

## **REPORT OF CABINET**

**(Meeting held on 2 December 2020)**

### **1. COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY – REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (MINUTE NO 146)**

In a year like no other, the Cabinet recognises that the news of a vaccine approval for COVID-19 could bring positive progress in the New Year. In the meantime, the New Forest, alongside other Hampshire and neighbouring Dorset authorities, finds itself in tier two restrictions.

The Council will be deploying trained COVID Safety Ambassadors from 2 December, to assist local businesses and communities to understand the latest local tier guidance. To support communities further, much like over both lockdown periods, the Council's Local Response Centre will be ready to respond across the Christmas period.

From 3 December, the Council's five health and leisure centres and Dibden Golf Course will re-open. Thanks should go to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Wellbeing and the wider team for work across these areas, particularly in making them COVID safe and secure.

Looking to business as usual, the recent Safer New Forest Webinar included positive discussions on how to best support the most vulnerable in the local community. In housing, the Cabinet is pleased to confirm that the Council's first Shared Ownership homes will soon be made available at Mulberry Gardens, Blackfield.

In relation to the local economy, the Kickstart Scheme continues to be promoted by the Council in partnership with New Forest Business Partnership. 18 placements have been identified at the Council across a range of service areas. With regard to our local businesses, the Council has paid over £2m to over 1,300 businesses since launching the Local Restrictions Business Support Scheme in November.

Looking to the Council's own finances, the Comprehensive Spending Review was delivered last week, with the overriding message to local government being that there are tougher times ahead for unprotected areas of public spending. However, the Council is very grateful for the financial assistance and support across a range of Government schemes. This includes the positive news that there will be no Business Rate Reset in 2021/22, which allows the Council to continue to retain its growth above the baseline.

In summary, the Leader and Cabinet would like to highlight the need to have to prepare for a very different Christmas, but with the hope of a successful vaccine, the Council will have the ambition to move forward and continue to deliver for the needs of the community throughout 2021. The Leader and Cabinet would like to express their thanks to all Members, the Chief Executive and all Council staff for their hard work in an unprecedented year.

### **2. COVID-19 RECOVERY – LOCAL ECONOMY TASK AND FINISH GROUP (MINUTE NO 147)**

The Cabinet, having considered the work of the COVID-19 Recovery – Local Economy Task and Finish Group, endorsed the ongoing initiatives and actions to date as outlined in Report 5 of the Cabinet Agenda. The report includes a summary of impacts (statistical and anecdotal) in each sector.

The Cabinet would like to thank all the councillors who engaged in the work of the Task and Finish Group. Many types of businesses got involved with the Group and much of the work will continue as the New Forest emerges from the national lockdown into tier two restrictions. These regional and also very local bodies demonstrated the resilience, adaptability and optimism shown by our partners during this difficult time.

In due course, the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development will meet with the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on digital connectivity in the New Forest, as one example of taking forward the findings of the Group.

**3. PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION OF RESTRICTIONS CONTAINED IN S157 HOUSING ACT 1985 TO RESTRICT ONWARD DISPOSALS OF COUNCIL PROPERTIES SOLD UNDER THE RIGHT TO BUY (RTB) IN DESIGNATED RURAL AREAS, NATIONAL PARK AND AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY WITHIN THE NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL ADMINISTRATIVE AREA (MINUTE NO 148)**

The Cabinet, having considered the recommendations of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel, approved the draft policy for consultation purposes, as outlined in Cabinet Report 6 of the Cabinet Agenda.

Section 157 of the Housing Act 1985 allows Housing Authorities to restrict onward disposals of former Right to Buy (RTB) properties in designated rural areas, the National Park and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, so that they can only be sold to people who have lived or worked in the 'protected areas' for at least three years.

The Cabinet would like to highlight that the proposed initiative will promote sustainable and thriving communities and supports the wider ambitions of the Council's Housing Strategy adopted in 2018, placing housing need at the heart of the initiative. Whilst the Council cannot make these homes affordable forever, it can use this mechanism to make them available to local people forever, delivering for those who are local and who help build those local communities.

**4. MITIGATION FOR RECREATIONAL IMPACTS ON NEW FOREST EUROPEAN SITES - DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (MINUTE NO 149)**

That Cabinet approved the publication of the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), as outlined in Cabinet Report 7 of the Cabinet Agenda, for a six week period of consultation.

The Cabinet looks forward to the outcome of the consultation on an SPD that aims to ensure that all new development is achieved to a high standard of design, is sustainable, and can be achieved without an adverse impact on protected sites.

**5. ICT STRATEGY AND BUDGET UPDATE (MINUTE NO 150)**

The Cabinet, having considered the recommendations of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel, noted the ICT Strategy and Budget Update and approved the required rephrasing of the budget as outlined in Cabinet Report 8 of the Cabinet Agenda.

Had the Council not invested in ICT as part of the overall ICT Strategy, it would have been in a very different place, particularly throughout the response to COVID-19. Working remotely, holding meetings online and serving the community without occupying the Council's buildings for large periods of time has been hugely successful.

Looking ahead, the Cabinet would remind all Members of the constantly changing and evolving landscape of technology. The Council needs to continue to invest to stay ahead of the curve and deliver for the community in a cost effective way.

## 6. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT (MINUTE NO 151)

The Cabinet noted the latest budget forecasts of the General Fund, Capital and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) as outlined in Cabinet Report 9 to the Cabinet Agenda. Furthermore, the Cabinet supported the distribution of £107,308 to the Town and Parish Councils on the basis of £1.50 per band D property (2021/22 tax base) in support of the financial pressures faced by each Council as a result of the COVID-19. It is recognised the role our Town and Parish Councils have performed in responding to COVID-19 across New Forest towns and villages.

With the ever changing nature of financial planning at a time where restrictions have changed a number of times throughout the year, the Cabinet can announce the positive news that the first application to the Government in respect of the sales, fees and charges income schemes has been successful. This equates to £1.399m of financial support for which the Council is very grateful. The Council remains in a strong financial position and although facing changes and variations, is well placed to continue delivering for the community.

## 7. COUNCIL TAX 2021/22 – SETTING THE TAX BASE (MINUTE NO 152)

The Cabinet is recommending the approval of a calculation of the Council's Tax Base for 2021/22.

It should be noted that the impact of COVID-19 has resulted in an increase in Council Tax Reduction awards, with revised collection rates also factored into the calculations. These are the primary reasons for recommending a relatively static tax base.

### **RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) ***That the calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2021/22 be approved; and***
- (b) ***That pursuant to Cabinet Report 10 of the Cabinet Agenda and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by this Council as its council tax base for the year 2021/22 be as follows and as detailed in Appendix 3 of the Cabinet report:-***

<b>PARISH/TOWN</b>	<b>TAX BASE 21/22</b>
Ashurst & Colbury	926.3
Beaulieu	513.1
Boldre	1,059.8
Bramshaw	340.4
Bransgore	1,825.0
Breamore	180.1
Brockenhurst	1,895.9
Burley	792.9
Copythorne	1,221.0
Damerham	239.5
Denny Lodge	164.8
East Boldre	383.2
Elingham, Harbridge & Ibsley	619.8
Exbury & Lepe	119.4
Fawley	4,603.5
Fordingbridge	2,353.2
Godshill	227.8

Hale	265.4
Hordle	2,417.8
Hyde	512.5
Hythe & Dibden	7,406.1
Lymington & Pennington	7,483.2
Lyndhurst	1,472.8
Marchwood	2,057.7
Martin	197.2
Milford on Sea	2,853.8
Minstead	372.3
Netley Marsh	816.1
New Milton	10,515.3
Ringwood	5,404.3
Rockbourne	167.3
Sandleheath	276.6
Sopley	391.1
Sway	1,706.1
Totton & Eling	9,405.1
Whitsbury	101.1
Woodgreen	251.2
<b>Whole District</b>	<b>71,538.7</b>

**8. ADDITIONAL MEETING DATE 2021 (MINUTE NO 153)**

The Cabinet approved the following additional meeting date for 2021:-

- 10.00 am, Wednesday 17 February 2021.

**COUNCILLOR B RICKMAN  
CHAIRMAN**