

## NOTICE OF MEETING

**Meeting:** CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND LOCAL ECONOMY  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

**Date and Time:** THURSDAY, 24 JUNE 2021, AT 9.30 AM\*

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

**Enquiries to:** Email: [andy.rogers@nfdc.gov.uk](mailto:andy.rogers@nfdc.gov.uk)  
Andy Rogers Tel: 023 8028 5070

**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=583&MId=7433&Ver=4>

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

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

Anyone wishing to speak should contact the name and number shown above no later than 12.00 noon on TUESDAY, 22 JUNE 2021.

**Bob Jackson**  
Chief Executive

Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, Hampshire. SO43 7PA  
[www.newforest.gov.uk](http://www.newforest.gov.uk)

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

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## AGENDA

### Apologies

#### 1. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 18 June 2020, 28 July 2020, 19 November 2020, 21 January 2021 and 25 March 2021 as a correct record.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

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

**3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

To note any issues raised during the public participation period.

**4. PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S REPORTS**

An opportunity for Portfolio Holders to raise any issues relating to their service areas.

**5. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND PROVISIONAL BUDGET OUTTURN 2020/21  
(Pages 5 - 28)**

To consider the Annual Performance and Provisional Budget Outturn 2020/21.

**6. ICT STRATEGY DELIVERY/BUSINESS WEBSITE/APP DEVELOPMENT (Pages  
29 - 38)**

To receive an update on the ICT Strategy Delivery and related issues.

**7. COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 39 -  
52)**

To receive a presentation incorporating the Commercial and Residential Property Annual Report. A copy of the presentation slides is attached to the agenda papers.

**8. BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS UPDATE (Pages 53 - 60)**

To receive an update on Business Support Grants.

**9. WORKSMART PROPOSAL (Pages 61 - 68)**

To note and feedback views on a summary of the proposed implementation of the WorkSmart initiative, the next step in the Council's Smarter Working Programme, supported with a HR Policy.

**10. FINANCIAL STRATEGY TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

To discuss arrangements for creating a task and finish group to monitor the Council's financial strategy.

**11. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 69 - 70)**

- a) To consider the Panel's future Work Programme, including any reviews of previous work undertaken; and
- (b) To receive any updates on Task and Finish Group work.

**12. ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT**

To:

**Councillors:**

**Councillors:**

Alexis McEvoy (Chairman)  
Alan Alvey (Vice-Chairman)  
Fran Carpenter  
Keith Craze  
Jack Davies

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

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## **CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND LOCAL ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 25/06/2021**

### **ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND PROVISIONAL BUDGET OUTTURN 2020/21**

#### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Panel:
  - 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;
  - c) Note the provisional outturn of the Housing Revenue Account for 2020/21; and
  - d) Provide feedback or comments back to Cabinet.

#### **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:

	<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Latest Budget April Cabinet</b>	<b>Reported Variations</b>
	<b>£'m</b>	<b>£'m</b>	<b>£'m</b>
<b>General Fund</b>	19.194	20.211	1.017
<b>Capital Programme</b>	25.694	27.238	1.544
<b>Housing Revenue Account (Income)</b>	(28.199)	(28.077)	0.122
<b>Housing Revenue Account (Expend.)</b>	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):

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

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

- 6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

**Further Information:**

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**Background Papers**

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

Financial Monitoring Report  
Cabinet  
Cabinet 4 December 2019

## 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
<b>PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS</b>									
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 - Accommodation 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
<b>NET PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>18,654</b>	<b>19,699</b>	<b>19,586</b>	<b>19,833</b>	<b>-40</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>2,808</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23,203</b>
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
<b>GENERAL FUND NET BUDGET REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>19,194</b>	<b>20,117</b>	<b>20,004</b>	<b>20,211</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>2,478</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23,200</b>

## 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 Seawal 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
<b>TOTAL GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>		<b>9,894,000</b>	<b>10,738,000</b>	<b>-396,000</b>	<b>-117,000</b>	<b>10,225,000</b>
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
<b>TOTAL HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>		<b>15,800,000</b>	<b>16,500,000</b>	<b>234,000</b>		<b>16,734,000</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>		<b>25,694,000</b>	<b>27,238,000</b>	<b>-162,000</b>	<b>-117,000</b>	<b>26,959,000</b>

FINANCIAL MONITORING 2020/21				
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT OUTTURN 2020/21	Feb 20	Apr 20	Outturn 2020/21	
	2020/21 £'000 Original Budget	2020/21 £'000 Updated Budget	2020/21 £'000 New Variations	2020/21 £'000 Outturn Position
<b>INCOME</b>				
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
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>-28,199</b>	<b>-28,077</b>	<b>-54</b>	<b>-28,131</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
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				
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>19,726</b>	<b>19,690</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>19,818</b>
<b>HRA OPERATING SURPLUS(-)</b>	<b>-8,473</b>	<b>-8,387</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>-8,313</b>
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	<b>0</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>88</b>

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# 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



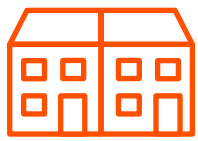
## VIRTUAL MEETINGS

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



## BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS

**£67.6m** TO **4,500+** BUSINESSES

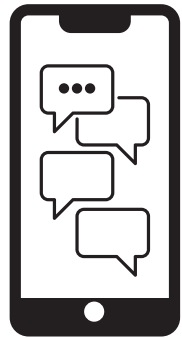


## HOUSING

**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

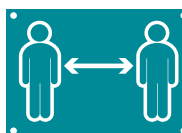


## WASTE AND RECYCLING

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

<b>Development Control</b>	Staffing	●
	Budget	●
	Service delivery impact	●
<b>Planning Policy</b>	Staffing	●
	Budget	●
	Service delivery impact	●
<b>Building Control</b>	Staffing	●
	Budget	●
	Service delivery impact	●
<b>Parking*</b>	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

<b>Housing Estate Management*</b>	Staffing	●
	Budget	●
	Service delivery impact	●
<b>Housing Register Management and Allocations</b>	Staffing	●
	Budget	●
	Service delivery impact	●
<b>Homelessness*</b>	Staffing	●
	Budget	●
	Service delivery impact	●
<b>Housing Repairs and Maintenance*</b>	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

<b>Financial Services</b>	Staffing	●
	Budget	●
	Service delivery impact	●
<b>Revenues and Benefits*</b>	Staffing	●
	Budget	●
	Service delivery impact	●
<b>Estates and Valuation</b>	Staffing	●
	Budget	●
	Service delivery impact	●
<b>HR*</b>	Staffing	●
	Budget	●
	Service delivery impact	●
<b>ICT*</b>	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

<b>Health &amp; Leisure*</b>	Staffing	●
	Budget	●
	Service delivery impact	●
<b>Dibden Golf Centre*</b>	Staffing	NA
	Budget	●
	Service delivery impact	●
<b>Sports and Community Development*</b>	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

<b>Waste and Recycling*</b>	Staffing	●
	Budget	●
	Service delivery impact	●
<b>Street Scene*</b>	Staffing	●
	Budget	●
	Service delivery impact	●
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Licensing*</b>	Staffing	●
	Budget	●
	Service delivery impact	●
<b>Coastal</b>	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 are 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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# ICT Update for COSP

Strategy Delivery / Business Website /

App Development

***24 June 2021***

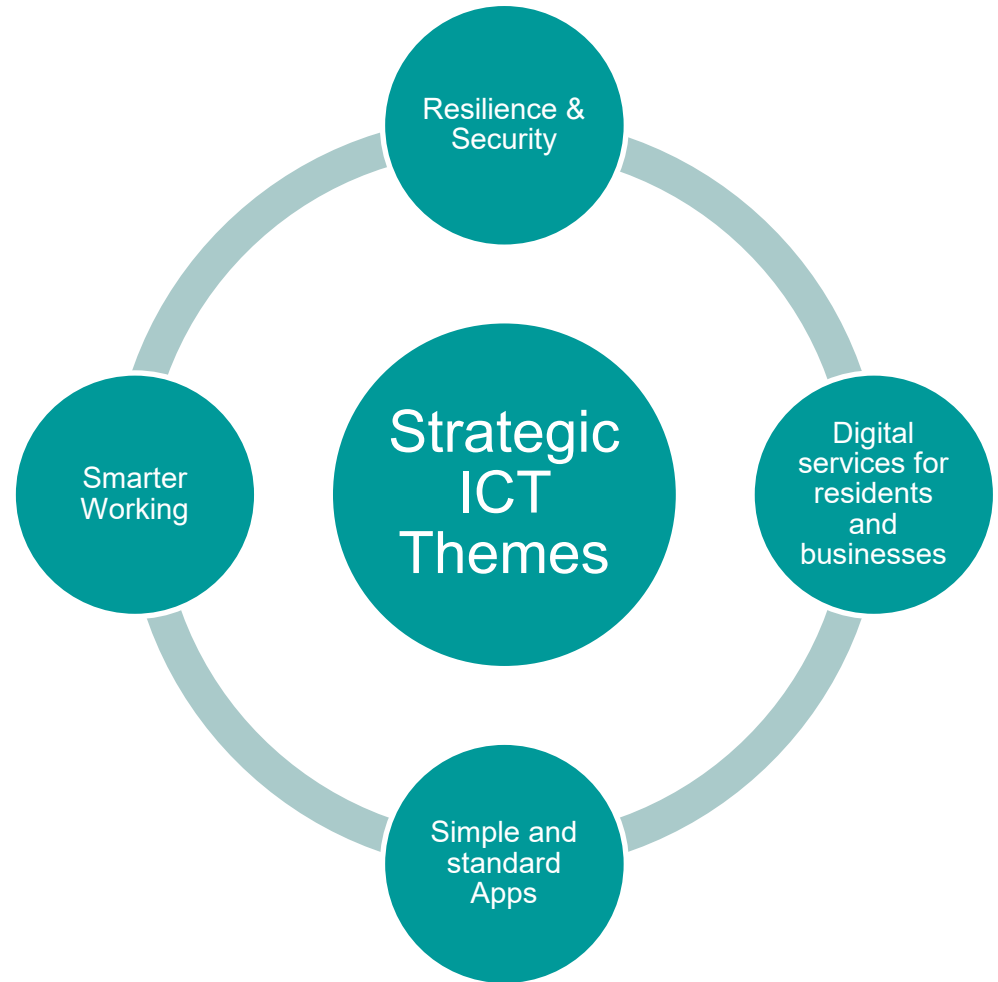
**Rob Beere**

Agenda Item 6

# Reminder: ICT Strategy 2017-2022

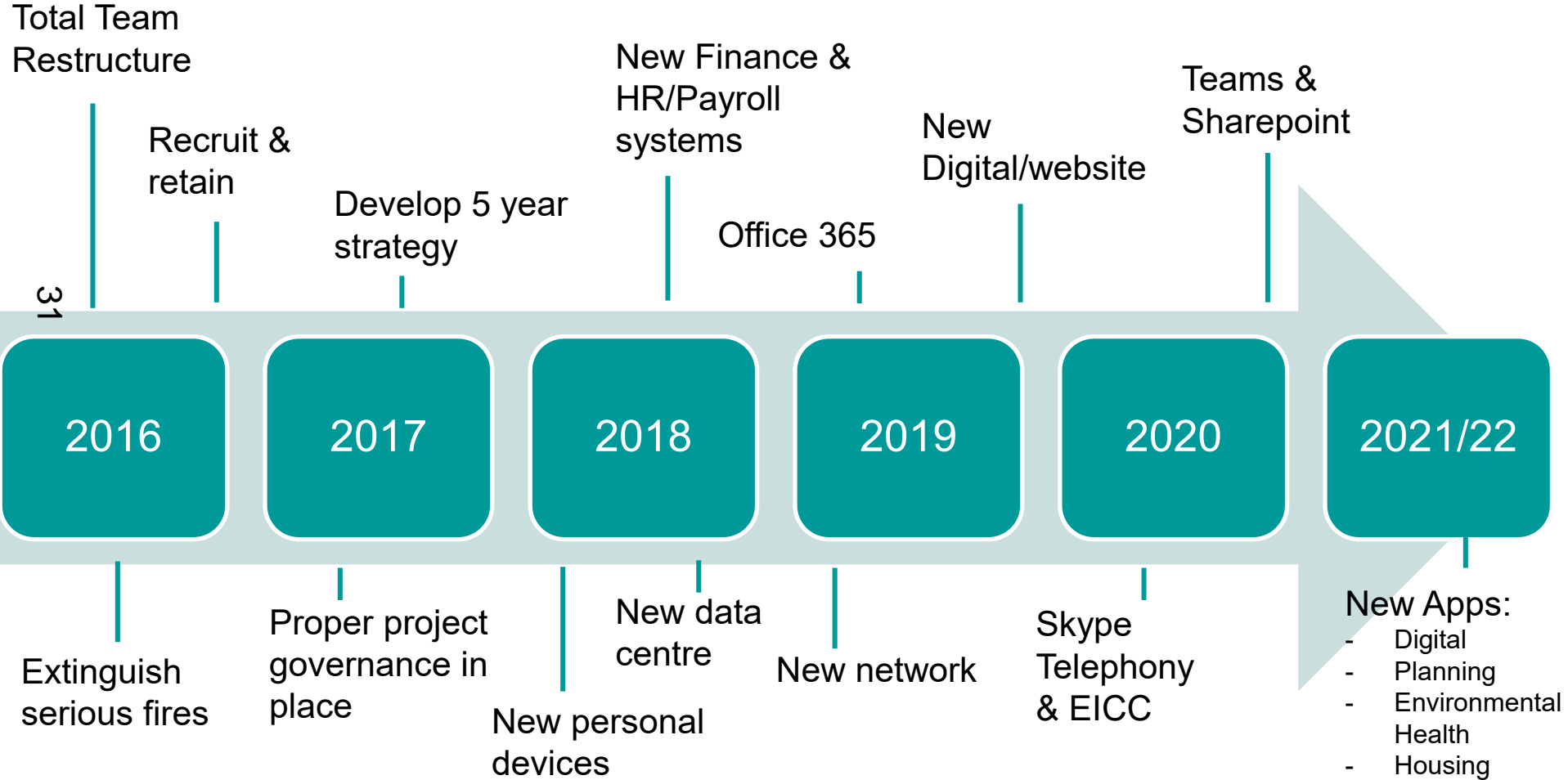
## Four Key Themes

- Resilience & Security
- Digital services for residents and businesses
- Simple and standard applications
- Smarter working



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# Making it happen: NFDC's ICT Journey



# Delivered Since Last Report in Nov 2020: Resilience & Security

- We have completed the configuration of our failover solution between our primary and secondary data centres (Gosport and ATC respectively).
- This means that in the event of a catastrophic failure of our primary data centre at Gosport we would be able to continue by ‘failing over’ to our secondary centre at ATC.
- ∞ • Once the ‘new normal’ is established, we will be conducting a full disaster recovery test over a weekend during the autumn of 2021. This is not something to rush and requires very careful planning and agreement from all council services in case of unintended consequences (ie not able to fail back to Gosport).
- Future work to keep NFDC’s ICT software and hardware current and effective will be handled as ‘Business as Usual’ from the annual Resilience and Security budget to ensure that NFDC systems remain stable, up to date, and secure from cyber-attacks.

# Delivered Since Last Report in Nov 2020: Digital Services

- There were a number of NFDC peripheral websites running on older, unsupported versions of Goss software (eg H&L, Safer New Forest) and these have been updated onto newer software. Forestnet will be migrated in 2021/22 once it is clear on requirements for new intranet.
- 33 • Progress has been made on optimising the new website, and research into potential vendors for further Digital services.
- Much focus on back office systems for Operations and Waste Management with workshops to explore the scope and functions required.
- We are on track to launch further Digital services in 21/22.

# Delivered Since Last Report in Nov 2020: Simple & Standard Applications

- Project RS (Regulatory Services) is the replacement of the large and complex Acolaid application for Planning and Environmental Health. This has proceeded through requirements gathering to the procurement phase with day-long demonstrations from each potential vendor happening during June 2021. We are aiming to go live with the new application early in 2022.
- Housing Management System (HMS) is the replacement of the large Orchard application for Housing. The business case for replacement has been prepared and potential vendors' solution are being assessed. We are aiming to go live in mid 2022.
- A new system called Truckfile has been implemented in MLD workshop to improve the management of NFDC's vehicles.
- A project to replace the Telecare system which manages Careline and CCTV is being progressed over the next 12-18 months.

# Delivered Since Last Report in Nov 2020: Smarter Working

- Microsoft Teams was implemented for all conference calls in January 2021 to replace Skype conferencing. This has been a gamechanger for the quality of conferencing during the pandemic and has facilitated collaboration with external organisations.
- NFDC devices have been offered to all members and have been issued to more than 50%. These have enabled smoother working during the pandemic for those members whose own devices were struggling. As far as possible members enjoy the same IT experience and features as officers to ensure consistent and equitable working.
- 35 • A new mobile phone contract including new smart phones for staff was procured between January and June 2021. This will improve smart working for all staff and in particular should make operational / housing maintenance staff more able to communicate with the rest of the organisation.
- We are working on implementing Microsoft Teams for all external phone calls into and from the council. This should be live by end of 2021
- We are working on Teams Collaboration, currently in ICT pilot phase. As well as smaller, but no less useful apps Office 365 such as Forms, Lists, Planner.
- Finally, we have a large multi-phased project to implement Microsoft SharePoint to replace Meridio for document management and record keeping and to enable better collaboration and sharing of documents across council officers and services. The first phase of this is in the process of going live now and subsequent phases will go live during the remainder of 2021 and into 2022.

# Financial Summary

## Updated Position - June 21

	Actuals to 31/03/2021	Budget 2021/22	Budget 2022/23	Total	Original Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Resilience & Security	191	130	0	<b>321</b>	<b>300</b>
Digital services for residents and businesses	57	223	120	<b>400</b>	<b>400</b>
Simple and standard applications	41	325	250	<b>616</b>	<b>750</b>
	<b>289</b>	<b>678</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>1337</b>	<b>1450</b>
Smarter Working	614	170	54	<b>838</b>	<b>750</b>
	<b>903</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>2175</b>	<b>2200</b>

# Last but not Least: Business As Usual

- We didn't want to finish this report without making reference to the day to day ICT services which help so much to keep the council functioning. This has never been more evident than during the pandemic when officers and members are so dependent upon their devices, applications and the network.
- Some highlights:
  - The ICT Hub at ATC has provided a drop off / pick up / resolution point for all of NFDC and has been resourced every day in person throughout the pandemic.
  - The ICT Service Desk has been on line remotely every day and resolves in the region of 1,000 tickets every month, with normally more than 80% resolved on first contact.
  - The ICT Infrastructure team has ensured our Data Centre servers and network connections are maintained. They also have worked to ensure that end user devices are fixed/replaced/re-built when any staff or members have problems. ICT Infrastructure staff have ensured the VPN (which enables NFDC staff to connect seamlessly from home) is optimised by restarting it regularly and improving it with new releases throughout the pandemic.
  - The ICT Applications team has supported and updated our applications, both to keep them current and to add new functions.. New features have been added to virtually every application in the last year, covering everything from the website to finance to GIS. This team also works closely with our project managers to ensure that new applications will integrate with existing applications. The decoupling of H&L systems has been managed by this team to ensure that Freedom Leisure are able to pick up ICT services fully from 1 July.
  - Finally the ICT Security team has ensured that NFDC stay safe and secure from cyber attacks of all kinds. They proactively plan strategies to help us avoid being compromised, such as training modules for staff and new protection software at our boundaries, and also respond rapidly to incidents and attacks, such as phishing or ransomware emails.

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**For further information contact:**

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# Corporate Affairs and Local Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

## Commercial and Residential Property Annual Report

24 June 2021

## Within this update

- Commercial Property report 2020/21
  - Aims and Objectives – a reminder
  - Investment Target
  - Net Income Target
  - Financial dashboard
  - Overview of 2020/21 and current activities
- Residential Property Company report 2020/21
  - Aims and Objectives – a reminder
  - Selecting Properties and Tenants
  - Property purchases
  - Financial summary
- Summary and Panel Recommendation

## Commercial Property

### Aims and objectives – a reminder

- To acquire commercial property within the District
- To secure economic development benefits and to make a return
- Original portfolio fund of £30M financed from reserves and borrowing (Public Works Loan Board)
- The Property Investment Panel comprises the Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Executive Head Housing & Governance, Portfolio Holder Finance and Chairman of the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- Panel meets regularly. Its terms of reference are to receive reports, provide governance and decision making in respect of real estate assets made under the Council's Asset Investment Strategy and the commercial property portfolio held by the Council more broadly.
- The Panel's remit also includes operational real estate development.

## Commercial Property Strategy Investment Target

- Overall pot of **£30M** to apply within the District pursuant to the Strategy.

	Existing Employment Site £M	Development Site (Crow Lane) £M's	Total £M's
2018/19	2.20	-	2.20
2019/20	2.75	2.23	4.98
2020/21	3.26	-	3.26
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.21</b>	<b>2.23</b>	<b>10.44</b>
<b>Remaining</b>			<b>19.56</b>

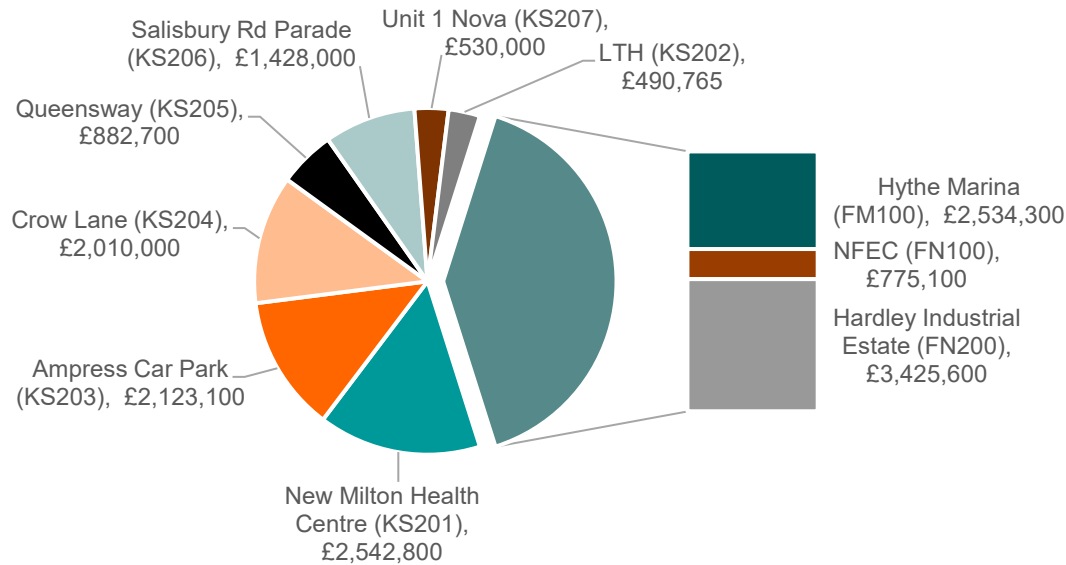
## Commercial Property Net Income Target

The Medium Term Financial Plan provides a cumulative net income forecast for Commercial and Residential Property with new income forecast from 2022/23.

Annual Budget	2019/20 £'000's	2020/21 £'000's	2021/22 £'000's	2022/23 £'000's	2023/24 £'000's
Within General Fund Budget	-100	-162	-397	-397	-397
<i>Commercial: Forecast Assumption in MTFP</i>				-270	-390
<i>Residential: Forecast Assumption in MTFP</i>				-130	-260
<b>TOTAL CUMULATIVE</b>	<b>-100</b>	<b>-162</b>	<b>-397</b>	<b>-797</b>	<b>-1,047</b>

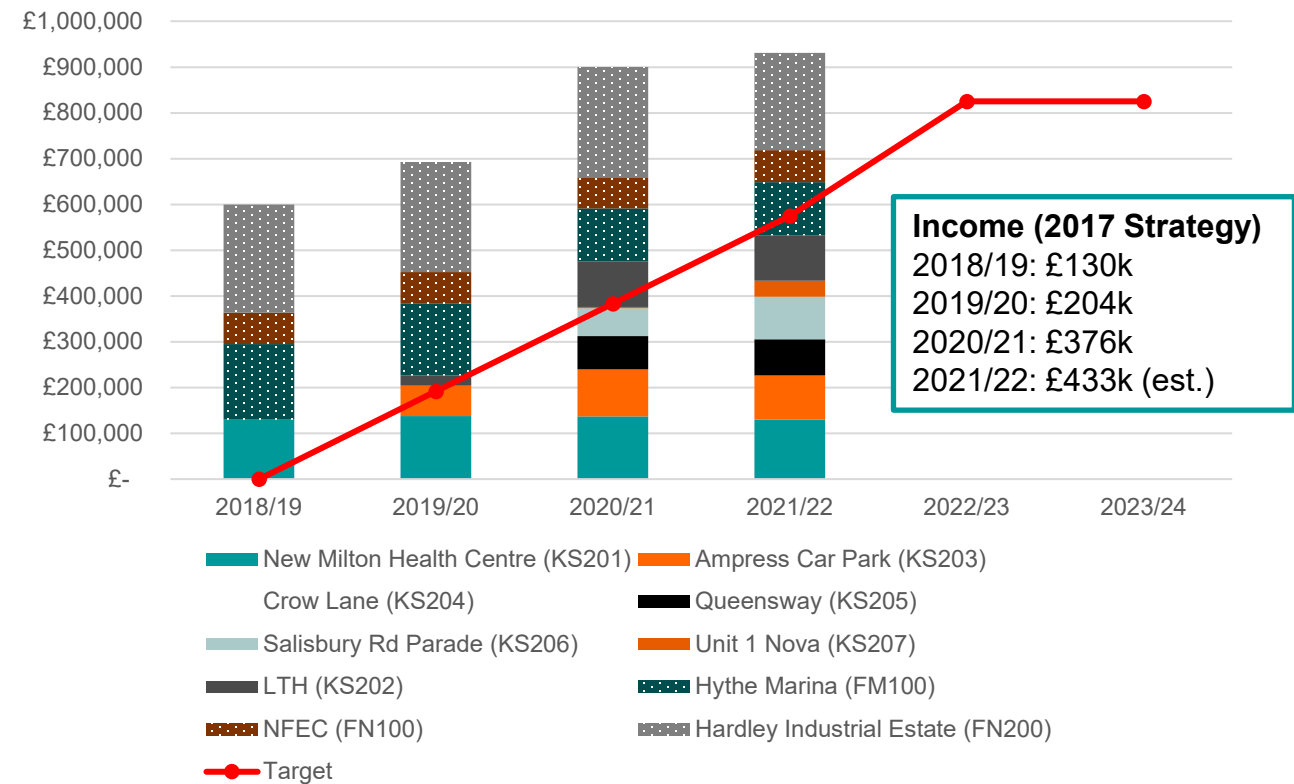
## Financial Dashboard: Book Value & Rental Income, Strategy Acquisitions (Commercial Properties)

**Balance Sheet Value: 2020/21  
(All Investment Properties)**



**Total Value (all properties) = £16,742,365**  
**Total Value (pursuant to 2017 Strategy) = £9,516,600**  
**Total Spend (inc. fees) = £10,437,124**

**Operating Income  
(All Investment Properties)**



## What we did in 2020/21 (Purchases)

### **Salisbury Road Parade Totton**

- Completed June 2020;
- Freehold purchase;
- A parade of 14 retail and office units;
- Adjacent to Council car park and residential development site;
- Supporting local employment and providing local amenities.

### **Queensway Stem Lane Industrial Estate New Milton**

- Completed June 2020;
- Freehold purchase with a single tenant, tenancy expires November 2022;
- Offices plus vehicular repairs and maintenance depot.

### **Nova Business Centre Gore Road Industrial Estate New Milton**

- Completed February 2021;
- Freehold purchase with a single tenant, tenancy expires 2030;
- Use: Plumbers' merchant and bathroom showroom;
- Supporting local employment and supply chains.

## What we did in 2020/21 (Operational)

### Hardley

- Potential new depot site;
- Planning permission granted for the depot, inc. buildings, storage and vehicular layout;
- Building contractors agreed terms relating to temporary use of part of site for works compound;
  - Temporary licence for occupation of Western Storage area being progressed, expected to be in by the end of June for about 6 months, with potential for a further extension for Phase 2 works;
  - As part of licence agreement, licensee will undertake works on site to create a new fencing and gate to the entrance.

### Operational Depot Strategy

- Consultant appointed to report on optimisation of Council depots for delivery of operational services;
- Depot tour and walkovers undertaken 5<sup>th</sup> May;
- Report due end June 2021.

## Commercial Property

### Current activities

- Drive Thru & Café Unit, Totton
  - New development, new employment opportunities and providing local facilities
  - Construction almost completed
  - Freehold purchase with an immediate lease to operator
- Crow Lane development activities
  - Development site acquired for employment and office use
  - Planning for 16 light industrial units and 8 offices
  - Some site infrastructure complete, spine road, services in place
  - Leading technical consultants appointed for the project
  - Construction tenders issued 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021
  - Returns due by 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021
  - Council decision September 2021
  - Target delivery October 2022
- Approximately £7M other commercial real estate presently under consideration

## Appletree Property Holdings Limited

### Aims and Objectives

- To operate as a commercial enterprise, offering market rental properties in the District to people with a local connection.
- Aim to be a “landlord of choice” in this market
- To secure in the region of 40 properties over a 3-year period
- £10M in the pot, financed by NFDC through equity and loans at a commercial rate of interest
- Loans secured by legal charge
- At present a £4M funding tranche made available
- A General Fund, not a Housing Revenue Account, project

### Selecting Properties and Tenants

- Seeking modern lettable properties in the District
- 2- and 3-bedroom houses in good condition and in areas of high demand.
- The tenants are credit checked for affordability and there is a preference for those with a local connection
- Tenancies are short term 7-12 months.

## Appletree Property Holdings Limited

### Property purchases to date

- By the end of the FY 2020/21, 7 properties acquired
- Since then, 2 more properties acquired
- 10<sup>th</sup> property under offer
- The 9 properties acquired are located: one in Lymington, three in Totton, two in Ashurst Bridge, two in Blackfield and one in Calmore
- 4 x 2 bed properties, 5 x 3 bed properties
- Loans from Council to the Company secured by legal charges
- Of the 9 purchases 4 were newbuild properties

## Financial Summary

### Appletree Property Holdings Limited

Year	Acquisitions	Total Cost £	Monthly Rent £'s	Annual Rent £
2019/20	2	505,975	1,770	21,240
2020/21	5	1,566,354	5,710	68,520
2021 to date	2	546,900	1,900	22,800
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2,619,229</b>	<b>9,380</b>	<b>112,560</b>

## NFDC

Year	Equity £	Debt £	Interest rate (% over BE)	Return £ (full year)	Blended Yield %
2019	201,700	304,275	4.75	14,453	2.86
2020/21	342,600	1,223,754	4.75	58,128	3.71
2021 to date	113,900	433,000	4.75	20,568	3.76
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>658,200</b>	<b>1,961,029</b>		<b>93,149</b>	<b>3.56</b>

## Summary

### Appletree Holdings Summary

- Presently approval has been given for £4 million of the £10 million pot to be invested in the project.
- Expenditure to date is £2,619,229 with a further £274,600 committed - totals £2,904,065.
- Income % return in line with strategy forecast.
- The Property Investment Panel gave support to release of an additional £2M tranche of shareholder funds (10/06/21); total £6M released.

### Commercial Property Summary

- £10M commercial property acquired through strategy
- Properties acquired all within the District helping to sustain local employment
- Income is tracking expectations and exceeding treasury management returns
- 5 potential acquisitions presently under negotiation

### Recommendation

- Panel asked to note performance to date in the delivery of the commercial and residential strategies and the continuation of both projects.

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## **BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report follows on from the previous report presented to the panel in November 2020, which detailed business support grant payments of £41,135,000 to small businesses and those in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors, and £2,195,000 paid out in discretionary grant payments.
- 1.2 This purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the support given to businesses via the government’s various Business Support Schemes since November 2020.
- 1.3 Since November 2020, the government has provided further funding to councils to administer the following business support grants to ratepayers:
1. Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) Addendum November to December 2020
  2. Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) due to tier restrictions
  3. Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) due to tier restrictions
  4. Christmas Support Payment for wet-led pubs
  5. Closed Business Lockdown Payment
  6. Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) 5 January – 31 March 2021
  7. Restart Grants
- 1.4 The schemes closed at various times, as detailed in government guidance, and weekly returns were submitted via DELTA to record eligibility and payments made.
- 1.5 The government provided detailed guidance on the types of businesses eligible for each of the above grants and supplementary FAQ’s. Eligibility was principally based on our records of ratepayers and the rating list on specified dates and the nature of the business use of the property.

### **2. BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS**

2.1 From the various rate-based business support grants, a total of £31,265,933 has been distributed to businesses since November 2020, summarised below:

#### **2.2 Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed)**

The Local Restriction Grant was to support businesses during the national restrictions during the period 5 November 2020 to 2 December 2020 that provide in-person services from their business premises. Eligibility was principally based on our records of ratepayers and the rating list on 5 November.

The grant award was a one-off payment, with the amount as follows:

Grant Payment	Criteria
£1,334	Businesses with a rateable value of less than £15,000
£2,000	Businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
£3,000	Businesses with a rateable value £51,000 or above

Total Grants Paid	No. of businesses awarded a grant
£2,522,716	1,616

### 2.3 Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open)

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) was to support businesses from 2 December 2020 where are not legally required to close but which are severely impacted by the localised restrictions on socialising due to the Tier 2 and 3 restrictions. The support was aimed primarily at hospitality, hotel, bed & breakfast, and leisure businesses.

The grant amounts per 14-day period were:

Grant Payment	Criteria
£467	Businesses with a rateable value of less than £15,000
£700	Businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
£1,050	Businesses with a rateable value £51,000 or above

Total Grants Paid	No. of businesses awarded a grant
£777,089	886

### 2.4 Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed)

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) was to support businesses from 2 December 2020 were legally required to close and impacted by the localised restrictions on socialising due to the Tier 2, 3 and 4 restrictions for the period 2 December 2020 to 4 January 2021. The support was aimed primarily at hospitality, hotel, bed & breakfast, and leisure businesses.

The grant amounts per 14-day period were:

Grant Payment	Criteria
£667	Businesses with a rateable value of less than £15,000
£1,000	Businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
£1,500	Businesses with a rateable value £51,000 or above

Total Grants Paid	No. of businesses awarded a grant
£678,839	2,447

The actual grant award amounts were proportioned where restrictions lasted less than 14 days.

### 2.5 Christmas Support Payment for wet-led pubs

The Christmas Support Payment grant scheme was developed in response to an announcement made by the government on 1 December 2020, and set out to provide additional support over the festive period for wet-led pubs in areas under Tier 2 or 3 restrictions for all or part of the period between 2 December 2020 and 29 December 2020.

The grant amounts were:

Grant Payment	Criteria
£1,000	For pubs that derive less than 50% of its sales from food and were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Open to the general public</li> <li>b) Allow free entry other than when occasional</li> </ul>

	entertainment is provided c) Allow drinking without requiring food to be consumed, and d) Permit drinks to be purchased at a bar
--	--

Total Grants Paid	No. of businesses awarded a grant
£62,000	62

## 2.6 Closed Business Lockdown Payment

The Closed Business Lockdown Payment grant scheme was to provide additional support for businesses legally forced to close from 5 January 2021 due to the introduction of national restrictions.

The grant award was a one-off payment, with the amount as follows:

Grant Payment	Criteria
£4,000	Businesses with a rateable value of less than £15,000
£6,000	Businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
£9,000	Businesses with a rateable value £51,000 or above

Total Grants Paid	No. of businesses awarded a grant
£7,675,550	1,644

## 2.7 Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) Addendum 5 January 2021 onwards

Businesses mandated to close were eligible for grants for the period 5 January 2021 to 15 February 2021, and for the period 16 February 2021 to 31 March 2021.

Grant amounts for the period 5 January 2021 to 15 February 2021 were:

Grant Payment	Criteria
£2,001	Businesses with a rateable value of less than £15,000
£3,000	Businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
£4,500	Businesses with a rateable value £51,000 or above

Total Grants Paid	No. of businesses awarded a grant
£3,865,629	1,656

Grant amounts for the period 16 February 2021 to 31 March 2021 were:

Grant Payment	Criteria
£2,096	Businesses with a rateable value of less than £15,000
£3,143	Businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
£4,714	Businesses with a rateable value £51,000 or above

Total Grants Paid	No. of businesses awarded a grant
£4,027,999	1,642

Over the two periods a total of £7,893,628 has been paid to businesses.

## 2.8 Restart Grant

The Restart Grant provided additional support for businesses legally forced to close with reopening safely in the non-essential retail, hospitality, accommodation, leisure,

personal care, and sports/gym sectors. This grant was intended to support businesses that are predominantly reliant on delivering in-person services for the general public, where the main activity takes place in a fixed rate-paying premises, in the relevant sectors

The Restart Grant is a one-off payment for business ratepayers who were the ratepayer on 1 April 2021. All eligible businesses received an email notifying them how to apply for the Restart Grant. The grant had two strands:

1. Non-essential retail

Grant Payment	Criteria
£2,667	Businesses with a rateable value of less than £15,000
£4,000	Businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
£6,000	Businesses with a rateable value £51,000 or above

Total Grants Paid	No. of businesses awarded a grant
£1,454,111	467

2. Businesses in the hospitality, leisure, accommodation, personal care, and sports/gym sectors:

Grant Payment	Criteria
£8,000	Businesses with a rateable value of less than £15,000
£12,000	Businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
£18,000	Businesses with a rateable value £51,000 or above

Total Grants Paid	No. of businesses awarded a grant
£10,202,000	1,075

The scheme closes for applications on 30 June 2021 and to date a total of £11,656,111 has been paid to 1,542 businesses.

### 3. ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS SUPPORT GRANTS

- 3.1 The government provided councils with discretionary funding to support businesses which have been impacted by the pandemic and who are not eligible for the rate-based support grants detailed above. The funding can also be used for wider business support.
- 3.2 The initial funding from government was £3,601,720 and a further amount of £1,599,713 was received, totalling £5,201,433. Grant funding has to be fully distributed by 30 June 2021 so that the council is able to claim further grant funding of £1,402,655 to provide additional support to businesses.
- 3.3 In consultation with Portfolio Holder for Finance, Investment and Corporate Services and the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development we developed our first scheme to prioritise support based on locally evidenced need. This included:
- businesses in the retail, hospitality, events, and leisure sectors
  - businesses in the immediate supply chain for the above sectors
  - business required to close by law, but which do not pay business rates (and are therefore not eligible for the Local Restrictions Support Grants (LRSG))
- 3.4 Businesses had to demonstrate that they were located in the New Forest, were trading in the relevant sectors and solvent, were impacted by the restrictions, were

compliant in laws and regulations, and had to provide bank statements. The funding was available to businesses with fixed property costs and home-based businesses.

- 3.5 To fully utilise the funding and continue support to the largest range of businesses within the District, four separate schemes were developed. The second ARG scheme broadened support to businesses to include manufacturing, engineering, and registered childcare providers. In addition, to support the impact on Taxi Drivers a specific scheme was developed for taxi drivers licenced by the council. The fourth scheme was targeted at larger businesses who support the retail and hospitality supply chain, whose trade was severely impacted by restrictions.

ARG 1 – 5 November 2020 to 1 December 2020

Grant Payment	Criteria
£750	Businesses based in a domestic dwelling
£1,334	Businesses with fixed premises costs of less than £15,000
£2,000	Businesses with fixed premises costs between £15,000 and £51,000
£3,000	Businesses with fixed premises costs of £51,000 or above

Total Grants Paid	No. of businesses awarded a grant
£514,932	487

ARG 2 – 2 December 2020 to 15 February 2021

Grant Payment	Criteria
£2,375	Businesses based in a domestic dwelling
£4,667	Businesses with fixed costs of less than £15,000
£7,000	Businesses with fixed costs between £15,000 and £51,000
£10,5000	Businesses with fixed costs of £51,000 or above

Total Grants Paid	No. of businesses awarded a grant
£2,540,243	705

ARG 3 – 16 February 2021 to 31 March 2021

Grant Payment	Criteria
£1,048	Businesses based in a domestic dwelling
£2,096	Businesses with fixed costs of less than £15,000
£3,143	Businesses with fixed costs between £15,000 and £51,000
£4,714	Businesses with fixed costs of £51,000 or above

Total Grants Paid	No. of businesses awarded a grant
£1,209,680	749

The breakdown of additional grants payments is tabulated below:

Scheme	No. of businesses awarded a grant	Total amount awarded
ARG 3 Top-up	305	£306,078
ARG 4	2	£120,000
Taxi Driver	458	£458,000

In addition to the above grant schemes we have provided funding for:

- Blue Funnel Ferries – A grant of £22,500 to support Hythe Ferry
- New Forest Business Partnership – A grant of £30,000 to support event sponsorship and wider business support

3.6 The total Additional Restrictions Grant funding distributed is £5,201,433. As this has been completed before 30 June 2021, we will be applying for the additional grant funding and developing a further scheme to continue to support businesses.

#### **4. SCHEME ADMINISTRATION**

4.1 The government provided guidance for the business support grants affected by the tier restrictions, as well as regular updated FAQ's. However, due to the changes in tiers, moving from into tier 2, then into tier 3, the into tier 4 and then into national restrictions this rapid changing landscape meant policies, procedures, webpage and eforms had to be agreed and developed quickly, and numerous phone calls and emails answered promptly.

4.2 Businesses were able to claim their grants via an eform which we developed in-house. The e-form gathered all the relevant information, including a declaration on state aid and subsidy allowances, and had built in security and validation checks and enabled filtering to authorise grants promptly. The eform enabled various grants to be claimed with one application. We undertook data-matching with our back-office system to ensure there was still an active business rates account.

4.3 To encourage maximum take-up of the grants the schemes were promoted via social media, website, weekly businesses enews and through network channels. E-mails were sent to businesses to encourage and promote the schemes. E-mail notifications were sent to previous business grant recipients, and for ARG applicants a shortened form was developed for those that had received a previous grant to simplify the process.

4.4 Feedback from businesses has been very positive in our prompt payment of grants and notifications.

4.5 We did receive contact from numerous businesses that were ineligible and undertook several reviews. We also received correspondence from MP's and national organisations.

4.6 We undertook checks using Spotlight to grant recipients of the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed). As per government advice all applications for Restart Grant were checked using Spotlight and the National Fraud Initiative data matching.

4.7 The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) have provided additional new burdens funding of £304,800 for administering the schemes, with further funding to be confirmed.

4.8 We are currently in the process of providing BEIS with reconciliation information, this will include proving a sample of applications and details of payments made.

4.9 Following the government's announcement on 14 June 2021 to extend the restrictions, there are currently no proposals to provide any further rate-based business support grants.

4.10 The Revenues and Benefits service administered the grant schemes, developing eforms, making payments, and providing statistics, supported by Economic Development who managed the Additional Restrictions Grants. This joint working across portfolios will continue going forward when communicating with businesses.

- 4.11 Administering these schemes to support businesses has improved engagement and communication with businesses including subscriptions to business enews increasing by 845. Our Economic Development Team are using this as an opportunity to shape current and future policies and will continue to build relationships with the businesses sector.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 To note the contents of this report.

### **Further Information:**

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### **Background Information:**

Corp. O&SP Nov 2020

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## **CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND LOCAL ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL 24 JUNE 2021**

### **WorkSmart – The Business Case**

#### **1. Recommendation**

- 1.1 That the members of the panel note the content of the report and feedback any comments on the proposed WorkSmart initiative for the consideration of the Cabinet.

#### **2. Purpose of the report**

- 2.1 This report provides the panel 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.

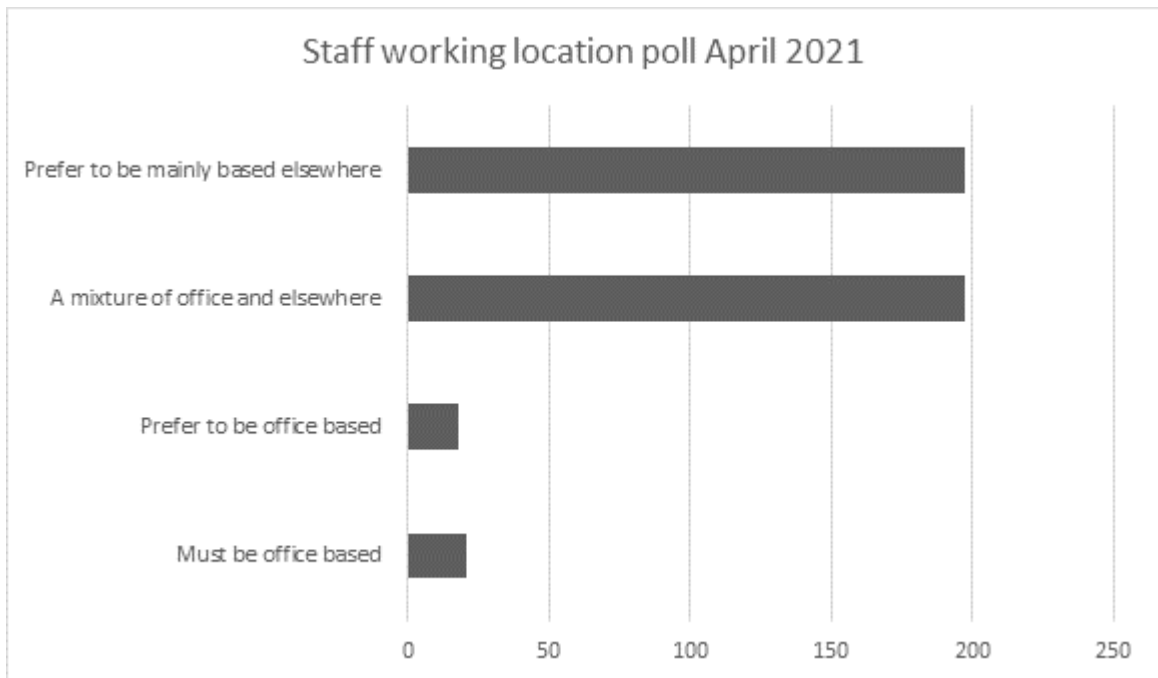
#### **5. A shift to virtual meetings during lockdown**

- 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. Conclusion**

- 10.1 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 Councils Green Agenda, and suite 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.

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**Background Papers**

HR Committee - 23/6/21

WorkSmart Policy Ap 21

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## 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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**CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND LOCAL ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME  
2021/2022**

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
<b>23 SEPTEMBER 2021</b>			
Council Tax Reduction Scheme & Council Tax Empty Homes Premium	To make recommendations on each scheme	Task & Finish Group Report	Ryan Stevens
Complaints Annual Report	To receive the annual summary of corporate and other complaints	Report	Karen Grimes
Procurement (Supply Chain Update)	To receive an update	Report	Ritchie Thompson
<b>18 NOVEMBER 2021</b>			
ICT Strategy & Budget Update	To receive an update on the ICT strategy delivery and related issues	Report	Rob Beere

<b>20 JANUARY 2022</b>			
Asset Maintenance and Replacement Programme	To receive an update on the Programme	Report	Alan Bethune
Capital Strategy	To receive an update on the capital strategy	Report	Alan Bethune

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
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24 MARCH 2022

TBC

**DATES TO BE ALLOCATED**

Procurement Update	To receive an update summarising procurement activities	Report	Gary Jarvis
Universal Credit Update	To be aware of issues arising	Regular update from Finance, Investment & Corporate Services Portfolio Holder/Service Manager – Revenues & Benefits	TBC
Staff Efficiency/Innovation Ideas Survey		TBC	TBC
Economic Development Performance Indicators		TBC	Claire Upton-Brown