

REPORT OF CABINET

(Meeting held on 7 July 2021)

1. WESTOVER URGENT WORKS – MILFORD-ON-SEA – UPDATE REPORT (MINUTE NO 10)

The Cabinet noted the completion of the urgent works at Westover Seawall, Milford-On-Sea, and the latest expected financial contribution required from the Council. It should be noted that of the total £1.9m expenditure, the Council's contribution is now anticipated to be approximately £525k. This is more than the previously reported estimate of £400k, although with the ultimate potential range to be funded by the Council between £400k - £1.525M, £525k remains at the lower end of this potential range. Despite this, it is not sustainable for a District Council to finance projects of this scale on an ongoing basis. Looking forward, these type of projects will need to secure significant external funding.

Following the failure of the seawall at Westover in February 2020, the project was completed under very trying circumstances during an exceptional year, including the impact of the pandemic and two severe storms. Looking ahead, the Council will be working with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council on the development of a Christchurch Bay Strategy, covering the entire coastline from Hengistbury Head to Hurst Spit. The significant benefit for the New Forest coastline is that in having an approved strategy, it will support and underpin future flood & coastal erosion risk management projects, particularly when funding support through the Environment Agency and partnership funding is being sought.

2. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND PROVISIONAL BUDGET OUTTURN 2020/21 (MINUTE NO 11)

The Cabinet, following consideration by the Council's four Overview and Scrutiny Panels, noted a report which provided an overview of performance and delivery of the corporate plan for 2020/21. The report looks backwards, reflecting on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, and sets out the provisional outturn results for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account.

The Leader of the Council would like to place on record his thanks to officers for all they have done to achieve an exceptional outturn in exceptional circumstances. The Council has continued to deliver services throughout the pandemic, whilst responding to entirely new responsibilities to support the community, in addition to the national response to coronavirus.

Setting an Emergency Budget in September 2020 was also an unprecedented requirement for the Council, having seen revenue streams such as health and leisure and car parking income cease earlier in 2020. The Council must continue to take a prudent approach through its Medium Term Financial Plan to ensure its finances remain in good shape.

3. WORKSMART (MINUTE NO 12)

The Cabinet, following consideration by the Corporate Affairs and Local Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel, supported the Business Case for Worksmart, the next step in the Council's Smarter Working Programme. The business case is supported by a new HR Policy, which is the subject of a separate report to Council on this agenda from the HR Committee. The initiative is also supported by a Members' guidance document for the future of hybrid working.

The Cabinet notes that a twelve month review of the initiative will take place, which will be key to assessing the success of some of the key drivers for change, such as a reduction in the Council's environmental impact, and the ability of the Council to recruit and retain high quality staff as an employer of choice.

The Cabinet are grateful to all officers and elected Members for their commitment to a new way of working throughout the pandemic. Through this hybrid working initiative, the Council will seek to maintain productivity, protect front line service delivery and implement new ways of working from both our own experience and best practice across both the public and private sector.

**COUNCILLOR E HERON
CHAIRMAN**