

REPORT OF CABINET

(Meeting held on 1 December 2021)

1. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MINUTE NO 43)

The Cabinet, having noted the updates to the Medium Term Financial Plan and having endorsed the approach taken to set the Asset Maintenance and Replacement Programmes, is recommending to Council on two budget requirements.

Following a request from Citizens Advice New Forest (CANF) for a three year funding agreement, the Community, Partnerships and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Panel recommended an agreement to the Cabinet. Cabinet supports this arrangement and is recommending to Council.

Furthermore, the Cabinet is recommending that the procurement of replacement vehicles and plant as included in the 2022/23 replacement schedule is commenced ahead of the formal setting of the 2022/23 budget. A significant share of the programme cost is the write down of the replacement Vehicles and Plant acquired by the Council. Lead in times for particular vehicles can be extremely long, and so waiting for February for the formal budget approval is not conducive to ensuring the delivery of the programme in the 12 month fiscal window. The replacement of vehicles is essential to front line service delivery and plays a significant part in ensuring the Council's fleet contributes to the Council's sustainability agenda, as new engines are typically more efficient than older models. It is worth noting that vehicles are being specified to take account of potential changes to waste collection services in line with the new national waste strategy.

The Council remains in a relatively strong financial position but it is important not to be complacent in tackling future challenges.

RECOMMENDED:

1. *That the CANF request for a three-year funding agreement for the years 2023/24 and 2024/25 be approved as follows:-*
 - *Year 1 commencing 1 April 2022: £185,895*
 - *Year 2 commencing 1 April 2023: £190,542*
 - *Year 3 commencing 1 April 2024: £195,306*
2. *That procurement of replacement vehicles and plant as included in the 2022/23 replacement schedule is commenced ahead of the formal setting of the 2022/23 budget.*

2. COUNCIL TAX EMPTY HOMES PREMIUM AND CARE LEAVER DISREGARD (MINUTE NO 44)

The Cabinet, having considered the recommendations and work of a Task and Finish Group, is recommending the adoption of new Empty Homes Premiums and a Council tax disregard for care leavers.

The aim of introducing the Empty Homes Premiums is to encourage owners of empty properties to bring them back into use. Tackling empty homes is part of the Council's Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy. The Council's Private Sector Leasing Scheme is promoted on any Empty Home Premium communication. If an unoccupied and substantially unfurnished property is furnished, such that it is capable of being lived in, a premium does not apply.

Whilst the number of properties impacted by this change in policy are relatively minor, like many districts, the New Forest continues to suffer from a housing shortage, and just a single family being given the opportunity of a home makes an unimaginable difference to them.

In respect of the introduction of the Care Leavers Disregard, this ensures that we provide ongoing support for some of our communities' most vulnerable young people as they transition out from the care system into the wider world.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1. That the empty homes premium is increased from 150% to 200% for properties that have been vacant and unfurnished for more than five years;**
- 2. That the empty homes premium is increased from 150% to 300% for properties that have been vacant and unfurnished for more than ten years;**
- 3. Where a property subject to an empty homes premium and a new owner becomes liable for council tax, they will be exempt from the premium for a 6 month period; and**
- 4. The adoption of a care leaver disregard for care leavers aged under 25.**

3. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2022/23 (MINUTE NO 45)

The Cabinet, having considered the recommendations and work of a Task and Finish Group, is recommending to Council a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23.

All local authorities are responsible for setting up their own local scheme to support those of working age on low income with paying their Council Tax.

The recommended scheme broadly remains unaltered from previous years with some fairly minor adjustments to streamline the administration and avoid duplicating the application process for those on Universal Credit.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1. That option A, B, C and D as detailed in section 6 of the report, be adopted from 1 April 2022; and**
- 2. That a Task and Finish Group review a Banded scheme during 2022, along with the vulnerable category with any proposals for change to take effect from 1 April 2023.**

4. COUNCIL TAX 2022/23 – SETTING THE TAX BASE (MINUTE NO 46)

The Cabinet is recommending the approval of a calculation of the Council's Tax Base for 2022/23.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1. The calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2022/23, be approved; and**
- 2. Pursuant to the report 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 2022/23 be as follows and as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report:-

PARISH/TOWN	TAX BASE 22/23
Ashurst & Colbury	930
Beaulieu	518.2
Boldre	1,069
Bramshaw	345.1
Bransgore	1,834.9
Breamore	184.2
Brockenhurst	1,902.9
Burley	797.7
Copythorne	1,223.1
Damerham	245.9
Denny Lodge	161.5
East Boldre	387.7
Elingham, Harbridge & Ibsley	627.5
Exbury & Lepe	119.3
Fawley	4,621.3
Fordingbridge	2,413.3
Godshill	229.7
Hale	266.1
Hordle	2,450.3
Hyde	516.5
Hythe & Dibden	7,479.3
Lymington & Pennington	7,505
Lyndhurst	1,466.7
Marchwood	2,070.4
Martin	198.7
Milford on Sea	2,919.9
Minstead	373.7
Netley Marsh	817.6
New Milton	10,624.7
Ringwood	5,465
Rockbourne	168.7
Sandleheath	278
Sopley	391.9
Sway	1,727.9
Totton & Eling	9,440.7
Whitsbury	100.9
Woodgreen	248.8
Whole District	72,122.1

5. OUTSIDE BODIES APPOINTMENTS (MINUTE NO 47)

The Cabinet reaffirmed the Outside Bodies appointments held by the Portfolio Holder for Partnering and Wellbeing, following the appointment of Cllr Blunden to this position, as follows:-

- Hampshire Police and Crime Panel
- New Forest Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board
- Project Integra Management Board (Reserve)

6. ADDITIONAL MEETING DATE (MINUTE NO 48)

The Cabinet agreed an additional meeting date of 10.00 am, Wednesday 16 February 2022.

**COUNCILLOR E HERON
CHAIRMAN**