

REPORT OF CABINET

(Meeting held on 4 November 2020)

1. COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY – REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (MINUTE NO 135)

The Cabinet acknowledge that the national restrictions, announced by the Prime Minister on 5 November 2020, will be hard on many people in the community, particularly businesses and those needing employment. It is with regret that the Council's five health and leisure centres and golf course must close for a second time. The overriding objective for everyone continues to be to protect the NHS and save lives.

The Council remains well placed to deliver services on a daily basis, operating in a socially distanced manner or working effectively from home. The offices remain open to those staff who cannot work from home, and to meet the needs of essential services like housing, benefits, business support and homelessness.

The financial support received from the Government of £71,000 will be utilised to work with partners to keep the New Forest community safe, helping with social distancing rules in towns, villages and areas where the public may gather.

The Cabinet are pleased to report on the Council's engagement in the Government Kickstart Scheme, creating jobs for young people aged 16-24 years old on universal credit. This work is very much in partnership with the New Forest Business Partnership. As a new Community Interest Company, the Council has supported the partnership with £5,000 of "seed funding" with a further £5,000 in early 2021, subject to agreement with the Portfolio Holder for the Local Economy.

2. DRAFT WASTE STRATEGY (MINUTE NO 136)

The Cabinet, having considered the work of the Waste Strategy Working Group and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel, approved the Draft Waste Strategy so that the further work described in the report can be carried out to enable the production of a final Waste Strategy.

The Cabinet acknowledges the strong views held by residents and partners on the subject of waste and recycling. In closely following the direction of the Government's national strategy for waste, it is very much the ambition to increase recycling rates and reduce the environmental impact of waste and recycling services.

The further work described in the report includes wider consultation and costing exercises before a final decision is taken in 2021. The Cabinet is mindful that a one sized approach will not fit the New Forest due to its unique nature.

3. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY (MINUTE NO 137)

The Cabinet, having considered the work of the Private Sector Housing Task and Finish Group and the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel, are recommending the adoption of a Private Sector Housing Strategy.

The Strategy brings together the outcomes of the district wide stock conditions survey, which created a valuable evidence base for the Portfolio Holder to consider with the Task and Finish Group. The Strategy delivers on the Council's ambitions within the Corporate Plan, in supporting a strong, high quality private rented sector. In return for

this support, the Council will expect landlords to play their part in providing quality and safe accommodation.

The report and strategy also identifies additional resources to enable a faster turnaround in the area of Disabled Facilities Grants and adaptations.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Private Sector Housing Strategy (Appendix 1 to Cabinet Report 8 of the Cabinet Agenda) be adopted.

4. PARTNERSHIP FOR SOUTH HAMPSHIRE – STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND (MINUTE NO 138)

Following an update to the Statement of Common Ground document agreed by the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) Joint Committee, the Cabinet agreed to approve and be a signatory to the updated document. It will in due course be published on the Council's website.

Each individual local planning authority is being requested to sign and publish the document to endorse its status and weight in providing evidence of effective strategic planning engagement under the Duty to Cooperate. The Cabinet will have the opportunity to consider whether to support the Statement of Common Ground in its final form in 2021, following further technical work by the PfSH Joint Committee.

5. COUNCIL TAX – EMPTY HOMES PREMIUMS (MINUTE NO 139)

The Cabinet, having agreed to review the Empty Homes Premiums applicable from 1 April 2022 by Task and Finish Group, are recommending that the current Empty Homes Premiums remain unchanged from 1 April 2021.

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel endorsed the recommendations, which ensure the current impact of COVID-19 is taken into account in the context of the housing market and suspension of building works.

RECOMMENDED:

That the current Empty Homes Premiums remain unchanged from 1 April 2021.

6. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2021/22 (MINUTE NO 140)

The Cabinet, having agreed to review the Council Tax Reduction Scheme applicable from 1 April 2022 by Task and Finish Group, are recommending that the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme be maintained for 2021/22 with no changes.

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel endorsed the recommendations, which take into account the uncertainty of COVID-19 and the impact on local residents.

RECOMMENDED:

That the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme be maintained for 2021/22 with no changes.

7. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2020/21 – 2024/25 (MINUTE NO 141)

The Cabinet adopted the revised Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2021/22 onwards, as outlined in Cabinet Report 12 of the Cabinet Agenda. The actions required as set out in the report will be progressed.

The long awaited Fair Funding Review and Business Rate Reset are still not confirmed, and the Autumn budget has now been deferred. The Council's MTFP continues to have to make assumptions on the most likely funding scenario over the Medium Term. The upcoming Comprehensive Spending Review has the potential to have a significant impact on these assumptions.

The implications of recent Government lockdown announcements would in due course be assessed. However, the Cabinet consider that the report, although written before these announcements, provides a good starting point in building towards future financial planning.

8. DELEGATION OF POWERS TO OFFICERS (MINUTE NO 142)

The Cabinet approved amendments to the Council's Delegation of Powers to Officers that are the responsibility of the Cabinet. The amendments reflect current roles and responsibilities for street naming and numbering in the district.

**COUNCILLOR B RICKMAN
CHAIRMAN**