

# Resource Plan by Portfolio

## Finance & Efficiency Oct 2015

### Current Aims of the Portfolio

- Managing our finances
- Managing our physical assets
- Delivering customer benefits through technology
- Maintaining strong governance

### Performance

Over the last 6 years the Council has successfully responded to reductions in grants of £3.4 million (28.3%). Since 2010 the budget has been reduced by £2.9 million (12.6%) to bridge the funding shortfall. This has all been done with no increase in Council Tax.

The Council is responsible for collecting over £100 million in Council Tax and £65 million in non-domestic rates. In year collection rates for council tax (98.9% at year-end) and non-domestic rates (98.8% at year-end) and administrative costs per dwelling rank amongst the best in the country against a continued Council Tax freeze.

The Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) was successfully implemented with the transfer of Council employees (3) dealing with fraud to Department for Works & Pensions.

Following the withdrawal of funding by the County Council a review of the New Milton Town Hall has been undertaken and NFDC has continued to provide the service for the benefit residents, by making efficiencies and reducing opening hours slightly.

The Council continues to review its asset holdings and recently disposed of 2 properties at Dibden Golf Course realising a capital receipt of £680K. The former Cussens Day Centre site will also be sold at auction in the autumn.

Work is well advanced to bring the vacant site (Unit 8) at Hardley Industrial Estate back into occupation which will secure new employment opportunities for the area.

The May 2015 Parliamentary elections were successfully delivered in spite of the challenges and complexity of resourcing and coordinating a combined election with the quadrennial District and Parish Council elections.

The use of technology continues to be developed with the introduction of a book and pay mobile 'app', an upgraded website and call handling and the completed upgrade of MS exchange. A GIS partnership with NFNPA is also now in place providing collaborative benefits for both authorities.

### Challenges

Prior to the Spending Review announcement scheduled for 25<sup>th</sup> 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.

Other challenges include the management and delivery of several welfare reforms and monitoring the impact of business rates growth, where opportunities are particularly limited in the New Forest, and the future implications of incorporating Housing Benefit within Universal Credit and the corresponding grant reductions.

### Corporate Requirements

- Develop plans and options to meet the budget shortfall including identifying service reviews.

### Key Activities

- Improving business management of back office functions and activities
- Generating greater value for money in the way we purchase goods and services
- Consider the approach to setting council tax and the use of reserves.
- Improve services to the customer by reviewing processes
- Continue to prepare for the implementation of Universal Credit (first new claims due December 2015)
- Implement new document records management strategy
- Progress depot review project to address operational issues at Marsh Lane and Claymeadow depot sites.

### 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](#)