIRTUAL MEETINGS

70+ COUNCILLOR MEETINGS VIEWED
8,950+ TIMES ON YOUTUBE



BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS

£67.6m TO **4,500+** BUSINESSES

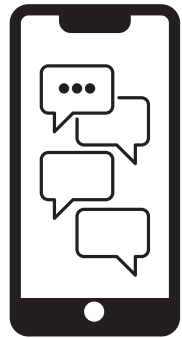


HOUSING

1,600 HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING ADVICE REQUESTS

207 HOUSEHOLDS PLACED INTO COVID-19 SECURE ACCOMMODATION

358 SOCIAL HOUSING PROPERTIES RELET



SOCIAL MEDIA

186 POSTS PER MONTH
6 MILLION+ REACHED



TAX AND BENEFITS RELIEF

56,000+ COUNCIL TAX, BENEFITS AND BUSINESS RATES SUPPORT CALLS

615 PEOPLE HELPED BY **£367,000** DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS

4,000 PEOPLE HELPED TO PAY THEIR COUNCIL TAX

£127,000 OF COMMUNITY GRANTS

9 NEW FOOD LARDERS SUPPORTED

WEBSITE

50,000+ CORONAVIRUS PAGE VIEWS
2,000 IN ONE DAY



LOCAL RESPONSE HUB

1,494 REFERRALS FOR SUPPORT

60 WELFARE CHECKS

1,182 FOOD PARCELS PACKAGED AND DELIVERED

£10,000 IN EMERGENCY GRANTS

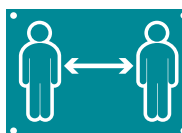


WASTE AND RECYCLING

COLLECTED FROM **22,000** HOUSEHOLDS EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK
RUBBISH INCREASED BY AROUND **10%**

SOCIAL DISTANCING SIGNAGE

430 SIGNS ERECTED



122 JOBS RECRUITED

6,051 BUILDING CONTROL INSPECTIONS

42,356 APPLETREE CARELINE ACTIVATIONS

63 SAFEGUARDING REFERRALS

3,858 GAS SAFETY CHECKS

131 BONFIRE COMPLAINTS

Leader and Corporate Affairs

Delivering a prosperous New Forest and putting our community first

The response to the pandemic became the priority for 2020/21 despite the strategic direction set out in Community Matters. The continued commitment to delivering modernised and innovative services and putting the community first was at the centre of this response.

Enabling office-based staff to work from home throughout much of the year was instrumental in the continued delivery of many services, with Appletree Court remaining open for essential reasons only. Engaging with staff and ensuring their wellbeing through this challenging time was a key focus and along with two staff surveys, steps were taken to support individuals with the appropriate ICT equipment to effectively work from home and in providing information and training to support employees' mental health.

Member meetings were also moved online, allowing the continuation of the democratic process throughout, with Members being supported with the appropriate technology so that they could engage in these meetings.

Recruitment into vacant positions continued with **122 vacancies** filled during the year, and the HR team were successful in their application for **18 placements** on the Government Kickstart Scheme, providing funding for the creation of new jobs for 16 to 24-year-olds on Universal Credit. Five placements have already been filled.

During the year, four Covid-19 Recovery Task and Finish Groups were set up to assess the impact on the Council's finances and resources, the local economy and the community, each reporting recommendations back to the Cabinet to help determine future recovery plans.

A significant contribution to the Portfolio's priority to work with regional partners to ensure the prosperity of the New Forest area was demonstrated in the Council's support for the **£2 billion** Solent Local Enterprise Partnership Freeport Bid, approved by the Chancellor in March. This will help strengthen the local position and rebuild the economy attracting much needed investment into the area.

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**, down from 60. 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

| KPIs | Unit | Desired DOT | Target | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | Actual DOT |
|-----------------------------|------|-------------|--------|---------|---------|------------|
| Vacancies filled first time | % | ↑ | - | 83% | 94% | ↑ |
| Sick days per FTE | Num | ↓ | - | 8.66 | 5.81 | ↓ |
| Total sick days | Num | ↓ | - | 6,567 | 4,579 | ↓ |
| Covid-19 absence per FTE | Num | - | - | - | 9.88 | - |
| Covid-19 total absence days | Num | - | - | - | 7,783 | - |

Planning and Infrastructure

Encouraging development that meets local needs and enhances the special qualities of the environment

Despite the pandemic, Building Control and Planning services were delivered throughout 2020/21. This included **14 virtual Planning Committee** meetings, the start of a procurement project to upgrade the IT system to deliver a more efficient customer friendly experience and dealing with over **1,000 calls** in to the Planning department per month. A virtual Waterside Conference took place in January and the Vision for the Waterside was launched. A review of all supplementary planning documents also commenced with the Parking and Mitigation of Recreational Impact documents which will make it easier for developers to engage with the planning process. The pre-application service has been redesigned, this includes the introduction of a virtual duty officer services which is proving very popular with customers and staff. Work has now commenced on Local Plan Part 2 which includes workstreams, amongst other matters, relating to Climate Change and Green Infrastructure.

Delivering the vision of the local plan and encouraging development that meets local needs and delivers positive economic, social and environmental outcomes remains a priority. The number of new planning applications received during the year remained steady with **1,433 applications** (1,437 2019/20) although the number of planning decisions made fell slightly by **5% to 1,280**. Whilst performance on the time taken to determine planning applications has remained good for smaller applications there has been a drop in performance on major applications, a series of actions are being taken to address this issue. July, a number of the strategic sites have come forward as applications and pre-application enquiries.

Building control market share fell to **44%** in May 2020 but recovered and rose to **58%** by January 2021, an overall increase of 9% since January 2019 which was a positive position given the lockdown restrictions at the time. At a virtual planning committee, members resolved to grant planning permission for a new sustainable community and centre of marine and maritime innovation at the former Fawley Power Station, the largest brownfield regeneration project in the South of England.

New Forest District Council are also one of the first Councils in the UK to require biodiversity net gain on all new development plans

and are supporting landowners to identify potential additional projects.

Working with Hampshire County Council, the service has developed a Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan for the Waterside recognising the important role cycling and walking plays in addressing the impact of climate change and promoting the health and wellbeing of residents. Work now continues on a joint Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan for the rest of the district working with HCC, the NPA and Forestry England. This document will enable funding applications and secure project delivery for the future.

Green infrastructure projects have been delivered, including both the Sweatford Water and Poulner Lakes projects to enable the enhancement of informal open space to create safer pedestrian routes, improve accessibility and enhance biodiversity.

Car park charges were suspended during the initial lockdown and usage was subsequently impacted throughout the whole year as a result of further lockdowns and national restrictions. The Portfolio lost revenue of approximately £1m as a direct result. The parking enforcement team were redeployed, in part, to support the delivery of food parcels to individuals.

Performance Summary

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Development Control | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |
| Planning Policy | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |
| Building Control | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |
| Parking* | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |

*Significant Covid-19 impact

Key Performance Indicators

| KPIs | Unit | Desired DOT | Target | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | Actual DOT |
|---|----------|-------------|------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| Increase in the number of houses completed each year (as set out in the Annual Authority Monitoring Report) | Num | ↑ | 300 | 308 | Expected July | - |
| Increase in the number of mitigation projects delivered each year | Num | ↑ | 3 | 3 | 3 | → |
| Total amount of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) spent | % | ↑ | 35% | 6% | 5% | ↓ |
| Increase in the total amount of open space play and sport provision, and cycling and walking infrastructure delivered each year | Projects | ↑ | 5 projects | 4 projects | 4 projects | → |
| Increase in NFDC Building Control Market Share | % | ↑ | 65% | 54% | 55% | ↑ |

Housing Services

Creating balanced communities and housing options that are affordable and sustainable

The Housing teams continued to work towards the strategic objectives set out on the Housing Strategy whilst responding to additional impacts and pressures due to the Covid pandemic.

During the first 6 months of the pandemic, the Homelessness Team provided safe accommodation for rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness, helping **130 households** as part of the government's "everyone in" campaign. The additional costs were offset by **£800,000** in government funding to support vulnerable homeless people. **207 households** were offered emergency temporary accommodation during the year and, at the height of the pandemic, over **85 households** were in external emergency temporary accommodation, many with complex needs. These households were supported with food, transport, benefit claims and referrals to specialist agencies by the Housing Support Team, funded by a successful bid to MHCLG. The scale of the increase in homelessness at this time had an impact on the medium term aspiration to minimise the use of external B & B accommodation.

Over **49%** of applicants presenting themselves as threatened with homelessness were prevented from becoming homeless with **267 households** securing alternative accommodation.

In total the Homelessness Team received **1,600 approaches** for assistance, awarding **1,004** statutory duties to help secure accommodation and successfully secured accommodation for **524 households**.

Despite Covid-19 restrictions, the Allocations Team relet **358** social housing properties during the year for all registered providers in the district, including **292** council properties.

Throughout the lockdown periods many of our tenants were affected financially as rent arrears increased by over **40%**. The Tenancy Account Team supported many tenants to seek financial advice, help with Universal Credit Claims and provided the reassurance and time to tenants to help resolve their situations. By the year end, arrears were **back in line** with performance targets.

The priority of increasing the provision of temporary accommodation continued at a pace with major works completing on a further **18 additional units, whilst another 13** are due to finish in 2021/22, offering an improved alternative to external B&B accommodation.

During the year a total of **190 new affordable homes** were provided across the New Forest; with **64** delivered by the District Council and contributing to the Corporate Plan target of 600 additional homes by 2026. 2020/21 also saw the first pair of new-build properties acquired and sold for **shared ownership**, with many more planned for the future.

And, as part of the Government's initiative to help Rough Sleepers, the Council competitively secured capital and revenue funding to set-up and support a **specialist accommodation scheme** which was delivered by the year end.

Lockdown restrictions meant that access to people's homes had to be carefully considered for planned and reactive maintenance services and disabled adaptations in order to prioritise safety. Resources were focussed on emergency repairs and essential maintenance and a two-stage screening process was implemented

for appointments to ensure individuals weren't symptomatic, self-isolating or shielding before work commenced. Work to deal with the backlog of non-essential repairs was ongoing throughout the year and continues.

From January 2021 maintenance services were re-prioritised to deal with the backlog in empty properties, which had increased during the year due to difficulties in sourcing materials, social distancing rules, and whilst resources were directed to essential maintenance work. External subcontractors were appointed to assist with turning around empty properties faster. This resulted in increased costs but rent income on such properties helped to offset some of the costs. It is anticipated that this backlog will be fully addressed during 2021/22.

The capital maintenance programme was delayed at the start of the year due to the lockdown restrictions, although with the easing of these restrictions in the summer, the programme was restarted which meant that the programme was not significantly impacted with **236 bathroom or kitchen modernisations** completed (246 for 2019/20).

Despite the pandemic, safety inspections were maintained during the year and measures were put in place to protect and reassure tenants and staff. **3,858 gas safety inspections** were undertaken during 2020/21, in line with previous years. Access to a small percentage of properties was challenging due to tenants self-isolating or being reluctant to have trade staff in their homes.

During the height of the pandemic, Housing Estates Management dealt with an increased volume of neighbourhood complaints and disputes, with follow up investigations, visits and mediation required. Between March and August 2020, the team responded to **407 separate neighbour complaints** compared with 123 for the same period the previous year. To manage the significant increase in these cases, the demand for lettings, and in recognition of local lockdown restrictions, the team shifted resources from estate and property inspections and in-person tenancy sign ups, to deal with the increase in neighbour disputes. Despite this, the team were still able to deliver **349 remote sign ups** of new tenants and temporary accommodation applicants during the financial year.

The Portfolio was successful in bidding for over **£250,000 of government funding to provide energy efficient heating upgrades** to homes of tenants on lower incomes with support from the **Greener Housing Task and Finish Group**. Plans also include a proposal to provide a greener housing scheme at the former Testwood Social Club site in Totton, to include the installation of air source heat pumps and triple glazing.

The new Private Sector Housing Strategy was approved by Council in December 2020, and a new bespoke software system was developed and implemented to help deliver new strategic actions. The Team prioritised disabled adaptations post lockdowns and completed works to the value of **£1.2m**.

The Tenant Involvement Group (TIG) switched to digital meetings and continued to scrutinise performance and processes, developing new ways to hold the service to account ahead of fundamental changes to landlord governance in the next 2 years.

Housing Services

Performance Summary

| | | |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| Housing Estate Management* | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |
| Housing Register Management and Allocations | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |
| Homelessness* | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |
| Housing Repairs and Maintenance* | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |

*Significant Covid-19 impact

Key Performance Indicators

| KPIs | Unit | Desired DOT | Target | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | Actual DOT |
|---|------|-------------|------------|----------|----------|------------|
| Additional council affordable homes by April 2026 | Num | ↑ | 600 (2026) | 90 (147) | 64 (211) | ↑ |
| Increase in prevention Duty cases successfully prevented | % | ↑ | 60% | 61% | 49% | ↓ |
| Net increase in the number of private sector lease properties | Num | ↑ | 140 | 138 | 141 | ↑ |
| Increase in rough sleepers entering accommodation pathway | Num | ↑ | Monitor | 31 | 62 | ↑ |
| Reduction in the number of Households in external emergency B&B accommodation at year end | Num | ↓ | 30 | 43 | 69 | ↑ |

Community Affairs

Keeping our communities safe and listening to their needs

As an essential service, Appletree Careline have maintained 24-hour service delivery, responding to **42,356** calls during this period in line with the previous year. As part of the Control Room, the team have also handled **2,501 Out of Hours emergency enquiries**, including calls for Covid-19 related support.

In response to Covid-19, a Local Response Centre was established in March 2020 providing support to people under the Government’s shielding measures, and other vulnerable members of the community. Scheduled elections for May 2020 were postponed and the elections team, along with other officers, was redeployed, in part, to set up and run the Local Response Centre (LRC). The LRC, in partnership with Community First, responded to **1,494 referrals** for support with food, prescription collection and social isolation as well as directly distributing **1,182 food parcels** from the Food Hub at Applemore Health & Leisure Centre. The response involved staff from across the organisation handling and making phone calls, providing reassurance and supporting independence, identifying local food offerings, shopping for essential food items, boxing and delivering food parcels and making over **60 welfare checks** to the homes of vulnerable individuals. Lymington Basics Bank took over the preparing of food parcels on behalf of the LRC from June, as the Leisure centres reopened, until shielding was paused at the beginning of August. The CCTV and Appletree Careline team took on the handling of referrals from December 2020.

Partnership working with town and parish councils, Hampshire County Council and the voluntary sector was instrumental to the pandemic response in supporting the needs, and recovery efforts, within the community. Along with the **£116,000** in revenue grants and **£97,650** in capital grants paid during the year, around **£10,000** in small grants to local voluntary organisations was distributed to assist in providing emergency support to those most vulnerable. Members grants were increased to **£1,000** to further support local community efforts.

The Community Covid-19 Recovery Task and Finish Group met with community and voluntary organisations to better understand the impact of the pandemic and to identify the actions required for recovery.

The reformed approach to the annual electoral canvass was still able to be delivered, with the revised electoral register published on 1 December 2020.

Modernising service delivery progressed with the Council’s new website, launched in July 2020, enabling greater digital service delivery with an easy to use design for customers. Since the launch, and up until end of March 2021, there were over **1million page views** and more services are now available online. The new website provided an alternative to some face-to-face contacts which were unavailable during the lockdown closures of the local information offices and **15,000 parking clock applications** were made online during this time. Staff from the Information Offices moved to working from home supporting Customer Services by taking calls. Phased re-opening of the information offices was brought in to support essential services.

Customer services, all working remotely throughout the year, also saw increased demand with calls up by **4% to 78,985**, emails up by **9.5% to 39,557** and webchat contacts of **5,136**, an increase of 21% on the previous year. There was a 63% increase in garden waste calls in response to a significant uplift in demand for the service.

Providing timely and accurate information to residents was a key strategy in the Council’s Covid-19 approach and a regular weekly resident’s email was introduced in direct response to the pandemic. This communication now has over **14,200 subscribers**, who, in a recent survey rated this service 9 out of 10 for usefulness, relevance and how easy the information was to understand. This communication was further enhanced by dedicated Coronavirus webpages providing information and signposting to guidance and available support. In total these pages have received over **50,000 page views**, with a **peak of 2,000 in one day** (the most of any single page).

Alongside our partners within Hampshire Constabulary and Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service our Community Safety team undertook five dedicated days to engage and listen to residents’ views across the district. Due to the pandemic the partnership held a community safety webinar online in November 2020 joined by 100+ delegates from services across the district area.

In a resident engagement survey, **96% of residents** asked were either satisfied or very satisfied with the area they live in regarding crime, disorder, or anti-social behaviour.

Priority was given to supporting those at risk from domestic abuse with the continuation of the Domestic Abuse forum with partner agencies, and regular communications highlighting help available for those affected. In November the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership supported 16 Days of Action reminding people of services available and releasing different messages each day to different target audiences. A staff policy was also published directed at employees affected by domestic abuse with training sessions for staff. Helpline information was displayed on refuse vehicles and sacks.

63 safeguarding referrals were received during the year.

Performance Summary

| | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| Customer Services and Information Offices* | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |
| Electoral Services* | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |
| CCTV & Appletree Careline | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |

*Significant Covid-19 impact

Community Affairs

Key Performance Indicators

| KPIs | Unit | Desired DOT | Target | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | Actual DOT |
|--|------|-------------|--------|---------|---------|------------|
| Number of engagement activities (Community Safety) | Num | ↑ | 5 | 5 | 5 | → |
| Residents satisfaction survey re: crime and disorder | % | ↑ | 95 | 96 | 96 | → |

Finance, Investment and Corporate Services

Enabling service provision and ensuring value for money for the council tax payer

Soon after the budget was set for 2020/21 the pandemic caused a significant adverse impact on the Council's projected income, resulting in a need for the Council to revise its spending plans and restate a balanced budget for the year. An emergency budget was set and approved in September 2020.

The closure of the Health and Leisure Centres had the biggest financial impact with lost income totalling approximately **£6m**. Government support of £5.2m offset much of this loss, including use of the furlough scheme for around **400 members of staff**.

The Covid-19 Recovery Finance and Resources Task and Finish Group was set up to review the financial impact as the situation developed and were instrumental in making recommendations to Cabinet on the necessary mitigating actions.

Measures put in place in response to the financial pressures included the review of asset maintenance budgets, revised Capital Programme Financing and reserve transfers, and a complete and thorough review of service budgets to account for savings and allow for expenditure increases as a direct impact of Covid-19. Measures were also implemented to control employee costs by adopting a Vacancy Control procedure to ensure only essential staffing posts were filled, including considerations for redeployment of existing staff where roles have been impacted by Covid-19. HR provided additional support to managers and staff on wellbeing, self isolation and furlough, they saw a reduction in recruitment during the year.

Government funding support subsequently eased much of the pressure. The existing strong financial position enabled the Council to respond well and reformulate its financial strategy to ensure future plans are sustainable and resilient.

Revenues and Benefits administered in excess of **£60m** worth of business support grants and **£28m** in business rate discounts to businesses who suffered as a result of the closure and reduced trade, whilst offering over **£700,000** in Council tax relief to assist individuals and families in financial hardship. Additional responsibilities also extended to the administration of self-isolation payments, whilst providing business as usual services.

Three more employment properties were acquired during the year within the district. The Crow Lane Ringwood development

was progressed with the appointment of technical advisors and letting consultants, and the procurement process for contractors commenced. The lettings for the Lymington Town Hall south wing were delivered including the completion of the Police station on the ground floor. These investments will continue to support the Council's financial resilience.

As at 31 March 2021, Appletree Property Lettings have purchased seven properties with offers accepted on a further two. Seven of these properties have been let. The roll out of the Commercial Property Investment and the Residential Property Investment strategies has been affected by Covid-19, especially in the early stages of the financial year.

The pandemic highlighted the value of the investment in, and modernisation of, ICT, which positioned the Council well to respond by working in alternative ways, particularly the ability for office-based staff to work from home at very short notice. Virtual meetings were also enabled within a very quick time frame and any members whose existing equipment wasn't appropriate were provided with new equipment to enable their continued participation in meetings. ICT effectively supported the workforce remotely throughout the year, along with HR and other corporate services.

Performance Summary

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Financial Services | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |
| Revenues and Benefits* | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |
| Estates and Valuation | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |
| HR* | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |
| ICT* | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |

*Significant Covid-19 impact

Key Performance Indicators

| KPIs | Unit | Desired DOT | Annual Target | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | Actual DOT |
|--|------|-------------|---------------|---------|------------------------|------------|
| Maintain high level of Council Tax collected | % | ↑ | 98.24% | 98.69% | 98.31% | ↓ |
| NNDR collected | % | ↑ | 98.19% | 98.97% | 97.79% | ↓ |
| Increase the value of commercial investment | £M | ↑ | 20 | 9 | 9.887 spend altogether | ↑ |
| Increase the value of residential investment | £M | ↑ | 4 | 1.43 | 2.08 | ↑ |
| Availability of NFDC Website | % | ↑ | 100% | 100% | 100% | → |

Leisure and Wellbeing

Improving the health and wellbeing of our community

This portfolio saw the biggest impact of the pandemic on service delivery with the closure of the Health and Leisure Centres, and just under **400 staff furloughed** throughout most of 2020/21. The remaining staff were retained to maintain plant and buildings and support other services of the Council, including the Local Response Centre providing a food hub from Applemore Health & Leisure centre and the distribution of food parcels to those who needed them.

The financial impact on the Portfolio was also significant. The closure of the Health and Leisure Centres resulted in lost income totalling approximately **£6m** (86% of the original budget), although **£5.2m** of this loss will be covered through government support.

The Health and Leisure recovery plan ensured that when centres could reopen in line with government guidelines, they could do so in a Covid-19 secure manner including one-way systems, maintaining social distancing requirements, increasing cleaning regimes in all the facilities, reconfiguration of gyms to allow 2m distancing, closing some facilities such as showers, and making sanitisation stations available in all public and staff areas.

The centres, with support of leisure staff, have also been used as Covid-19 vaccination and testing sites. The Lateral Flow Test Community Covid-19 Test Centre, based at Totton Health & Leisure centre, was operated 6 days a week for 6 weeks. **1,441 tests** were carried out during that time.

Despite the pandemic, the review of Health and Leisure concluded, with a partnership with Freedom Leisure announced in February 2021. This will not only help to sustain the service but also to increase participation and improve the health and wellbeing of our community.

The quarterly meetings of the Health and Wellbeing board were suspended and did not take place due to the pandemic. The partners of the Health and Wellbeing Board (Public Health Hampshire, West Hampshire CCG, the voluntary sector and NFDC) worked together to ensure a joined-up approach to supporting the most vulnerable residents during this time. The impact of the pandemic on widening the existing health inequalities will be reflected in recovery planning.

This year's Active Lives report showed that inactivity levels sat at **19.5%** to May 2020, with **65.4%** of New Forest adults and **53.3%** of children reporting being physically active, however the impacts of the pandemic on physical activity will not be known until the next bi-annual report. This is an area that will also need to be kept under review as part of the recovery activities.

Performance Summary

| | | |
|--|-------------------------|----|
| Health & Leisure* | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |
| Dibden Golf Centre* | Staffing | NA |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |
| Sports and Community Development* | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |

*Significant Covid-19 impact

Key Performance Indicators

| KPIs | Unit | Desired DOT | Target | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | Actual DOT |
|---|------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|------------|
| Increase in physical activity in adults | % | ↑ | Monitor | - | 65.4% | - |
| Increase in physical activity in children | % | ↑ | Monitor | - | 53.3% | - |
| Reduction in inactivity levels | % | ↓ | Monitor | - | 19.5% | - |

Environment and Regulatory Services

Working to tackle climate change and enhancing our special environment

Taking action to address the impact of climate change remains a long term key priority and there are numerous workstreams across the council to address this issue. Work on the Environment Strategy was delayed due to other priorities, further consideration will be given to what needs to be included in the Environment Strategy that is not covered in other workstreams.

Despite the impact of the pandemic the Waste and Recycling service maintained weekly collections to the 22,000 households in the district. The Council collected over **63,000** tonnes of household waste in 2020/21, a **9% increase** on 2019/20. With more people at home during three national lockdowns and an increase in online shopping, take away dinners and home clear outs, more waste was collected than in previous years.

2020/21 saw a **28% increase** in Garden Waste customers with an additional **4,437 sign ups** throughout the year. There was also a **63% increase** in Garden Waste enquiries to Customer Services.

Work to deliver a new, modern Waste Strategy continued with the draft going to Cabinet in November 2020. This was also released for consultation and **3,865** residents responded with comments.

In May 2020 the #Crabby campaign helped change the behaviour of those who litter. This coincided with a **40% increase** in visitors to the beaches in the district and resulted in a **29% reduction** in rubbish collections, creating a **£10,000 saving**.

The number of fly tipping incidents reported to customer services increased by 28% to over **1,100**. In addition to this, operatives encountered increased fly tipping incidents at Council recycling bring sites (1,898) as well as unreported fly tips at other locations across the district (519), amounting to an additional **2,417 fly tips** throughout the financial year. The Council issued **17 fixed penalty notices** during 2020/21, an **increase of 88%** when compared to the previous year.

As a response to the pandemic cleaning activities on public conveniences were increased and this continues to be budgeted for in 2021/22 to ensure they remain Covid-19 safe. The public conveniences at Milford-on-Sea were replaced in 2020 as planned.

Environmental Health were diverted from their normal functions to support the Covid-19 response. The Portfolio dealt with over **1,100** Covid related service requests from March 2020, including complaints and queries from the public and requests for advice from businesses. **300 new businesses** were set up during the year (248 2019/20), although food hygiene interventions fell significantly

from 701 (2019/20) to 146 (2020/21). Officers visited over **100** supermarkets and food retailers and **37** other premises such as garden centres, DIY stores and builders' merchants to help them keep staff and residents safe, ensuring Covid-19 compliance.

Environmental Protection received an increase in nuisance requests - including noise, air, drainage, and public health - from 548 in 2019/20 to **657** in 2020/21, with support for planning consultations also increased by **16%** to 455 during the year. The team also introduced a no charge pavement license to support local businesses to operate safely.

Work began to repair damage to the district's coastlines, most significantly damage to the Westover cliff and sea wall at Milford-on-Sea. Urgent works began in August 2020 after **48 properties** were deemed to be at risk with over **15,000 tonnes** of rock imported to support the failing wall. The Environment Agency has provided funding of **£250,000** to carry out scoping work for what could be a longer-term project in this area.

Although funding was in place to undertake drainage trials at Barton-on-Sea, work was not completed due to the change in priorities during the year.

A new cemetery was opened at Calshot, and work continued to identify potential sites in Totton and Lymington to help meet the demand for burial space. Assessments of remaining capacity and associated timescales are underway.

Performance Summary

| | | |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| Waste and Recycling* | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |
| Street Scene* | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |
| Environmental Health & Licensing* | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |
| Coastal | Staffing | ● |
| | Budget | ● |
| | Service delivery impact | ● |

*Significant Covid-19 impact

Key Performance Indicators

| KPIs | Unit | Desired DOT | Target | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | Actual DOT |
|--|------|-------------|--------|---------|---------|------------|
| Household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting | % | ↑ | 35% | 34% | 34% | → |
| Reduction in the number of flytipping incidents | Num | ↓ | 900 | 923 | 1183 | ↑ |

Economic Development

Helping local businesses to grow and prosper

This Portfolio was instrumental in the response to mitigate, as far as possible, the economic impacts of the pandemic. Instead of delivering many of their normal functions the services within the Economic Development Portfolio were focussed on supporting the local economy with over **£6 million** in discretionary funding allocated to local businesses. **60%** of businesses were supported under the additional restrictions' grants provided to limited companies, new enterprises, and trades people with most applications being assessed and paid within one week.

Additionally, **£120,000** was secured from the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, including the rural resilience fund, in direct response to Covid-19, and the rural growth fund to support wider business investment.

The pop-up Business School initiative supported over **40** local individuals through week long online courses focused on starting their own enterprise.

Throughout 2020 engagement with businesses significantly improved and the Council are now in weekly contact with **60%** of the businesses in the district. The Economic Development team have also compiled a comprehensive employer database, listing detailed information on local businesses to enable relevant timely contact.

The town and parish councils were supported through the Reopening High Streets Safely initiatives, to give people the confidence to return to the High Street safely. Work has now commenced on the Welcome Back fund.

The Local Economy Task & Finish Group met with business leaders, key employers, small businesses, arts organisations and further education providers to better understand the ongoing impact to

the hospitality and tourism sector, as well as other key sectors and employers. These meetings were crucial to supporting recovery efforts as we move forward.

Improving broadband connectivity remains a priority and is arguably more important than ever as working from home has become the norm. The Economic Development team have worked in partnership with the Hampshire Superfast Broadband Team to promote community broadband funding programmes, and this is supported further through the local plan, with all new homes having a high-speed fibre connection.

In the wake of Covid-19 there has been an increased focus on initiatives to promote training and skills opportunities. The Portfolio has worked closely with Solent Apprenticeship Hub and specific schemes like the Government Kickstart to ensure that take-up in the New Forest District is maximised.

A full review of the Economic Development webpages was undertaken as part of the new NFDC website and the content was fully updated to offer a better experience for residents and businesses.

Performance Summary

Economic Development *

Staffing ●
Budget ●
Service delivery impact ●

*Significant Covid-19 impact

Key Performance Indicators

| KPIs | Unit | Desired DOT | Target | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | Actual DOT |
|---|------|-------------|--------|---------|---------|------------|
| Increase in apprenticeships within the district | Num | ↑ | - | -29% | -19% | ↓ |
| Increase in Businesses engaged in economic development programme | Num | ↑ | - | N/A | 2232 | - |
| Increase in subscribers to 'Helping local businesses grow' e-news | Num | ↑ | - | N/A | 3780 | - |

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FINANCIAL MONITORING 2020/21

GENERAL FUND OUTTURN 2020/21

| | Feb 20 | Sept 20 | December 20 | April 21 | Previously | Outturn 2020/21 | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| | 2020/21 £'000's Original Budget | 2020/21 £'000's Emergency Budget | 2020/21 £'000's Updated Budget | 2020/21 £'000's Updated Budget | Reported Item Split across Portfolio's | 2020/21 £'000's New Variations Expend. | 2020/21 £'000's New Variations Income | 2020/21 £'000's New Variations Rephasings | 2020/21 £'000's Outturn Position |
| PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS | | | | | | | | | |
| Community Affairs | 1,497 | 1,612 | 1,612 | 1,418 | -20 | -59 | 37 | -5 | 1,371 |
| Contain Outbreak Management Grant | | | | | | 77 | -180 | | -103 |
| Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Grant | | | | | | 11 | -181 | | -170 |
| COVID Compliance/Enforcement | | | | | | 71 | -71 | | 0 |
| COVID Test Centre | | | | | | 54 | | | 54 |
| Emergency Assistance/Community Response Grant | | | | 75 | | 102 | -139 | | 38 |
| Economic Development | -11 | -85 | -85 | -130 | 28 | -14 | -13 | 0 | -129 |
| Environment and Regulatory Services | 9,177 | 9,535 | 9,533 | 9,629 | -107 | -5 | -79 | -33 | 9,405 |
| Environment - Income Support Scheme | | 0 | 0 | -98 | 0 | | 98 | | 0 |
| Finance, Corporate Services and Improvement | 3,863 | 3,708 | 3,379 | 3,178 | 350 | 842 | -955 | -10 | 3,405 |
| Finance - New Burdens Funding | | -170 | -170 | -170 | | 12 | -366 | | -524 |
| Finance - Emergency Assistance Grant | | -134 | -134 | -134 | | | 134 | | 0 |
| Housing Services | 1,847 | 2,393 | 2,496 | 2,375 | -49 | -72 | -40 | -84 | 2,130 |
| Housing Services - Accomodation Support Funding | | -100 | -438 | -438 | | | | | -438 |
| Leader and Corporate Affairs | 68 | 168 | 175 | 175 | | -8 | 0 | 0 | 167 |
| Leisure and Wellbeing | 1,403 | 6,361 | 6,239 | 6,825 | -78 | -354 | 132 | -32 | 6,493 |
| Leisure and Wellbeing - Income Support Scheme | | -2,220 | -2,220 | -3,803 | | | 3,803 | | 0 |
| Leisure and Wellbeing - Furlough | | -1,100 | -1,100 | -1,059 | | | | | -1,059 |
| Planning and Infrastructure | 1,361 | 2,316 | 2,291 | 1,956 | -124 | 193 | -234 | -20 | 1,771 |
| Planning and Infrastructure - Income Support Scheme | | -620 | -620 | -585 | 0 | | 585 | | 0 |
| | 19,205 | 21,664 | 20,958 | 19,214 | 0 | 850 | 2,531 | -184 | 22,411 |
| Reversal of Depreciation | -1,545 | -1,535 | -1,535 | -1,495 | -40 | 131 | | | -1,404 |
| Contribution (from) / to Earmarked Revenue Reserves | -256 | -435 | 158 | 864 | | -379 | 277 | 184 | 946 |
| Contribution to Revenue Reserves | 1,250 | 5 | 5 | 1,250 | | | | | 1,250 |
| NET PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS | 18,654 | 19,699 | 19,586 | 19,833 | -40 | 602 | 2,808 | 0 | 23,203 |
| Minimum Revenue Provision | 1,181 | 1,204 | 1,204 | 1,164 | 40 | -110 | | | 1,094 |
| RCCO | 375 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | 0 |
| Interest Earnings (Net) | -730 | -500 | -500 | -500 | | 19 | -330 | | -811 |
| New Homes Bonus | -286 | -286 | -286 | -286 | | | | | -286 |
| GENERAL FUND NET BUDGET REQUIREMENTS | 19,194 | 20,117 | 20,004 | 20,211 | 0 | 511 | 2,478 | 0 | 23,200 |

FINANCIAL MONITORING 2020/21

CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN 2020/21

| | Portfolio | Feb 20 2020/21 Original Budget | Apr 20 2020/21 Updated Budget | Outturn 2020/21 | | |
|---|-------------|---|--|---|---|------------------------------|
| | | | | 2020/21 New Variations Expend. | 2020/21 New Variations Rephasing | 2020/21 Outturn Budget |
| Disabled Facilities Grants | HSG (GF) | 1,200,000 | 590,000 | -45,000 | | 545,000 |
| Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring (15-21) | ENV | 1,495,000 | 1,739,000 | 19,000 | -100,000 | 1,658,000 |
| Hurst Spit | ENV | | | 15,000 | | 15,000 |
| Barton Drainage Test (19-21) | ENV | 50,000 | | | | |
| Public Convenience Modernisation Programme | ENV | 300,000 | | 8,000 | | 8,000 |
| Public Convenience Additional Enhancements | ENV/LEADERS | 75,000 | | | | |
| Lymington Sea Wall | ENV | 400,000 | | | | |
| Emergency Works - Milford Sea Wall | | | 1,825,000 | | | 1,825,000 |
| Emergency Works - Milford Sea Wall S151 Contingency | | | 300,000 | -216,000 | -15,000 | 69,000 |
| Westover Seawall Scheme Appraisal and Development | | | | | 10,000 | 10,000 |
| New Depot Site | F,CS&I | 3,000,000 | 170,000 | | -10,000 | 160,000 |
| V&P; Replacement Programme | F,CS&I | 1,682,000 | 242,000 | | -36,000 | 206,000 |
| Smarter Working; Future Delivery | F,CS&I | 500,000 | 250,000 | -255,000 | | -5,000 |
| Commercial Property Acquisitions | F,CS&I | | 3,400,000 | 33,000 | | 3,433,000 |
| Residential Property Acquisitions | F,CS&I | | 1,850,000 | -2,000 | | 1,848,000 |
| Open Space Schemes | P&I | 292,000 | 56,000 | 47,000 | 67,000 | 170,000 |
| Transport Schemes | P&I | 265,000 | 172,000 | | | 172,000 |
| Mitigation Schemes | P&I | 635,000 | 144,000 | | -33,000 | 111,000 |
| TOTAL GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME | | 9,894,000 | 10,738,000 | -396,000 | -117,000 | 10,225,000 |
| HRA - Major Repairs | HRA | 5,600,000 | 5,600,000 | -15,000 | | 5,585,000 |
| Estate Improvements | HRA | 200,000 | 200,000 | -69,000 | | 131,000 |
| Council Dwellings - Strategy Delivery | HRA | 9,000,000 | 10,000,000 | 376,000 | | 10,376,000 |
| Disabled Facilities Grants | HRA | 1,000,000 | 700,000 | -58,000 | | 642,000 |
| TOTAL HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME | | 15,800,000 | 16,500,000 | 234,000 | | 16,734,000 |
| GRAND TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME | | 25,694,000 | 27,238,000 | -162,000 | -117,000 | 26,959,000 |

| FINANCIAL MONITORING 2020/21 | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT OUTTURN 2020/21 | | | | |
| | Feb 20 | Apr 20 | Outturn 2020/21 | |
| | 2020/21 | 2020/21 | 2020/21 | 2020/21 |
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| | Original | Updated | New | Outturn |
| | Budget | Budget | Variations | Position |
| INCOME | | | | |
| Dwelling Rents | -26,354 | -26,354 | -5 | -26,359 |
| Non Dwelling Rents | -786 | -724 | | -724 |
| Charges for Services & Facilities | -660 | -660 | -1 | -661 |
| Contributions towards Expenditure | -64 | -64 | -69 | -133 |
| Interest Receivable | -78 | -18 | | -18 |
| Sales Administration Recharge | -32 | -32 | 14 | -18 |
| Shared Amenities Contribution | -225 | -225 | 7 | -218 |
| TOTAL INCOME | -28,199 | -28,077 | -54 | -28,131 |
| EXPENDITURE | | | | |
| Repairs & Maintenance | | | | |
| Cyclical Maintenance | 1,337 | 1,257 | 65 | 1,322 |
| Reactive Maintenance | 3,356 | 3,610 | 102 | 3,712 |
| Supervision & Management | | | | |
| General Management | 5,095 | 4,885 | 64 | 4,949 |
| Special Services | 1,222 | 1,222 | -54 | 1,168 |
| Homeless Assistance | 64 | 64 | 3 | 67 |
| Rents, Rates, Taxes and Other Charges | 54 | 54 | 36 | 90 |
| Provision for Bad Debt | 150 | 150 | -42 | 108 |
| Capital Financing Costs - Settlement Adjustment | 8,376 | 8,376 | -15 | 8,361 |
| MRP | 72 | 72 | -31 | 41 |
| Capital Financing Costs - New Borrowing | | | | |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 19,726 | 19,690 | 128 | 19,818 |
| HRA OPERATING SURPLUS(-) | -8,473 | -8,387 | 74 | -8,313 |
| Contribution to Capital - supporting Housing Strategy | 8,473 | 8,473 | 0 | 8,473 |
| Contribution to/from(-) Earmarked Reserves | | | -72 | -72 |
| Transfer to Acquisitions/Development reserve | 0 | 86 | 2 | 88 |

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WORKSMART – THE BUSINESS CASE

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 That the Cabinet support the content of the report, noting the Overview and Scrutiny Panel's comments on the Business Case and noting the HR Committee's endorsement of the 'Worksmart – Hybrid Working Policy', and their recommendation to Council that the new HR policy be approved.

2. Purpose of the report

- 2.1 This report provides the Cabinet with information on the proposed implementation of the WorkSmart initiative, the next step in the Council's Smarter Working Programme, supported with a HR Policy and a Members Guidance Document.

3. Background

- 3.1 The significant majority of the Council's c400 office-based employees work in roles that have been working from home since the middle of March 2020. WorkSmart introduces a policy to allow staff to continue to work from home or an alternative base. Working from an alternative base is not possible for our Operational, Leisure (who transfer to Freedom Leisure on 1/7/21) and field-based employees
- 3.2 The investment made by the Council in recent years in its ICT equipment and infrastructure meant the Council was in an excellent position to respond to the immediate challenge faced by enforced home working in March 2020. In addition to the Laptops and Virtual Public Network the Council has in place to enable remote access, the Council provided ICT bundles consisting of a Keyboard, Mouse and Monitor to ensure employees they have the equipment that they require to work from home effectively. In addition employees have had the opportunity to recycle surplus office equipment such as chairs and small filing cabinets.
- 3.3 The mainstay of the WorkSmart Policy for staff is a commitment from the Council to support officers to work from home or from another location for part of their working week, in line with the business needs of the service.
- 3.4 A clear demand exists for future hybrid working options for councillors as well as employees, particularly in more informal settings. WorkSmart can therefore also apply to Elected Members when undertaking Council business.

4. A shift to homeworking during lockdown

- 4.1 During the first national lockdown period in the UK, between March and July 2020, the Council maintained the majority of its services. We successfully implemented homeworking arrangements for most of our office based employees during this time, although operational staff including Waste, Grounds, Streetscene and Housing staff, were required to continue working to deliver essential service to the public and our tenants.
- 4.2 The investment in ICT that has been made over the last few years has paid dividends and was key in enabling the shift to remote working. Most office based staff had been given a laptop so it was actually fairly straightforward to mobilise many office based staff to start working remotely straight away.

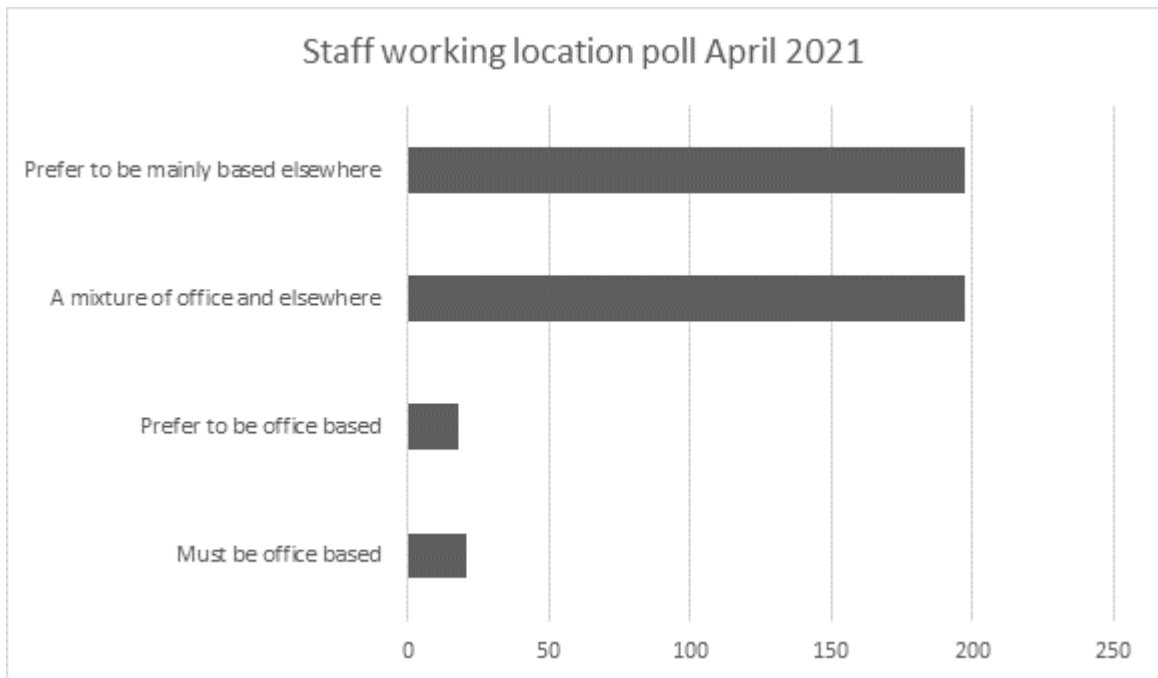
5. A shift to virtual meetings during lockdown

- 5.1 The enforced move to working from home but still staying in touch presented some challenges. The move from Skype to MS Teams has made this easier. Most staff with laptops have embraced the technology. The significant majority of meetings have taken place virtually since April 2020, including council meetings. The online etiquette is now seen as common practice and managers are encouraged to stay in touch with staff regularly through online meetings both one to one and as team meetings.

6. Introducing the WorkSmart programme

6.1 Employees

- 6.1.1 A couple of months into lockdown, an Employee Survey of all employees was carried out. In particular we wanted to assess how they were coping with their new working arrangements at home. Despite all the concerns and upheaval caused by enforced home-working, many employees welcomed being able to work from home and in general we received a lot of positive feedback. Those who were homeworking were liking the fact they were commuting less and that they could work more flexibly around childcare and they said they felt supported and trusted and that they enjoyed having autonomy over their work.
- 6.1.2 There were some staff that did feel isolated and were looking forward to a return to the office.
- 6.1.3 Most staff at that early stage said they would welcome a hybrid approach.
- 6.1.4 A second staff poll was run in April 2021, 12 months after the initial move to remote working. The results clearly favour a remote / in-office mix (i.e. 'Hybrid'), or a pure remote working pattern.



6.1.5 This feedback favouring hybrid and remote working has prompted the council to consider whether these arrangements could become the "new normal", when Coronavirus restrictions end and employees are able to return to their offices.

6.1.6 The mainstay of the WorkSmart programme would be a commitment from the council to support employee's, with the managers agreement, to work from home or from another location for part of their working week. The scheme would be flexible but there would always be occasions when there would be a need to come into the office for meetings or to collaborate with colleagues on a scheduled remote working day. Agreement from employees to this element of the programme would be essential.

6.1.7 Off-site workers are not subject to fixed hours and subject first and foremost to the needs of the business and the agreement of their manager, are free to perform the agreed number of hours/work at times that suit them. The flexible working agreement would include details of the working pattern agreed. Normal working hours would be expected to be between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday.

6.1.8 Managers will arrange flexible working locally - and they will be responsible for ensuring they are getting the business outcomes they need and are providing a good level of service with sufficient cover.

6.2 Elected Members

6.2.1 A survey of Elected Members was undertaken in May 2021 which identified a clear demand for future hybrid working options for councillors, particularly in

more informal settings. WorkSmart can therefore also apply to Elected Members when undertaking Council business.

6.2.2 The full survey results are attached as an appendix to this report. In short, the following themes can be drawn:-

- For formal meetings, Members broadly favour a mixture of face-to-face and hybrid meetings.
- For Task and Finish Groups and Working Groups, Members broadly favour a mixture of hybrid and virtual meetings, with some face-to-face options.
- For informal meetings, Members broadly favour a mixture of hybrid and virtual meetings.
- For ward/case work, Members broadly favour the flexibility to work both remotely and at Council offices.

6.2.3 It is recognised that at present, a change in legislation is required to allow formal decision making meetings to be held virtually or with hybrid attendance. However, through a commitment and detailed preparations for Hybrid Working, the Council will be able to respond positively to any future changes to legislation. A mix of face to face, hybrid and virtual meetings is anticipated for Members as we move into the “new normal”.

7. ICT and Document Security

- 7.1 Employees and Members must not allow family or third parties to access or use NFDC equipment.
- 7.2 Employees and Members are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with Council business secure at all times.
- 7.3 Employees must continue to adhere to the ICT Security Policy.
- 7.4 Members must continue to adhere to the Members ICT Security Protocol.

8. Performance Management

- 8.1 Managers will be required to maintain frequent contact with their team members and are encouraged to maintain team collaboration and communication through regular virtual ‘touch point’ meetings and on-site team meetings and briefings.
- 8.2 Managers will be responsible for setting targets for individuals and discussing their performance expectations. Regular constructive feedback will be essential to ensure employees remain both engaged and positive in terms of their performance.

- 8.3 Where managers become concerned over an employee's performance or contribution to the team then initially this should be addressed by more regular contact. If no improvement is made then a more formal approach may be required.
- 8.4 Managers will keep track of overall and individual team performance and will regularly feedback to their Executive Head.

9. Sustainability

- 9.1 Moving to a hybrid way of working enables the Council to make a good contribution towards its sustainability agenda.
- 9.2 Employee travel (not including commuter or roundage miles) in 2019/20 was in the region of 480,000 miles. A reduction in travel is anticipated from employees who have a new flexible working arrangement in place, which could generate financial and time benefits.
- 9.3 Members' travel in 2019/20 was in the region of 44,000 miles. A reduction in travel is anticipated from some Members undertaking a hybrid way of working, which could generate financial and time benefits.
- 9.4 The 524,000 miles travelled in 2019/20 equates to 159.33 tonnes of CO2 emissions in an average petrol car. A hybrid way of working could therefore also lead to a reduction in the Council's carbon footprint.
- 9.5 The Council will monitor this performance to identify both financial efficiencies and the contribution made to the sustainability agenda.
- 9.6 Moving to virtual and hybrid meetings where appropriate has also enabled Members, managers and employees to stay in touch without the need to commute.
- 9.7 The Council is also aiming to discourage mass use of printing in line with its commitment to reduce its carbon footprint.

10. HR Committee Comments

- 10.1 The HR Committee, at its meeting on 23 June 2021, recommended the adoption of the Worksmart HR Policy to the Council, with a review after the first 12 months of the initiative being implemented.

11. Corporate Affairs and Local Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel Comments

- 11.1 The Corporate Affairs and Local Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel, at its meeting on 24 June 2021, supported the business case for Worksmart. The

Panel recognised that as the Council moved forward with more hybrid working, this would necessitate a review of the Council's use of offices across the District, to ensure it met the needs of the organisation moving forward. The Panel welcomed the opportunity to consider these matters at the appropriate time

12. Financial Implications

12.1 There are no immediate Financial Implications arising from the report, however it is envisaged that increased remote working may result in recruitment savings and reduced travel, both resulting in a saving to the Council.

12.2 The provision of screens to employees and laptops to some members to enable effective working from home has resulted in the need to acquire additional ICT, but costs here have been contained within existing budgetary provision.

13. Crime & Disorder Implications

13.1 There are none arising as a result of the report.

14. Environmental Implications

14.1 As outlined in section 9 of the report, the adoption of the Worksmart Business Case and Hybrid Working Policy has the opportunity to make a positive contribution towards the Council's green agenda.

15. Conclusion

15.1 The introduction of a new hybrid policy builds on the Smarter Working platform which has been well established by the Council over the past 3 to 4 years. It supports the Council's Green Agenda and suits the needs of the Council to be an employer of choice to ensure it can continue to attract and retain a high calibre of employee. The new hybrid working policy takes into account everything that has been learnt since March 2020 in terms of how to make a success of remote working for the benefit of the organisation, and the employee.

16. Portfolio Holder Comments

16.1 I am grateful to all officers and elected members who completed the surveys. It is important that we maintain our high quality of service delivery while adapting the way we work. I am confident that this hybrid working policy seeks to meet the aspirations of our employees while protecting service delivery and maintaining productivity. As we move to the 'new normal' we will monitor the impact of these changes and it is likely that some adjustments will need to be made as we learn from our own experience and best practice from both the public and private sector.

Alan Bethune

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Background Papers

HR Committee - 23/6/21
Corp. Affairs Panel –
24/6/21

Heleana Aylett

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WORKSMART - Hybrid Working Policy

We promote flexible working for all staff and will agree to an employee working partly or wholly from home or an alternative location (herein referred to collectively as 'off-site') as opposed to solely from an NFDC workplace, where appropriate.

Individual requests for hybrid working will depend on whether or not your work can be done off-site effectively. We cannot agree to all requests because every job is different, service demands are different and every employee is different.

An integral part of the decision as to whether agreement can be reached between the Manager and employee on the flexible working request will have regard to what is happening across other service areas. Requests for flexible working will not be considered in isolation but on a corporate basis.

If making a request to work off-site you should consider whether or not you have the necessary organisational and time-management skills; the ability to work without direct supervision; and are able to cope with the potentially conflicting demands of work and family.

This policy outlines the working arrangements that will apply when a flexible working request has been approved. All requests granted will initially be for a period of 12 months. A review will then be undertaken before any further request is agreed to. Should there be concerns about productivity then meetings must be arranged during the trial to discuss this. If the issues cannot be overcome then the trial may be halted.

Hours of work

Off-site workers are not subject to fixed hours and subject first and foremost to the needs of the business and the agreement of their manager, are free to perform the agreed number of hours/work at times that suit them. The flexible working agreement would include details of the working pattern agreed. These should typically be between the hours of 8am and 6pm.

We would expect all staff to be in regular contact with their supervisor and team colleagues when working off-site.

Where employees are required to be accessible to members of the public then arrangements need to be put in place to accommodate this. Where members of the public are unable or unwilling to use devices to facilitate a virtual meeting then alternative arrangements need to be made which will include face to face meetings at an NFDC workplace.

All employees must ensure they take adequate rest breaks, as set out by the Working Time Regulations 1998:

- take a break of at least 20 minutes if working a period of 6 hours or more;
- ensure the time period between stopping work one day and beginning the next is not less than 11 hours; and
- have at least one complete day each week when no work is done.

All employees working off site will be required to complete a DSE Assessment of their off site set up and this will need to be submitted as part of their application for flexible working. The Council has appropriate workspace in its office locations for any employer whose home DSE assessment fails to provide a suitable workspace.

Visits to the employer's premises

Any staff that work off-site are required, on request, to attend the NFDC workplace for purposes such as, but not limited to; training, performance assessments, collaborative work and team briefings. In the event of any ICT issues experienced you may be asked to attend the NFDC workplace to provide ICT staff physical access to your device. The dates and times of such visits will be agreed in advance. Travel to and from the NFDC workplace will be in the employees own time.

Equipment and materials

We will provide and maintain all ICT equipment and materials necessary for you to work from home. It is your duty to ensure that proper care is taken of such equipment and materials.

Specifically, we will provide:

- a laptop computer;
- Screen
- Keyboard / mouse

On termination of your employment for any reason, we will have the right to visit your home at an agreed time and retrieve all equipment, materials and documents belonging to us if you are unable to bring them back to the office yourself.

Telephone and internet accounts

You will pay the costs for all telephone and internet connections in your home and these must be of a suitable quality to ensure you can carry out your work with maximum productivity. If a suitable stable internet connection is not available then you will be unable to work from that location.

We will pay all charges on any mobile phone provided by us, with the strict proviso that it must be used only for work-related purposes. The employee should be aware of their data usage on their NFDC device and speak to ICT immediately if they have concerns about data limits.

Mileage Claims

On days that you work from home / off-site you will be able to claim mileage for any visits undertaken using your home / off-site location as your base.

On days when you work in the NFDC workplace – any mileage claimed should start using the NFDC workplace as your base starting point.

Employees are responsible for planning their days sensibly to minimise travel and downtime during work hours.

Stationery Printing and Postage

If you require stationery to complete your job whilst working off-site, then this should be collected from the NFDC workplace.

There will be no reimbursement of printing or postage costs. The Corporate Admin team offer a printing and postal service and this can be used via the online eform available on Forestnet.

Security

You must not allow members of your family or third parties to access or use our equipment.

Employees who work off-site are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with our business secure at all times. Specifically, those that work from home are under a duty to:

- keep filing cabinets and drawers locked when they are not being used;
- keep all documentation under lock and key at all times except when in use; and
- use a unique password for the computer and any other digital devices.

Further, the computer and other equipment provided by us must be used for work-related purposes only and must not be used by any other member of the family or third party at any time or for any purpose. All employees working off-site must continue to adhere to the ICT Security Policy; http://forestnet/media/1111/ICT-Security-Policy/pdf/ICT_Security_Policy_-_New.pdf

Health and safety issues

We are legally obliged to ensure the health and safety of homeworkers in the same way as office-based staff. We are therefore required to ensure that:

- all equipment is safe;
- all articles and substances are handled and stored safely;
- an assessment of your workstation is conducted;
- information and training on the safe use of equipment, including display screen equipment, is provided; and
- relevant risk assessments are carried out.

All employees who work off-site have a duty to ensure, insofar as is reasonably practicable, that they work in a safe manner and that they follow all health and safety instructions issued by us from time to time.

Insurance

The homeworker is responsible for checking that all home and contents insurance policies provide adequate cover for the fact that they work from home. Any additional costs would need to be met by the employee.

Mortgage or rental agreements

You are responsible for checking applicable mortgage or rental agreements to ensure you are permitted to work from home, and for obtaining any permissions necessary to work from home.

Requests to work from home or an alternative location

Any employee who wishes to work from home or an alternative location should make the request under the council's Worksmart Flexible Working Procedure. In general, most requests should be made with a view to spending a proportion of a working week off-site, and a proportion at an NFDC workplace. Your manager will arrange a meeting to discuss the feasibility of your flexible working request within 28 days. If you do not accept the outcome of that meeting, you have the right to request a review be carried out by your Service Manager.

It is our policy to view such requests in a positive light and we will, whenever it is possible and practicable, agree to the request. You must however be in a position where your productivity will not be affected by working

WORKSMART

Hybrid Working Guidance – Elected Members

Background

This document outlines guidance for Elected Members in the wider context of the Council's Worksmart Policy for staff.

The mainstay of the WorkSmart Policy for staff is a commitment from the Council to support officers to work from home or from another location for part of their working week, in line with the business needs of the service.

A survey of Elected Members was undertaken which identified a clear demand for future hybrid working options for councillors, particularly in more informal settings. Worksmart can therefore also apply to Elected Members when undertaking Council business.

Members' Survey Results

The full survey results are attached as an appendix to this guidance. In short, the following themes can be drawn which inform this guidance:-

- For formal meetings, Members broadly favour a mixture of face-to-face and hybrid meetings.
- For Task and Finish Groups and Working Groups, Members broadly favour a mixture of hybrid and virtual meetings, with some face-to-face options.
- For informal meetings, Members broadly favour a mixture of hybrid and virtual meetings.
- For ward/case work, Members broadly favour the flexibility to work both remotely and at Council offices.

Formal Meetings

It is recognised that at present, a change in legislation is required to allow formal decision making meetings to be held virtually or with hybrid attendance. However, through a commitment and detailed preparations for Hybrid Working, the Council will be able to respond positively to any future changes to legislation.

Formal meetings will continue to be held from the Council's Appletree Court offices.

Task and Finish Groups / Working Groups

The Council is investing in ICT infrastructure to allow Hybrid Meetings to take place. It is anticipated that pilot Hybrid Meetings could be held from August 2021.

In the meantime, Task and Finish Groups and Working Groups will be held as virtual meetings (following the Government coronavirus roadmap), with face-to-face options returning thereafter.

Informal Meetings and Briefings

As with Task and Finish Groups, it is anticipated that informal meetings and briefings could be held as Hybrid Meetings from August 2021.

In the meantime, face-to-face meetings with Council officers should be pre-arranged to ensure that attendees are on site at the preferred meeting time. Virtual meetings are encouraged if convenient for the attendees and the type of meeting, and specifically in line with the Government's coronavirus roadmap.

Ward / Case Work

The Members' Room at Appletree Court is available for Members to work on ward or case work from the Council's offices.

Remote working on ward or case work is encouraged where convenient and appropriate and is supported by the Council's ICT offering for Members.

ICT Equipment

All Members have been offered an individual ICT assessment to establish any necessary measures to fulfil their duties as a councillor. Standard issue laptop devices have been made available and over half of councillors are currently using one.

Peripherals are also available to Members such as keyboard, mouse and headset.

All Members are encouraged to routinely review their ICT setup and requirements to ensure they have the required support in place. It is the responsibility of an individual Member to ensure their broadband is adequate to support any virtual or hybrid meetings they attend. The Council can advise on this via the ICT assessment process.

In preparation for the 2023 elections, the Council will explore options for the issue of standard devices to all councillors. Standard devices provide for a smoother working experience and integration with officer functionality, which is crucial in a Hybrid Working environment.

ICT Security

Members must not allow family or third parties to access or use NFDC equipment.

Members are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with Council business secure at all times. The following specific actions are recommended:-

- keep filing cabinets and drawers locked when they are not being used;
- keep all documentation under lock and key at all times except when in use; and
- use a unique password for the computer and any other digital devices.

Further, the computer and other equipment provided by the Council must be used for Council business only and must not be used by any other member of the family or third party at any time or for any purpose.

Sustainability

Moving to a hybrid way of working enables the Council to make a good contribution towards its sustainability agenda.

Members' travel in 2019/20 was in the region of 44,000 miles. A reduction in travel is anticipated from some Members undertaking a hybrid way of working, which could generate financial and time benefits.

The 44,000 miles travel in 2019/20 equates to 12.34 tonnes of CO₂ emissions in an average petrol car. A hybrid way of working could therefore also lead to a reduction in the Council's carbon footprint.

The Council will monitor this performance to identify both financial efficiencies and the contribution made to the sustainability agenda.

Moving to virtual and hybrid meetings where appropriate has also enabled Members, managers and employees to stay in touch without the need to commute.

The Council is aiming to discourage mass use of printing in line with its commitment to reduce its carbon footprint. To that end, Members are encouraged to consider going paperless with the support of a Council device for viewing documents.

More flexible paper options are available, such as more complex documents being made available in paper (e.g. planning), whilst viewing other committee agendas and reports on a Council device.

Wellbeing Support

Members are routinely sent health and wellbeing information and the Employee Assistance Programme continues to be made available for Members. The aim is to ensure that Members can look after every aspect of their health, whether that be their mental wellbeing, their physical wellbeing, their social wellbeing or their financial wellbeing.

Member Poll - Results

37
Responses

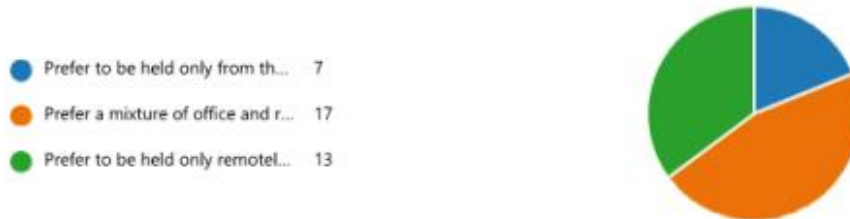
01:06
Average time to complete

Active
Status

1. For formal Council meetings (including Committees and Panels), would you:-



2. For Task and Finish Groups and Working Groups, would you:-



3. For informal meetings (briefings, officer meetings), would you:-



4. For ward/case work, would you:-



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