

Leader's Portfolio Oct 2015

Current Aims of the Portfolio

- Engaging the public
- Delivering through people
- Supporting local businesses
- Dealing with local emergencies

Performance

In its response to continued reductions in grant funding the Council has taken action to protect frontline services and to keep Council Tax at the same level for six years, helping to reduce the burden on householders.

A further annual saving of £50,000 was made in Senior Management costs last year and vacancies continue to be reviewed and challenged as they arise. These reviews have resulted in the number of full time equivalent employees decreasing by a further 20 this year.

Achieving the best possible coverage of superfast broadband is essential if the vibrancy of the local economy is to be maintained. A working group is bringing together local information in order to guide future investment by all parties. In this way there can be coordinated, practical, local help in achieving the desired outcome.

Closer working relationships have been established with the Local Economic Partnerships that will enable local business to better connect to support that is available.

More locally, the New Forest Business Partnership continues to develop. One of its aims is to bring together the marine and allied industries to create a strong local sector.

Local issues have also been addressed within Emergency Planning following the flooding of 2014. A Multi-Agency Flood Plan has been produced for Lymington.

Challenges

Prior to the Spending Review announcement scheduled for 25th November 2015 there remains considerable uncertainty over the scale of funding reductions anticipated. Early indications are that in the period to 2020 the Council will see significant funding reductions. Currently estimates indicate that over the 4 years General Fund budget spend will exceed funds available by £3.5 million (19.2%).

Each portfolio holder will be undertaking a review of key areas of budget spend and activity with the emphasis on reducing budget expenditure (see summary of net portfolio spend). The focus will remain on ensuring key frontline services to the community are prioritised.

The Fit for the Future Programme with its focus on 'Customers' and 'People' will support the delivery of frontline services designed around the individuals that

use them and underpinned by a culture suited to a modern and ambitious local authority.

The development of devolution proposals for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight provide both an opportunity and a challenge for the council. The Council will engage with the development of these proposals and monitor the implications for the Council as they progress.

There is pressure on employment costs arising from an increase in National Insurance payments and national living wage implementation and recruitment and retention continues to be of concern across the business as market confidence grows.

The highest risk identified for the Portfolio is that economic conditions limit growth and employment in the district. Attempts will be made to mitigate against this risk by developing new and reinforcing existing links to Local Enterprise Partnerships to benefit the District.

Corporate Requirements

- Develop plans and options to meet the budget shortfall including an increased focus on collaborative working
- Review of Corporate Plan and Performance Management framework

Key Activities

- Seek savings in senior management and staff costs
- Review of pay systems, implementation of National Living Wage, equate to 2%. Pay award assumptions of 1% and increase cost of Pensions of 1%
- Ensure the best possible coverage is achieved in the continued implementation of the New Forest Broadband Campaign, including development of cold spot maps.
- Continue to support and develop links to Local Economic Partnerships to benefit the District, including putting forward appropriate economic development schemes for financial assistance.
- Continue the development of the Brand New Forest campaign with a loyalty scheme and greater integration with local producers
- A new internal Emergency Response plan, in line with legislative requirements will be published this autumn.

Supporting Information

In support of this plan the following documents are available:

- 1) [The Delivery Plan of Corporate Aims 2012-2016 for the Portfolio](#)
- 2) [The Portfolio's Performance Scorecard](#)
- 3) [Strategic Risk Register](#)
- 4) [Summary of Net Portfolio Spend](#)