

## REPORT OF CABINET

(Meeting held on 6 July 2022)

### 1. WASTE STRATEGY 2022-2027 (MINUTE NO 12)

The Cabinet, having considered the detailed work of the Sustainable Waste Task and Finish Group and the deliberations of the Environment and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel, is recommending the adoption of the Waste Strategy by the Council.

Considerable work and research has been undertaken to assess and determine the strategic approach to a modernised waste collection service that will prevent waste, increase recycling, and deliver on the Council's objectives regarding climate change.

Local, regional and national policy objectives are driving the agenda for a more sustainable approach to waste management, along with the waste hierarchy principles that prioritise reducing waste in the first instance, with disposal as its lowest priority. NFDC has a legal obligation to manage waste as high up the hierarchy as possible, driving material up the waste hierarchy and reducing CO2 emissions accordingly. The strategy has this objective as its focus.

The aim of the strategy is to provide the New Forest District with a cost and carbon efficient recycling and waste service that maximises the recovery of valuable natural resources and meets the needs and expectations of residents. The Council will ensure that this service is compliant with forthcoming national legislation and compatible with any new working arrangements with Hampshire partners.

The objectives of the strategy are as follows:-

- Objective 1 – Minimise carbon impact of waste/recycling service
- Objective 2 – Increase quality and quantity of recycling
- Objective 3 – Reduce levels of overall household waste
- Objective 4 – Legislative and regulatory compliance

Changes to waste and recycling collection services requires significant planning to ensure that stakeholders are informed, resources are made available to support deployment, and that realistic timescales are set and adhered to.

The Council will consider, plan and deliver a service change implementation programme, which from point of decision making is anticipated to take approximately 20-24 months. Consideration will be given to:

- Surveying of properties to inform alternative arrangements
- Stakeholder communication and engagement
- Procurement of vehicles and services
- Operational Service re-design including ICT system
- Staff workforce plan
- Customer information and communication plan
- Service rollout

The Council has consulted with groups across the District including Town and Parish Councils, the National Park Authority, the Verderers, Forestry England, and more importantly residents whose feedback from the survey in 2020 has been valued and considered carefully.

The significance of the Strategy cannot be stressed too highly as the Council moves towards a more sustainable and greener waste collection, an improved recycling function and a cost-effective service.

Going forward the Council will continue to communicate its plans to improve recycling and reduce waste and a comprehensive property survey of the District will be undertaken to inform the most appropriate collection method for residential areas.

At the Cabinet meeting, two public speakers cited their concerns with the strategy, particularly in respect of wheeled bins, the timing for food waste collection implementation, alternate weekly collections and the recycling targets within the strategy.

Council officers responded in detail to the technical questions raised at the Cabinet meeting and it was confirmed that a detailed plan would come forward, informed by a survey, to ensure household suitability for wheeled bins, including assisted collections.

The Cabinet would like to thank the Sustainable Waste Task and Finish Group for their significant work in bringing the strategy forward.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. ***That the Waste Strategy 2022-2027, be adopted. The adoption of the Strategy includes changes to frontline services and one-off transition costs as follows:-***
  - (a) ***the introduction of a weekly food waste collection service***
  - (b) ***the adoption of a two-weekly, "twin stream" recycling service to enable residents to recycle a greater range and quantity of recyclable materials (collected on the opposite week to general waste)***
  - (c) ***the introduction of a two-weekly collection of general waste (collected on the opposite week to recycling)***
  - (d) ***the use of wheeled bins for general waste and mixed recycling, with paper and card collected in a reusable bag***
  - (e) ***the use of wheeled bins for garden waste collections (collections remain two-weekly)***
  - (f) ***transition funding of £1.1m is required to mobilise the roll-out of the new strategy, including delivery of new bins, temporary staff, communications and education. Beyond the transition period, communications and education will continue to have a vital role in reducing waste and increasing recycling.***
2. ***That authority is delegated to the Executive Heads in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal Services to take all operational decisions to implement the above recommendations and all aspects of the Strategy.***
3. ***That the progression of the strategy is on the understanding that new burdens funding will cover the increased costs associated with food waste collection.***
4. ***That the council continue to monitor progress at national and regional level to ensure that Strategy implementation is compliant and delivered in the most financially efficient manner.***
5. ***That allowance is made within the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning to accommodate a variety of funding scenarios until clarity on new burdens and new income is provided.***

## **2. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND PROVISIONAL BUDGET OUTTURN (MINUTE NO 13)**

The Cabinet, following the consideration of the Council's four Overview and Scrutiny Panels, noted the annual performance report for 2021/22, alongside the provisional outturn of the General Fund, Capital and Housing Revenue Account budgets for 2021/22.

2021/22 continued to present significant challenges, with continuing Covid restrictions and significant backlogs in some areas from staff having focused on supporting residents during the peak of the pandemic. The Cabinet would like to express its sincere gratitude to all staff and officers for their hard work and dedication over the 12 months covered by the report and beyond, which enabled the Council to continue to deliver on its key priorities despite the exceptional circumstances.

Cabinet note the budget underspend within the year which will assist the Council in the coming year to tackle challenges such as the cost of living and utilities.

## **3. RESIDENT INSIGHT 2022 (MINUTE NO 14)**

The Cabinet approved a resident survey, to gather resident and community insight. The survey will take place between 1 September and 31 October 2022 and will enable the Council to understand and respond to changing resident needs, make improvements to services and baseline current performance.

According to the Local Government Association, resident insight is vital for councils wanting to understand their communities, improve their services and direct their resources at the issues that matter the most.

The expertise of the Insight Officer at Havant Borough Council has supported the initial proposal to conduct a resident insight survey of the New Forest and will provide ongoing partnership support to deliver a resident survey.

The insight survey is likely to have questions that fall under the following categories:

- Reputation metrics, such as satisfaction, feeling informed, trust, and value for money
- Satisfaction with services
- Areas of importance and concern for residents
- Customer contact and communications
- Behaviour and demographics

The pandemic, the rising cost of living, new technological advances and the climate and nature emergency are just a few of the things that are impacting how residents live their lives. With these changes, the services residents need from the Council, how they need to be delivered, and the way residents want to access them will also evolve.

This initiative is one of the ways that the Council can ensure that the next Corporate Plan responds to these changes and how its implementation can be benchmarked in the future to ensure the services the Council provides in the future meet residents' needs and are accessible to all.

At the Cabinet meeting, it was clarified that the method of telephone consultation ensured representative data in respect of the New Forest population, from across the District's wards and within different demographics, such as gender, age and work status.

#### 4. **DIGITAL STRATEGY – CUSTOMER FIRST, DIGITAL BY DESIGN (MINUTE NO 15)**

The Cabinet, having considered the comments of the Corporate Affairs and Local Economy O&S Panel, is recommending the adoption of the Digital Strategy to Council.

Having reached the end of the 2017-2022 ICT strategy and delivered the secure and robust infrastructure envisaged, as well as replacing several core systems, this strategy outlines how the Council will retain the benefits of a contemporary ICT environment, as well as support the aspirations of the Council now and into the future

'Customer first, digital by design' is the ethos of the NFDC Digital Strategy, with the following principles at the heart of the strategy:

- All services will adopt full end to end digital business models
- All services will actively use data to inform decision making and report performance in real-time
- The Council will develop its workforce to realise the business benefits of digital service delivery
- Services will continue to review their capabilities and capacity, reshaping services to leverage the business benefits of digital practices

The Council's budget for 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan sets aside funding to 2024/25 to deliver projects aligning to this Digital Strategy. Benefits realisation will be a key factor to project evaluation before funds are allocated to individual projects. Regular updates on progress and forecast expenditure will be presented to the Council's Capital and Change Board, and well as six monthly updates through the Corporate Affairs and Local Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Council's Digital Strategy remains an important part of the changes necessary to deliver services in a timely and cost-effective manner. Not only did this help in enabling the Council to remain in contact with, and deliver services to residents throughout the pandemic, but moving forward it empowers residents to transact business and contact the Council in a way and at a time that most suits them. A further and important benefit is the way in which it allows Council staff to work in a more modern and productive format as well as helping to reduce the need to travel as the Council looks, as an organisation, to reduce its carbon footprint.

Whilst this can only be good for residents, staff and the environment, there still remains a number of people within the community who have difficulty engaging with the Council through digital means or simply choose not to. At the Cabinet meeting, Members welcomed the commitment that the Strategy puts people's needs first which will involve maintaining telephone and face-to-face options for residents as an integral part of service delivery.

#### ***RECOMMENDED:***

***That the Digital Strategy, be adopted.***

#### 5. **SUPPORT TO LOCAL BUSINESSES, HOUSEHOLDS AND THE COMMUNITY (MINUTE NO 16)**

The Cabinet, following consideration by the Corporate Affairs and Local Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel, noted the significant support given to businesses and communities throughout 2021/22 and agreed to continue working with partners to identify emerging issues and explore further funding initiatives in this area.

Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 the Council administered and distributed various grants to support businesses, totalling £31,744,124. During the same time

period, an additional £515,924.44 was distributed to support households and community groups.

The Cabinet report highlights the wide range of schemes and scale of administration undertaken to support businesses, households and communities during 2021/22, administered effectively and efficiently. The Council works closely with partners across the District to promote the support available and will continue to engage with them to identify and provide further support.

The Cabinet encourages all Members to continue to signpost residents who are in need of support to Citizen's Advice New Forest, and the Council as appropriate.

## **6. DEPRIVATION WITHIN THE NEW FOREST (MINUTE NO 17)**

The Cabinet, having considered the motion referred to it by the Council, alongside a comprehensive officer report, is reporting to Council.

At the Council meeting on 16 May 2022, Cllr J Davies moved the following motion:-

*"This Council notes:*

- The alarming news that 4 out of 114 neighbourhoods across the New Forest are in the top 20% most deprived neighbourhoods for income deprivation in England according to the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation.*

*This Council further notes:*

- The Cost of Living Crisis, which is expected to get worse, will push more local households into poverty.*
- That the cost of living crisis has a disproportionate effect on people in the most deprived neighbourhoods.*
- There are many different areas of deprivation included within the Index of Multiple Deprivation. These include: income deprivation; employment deprivation; education, skills, and training deprivation; health and disability deprivation; crime deprivation; income deprivation affecting children; income deprivation affecting older people; living environment deprivation; and housing deprivation.*
- There are two neighbourhoods within the New Forest which are in the top 20% most deprived neighbourhoods for income deprivation affecting children. These two neighbourhoods are contained within Butts Ash and Dibden Purlieu ward and Pennington ward respectively.*

*This Council recommends:*

- 1. A Task and Finish Group\* be set up to form a plan to tackle deprivation across the New Forest with a particular emphasis on the 4 most deprived neighbourhoods for income deprivation.  
\*That this Task and Finish Group reports to the Community, Partnerships and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Panel.*
- 2. Overall Deprivation is included as a key priority within the Corporate Plan and include the responsibility for reducing overall deprivation within the priorities of the Portfolio Holder for Partnering and Wellbeing."*

In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, the motion was referred to the Cabinet for consideration. A report was prepared which detailed background information for the Cabinet on the subject of deprivation within the New Forest (Cabinet Report 9 of the Cabinet Agenda).

At the Cabinet meeting, Cllr J Davies spoke in support of the original motion, expressed his disappointment that the recommendations did not respond directly to his proposals and encouraged Members to consider supporting the proposals originally put.

The Cabinet are recommending, in line with the Council's long track record of tackling deprivation, alongside the golden strand in the Corporate Plan of economic welfare for the people of the New Forest, that the ongoing initiatives continue. Furthermore, in partnership with others, it is proposed that opportunities be explored to promote further support to households. It is suggested that an annual report on deprivation could in future be brought to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- 1. That the scale of the national and local support measures in place to assist households that are most in need within the District, be noted;**
- 2. That the existing cross-cutting work on-going within the Council and with partners to support those most in need, including those within the most deprived neighbourhoods in the District, continues;**
- 3. That continued support to the Cost of Living Steering Group is provided, bringing a multiagency approach to tackling issues affecting the most vulnerable in our community, working alongside the Local Partnership Campaign Manager to explore and promote further support to households.**
- 4. That an annual report on deprivation be considered by the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Panel.**

**7. NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PLAN (MINUTE NO 18)**

The Cabinet, following the consideration of the Housing and Homelessness Overview and Scrutiny Panel, approved the Housing Development Plan (HDP).

Originally identified as an action in the Housing Strategy, the HDP fulfils a number of aims.

- A business plan to frame housing development aims and objectives
- To establish focus, scope and parameters for housing development activities
- To document the primary evaluation and decision-making processes
- To document the physical standards and financial assumptions that underpin the development activities
- To recognise and set out housing development processes and procedures, and the approach to risk and risk monitoring and mitigation
- To establish consistency of approach and clarity of purpose – creating a benchmark to measure against and a mandate to work within

The Cabinet welcome the report and how it frames the Council's objectives for housing development with clarity and purpose. The Cabinet's thanks are extended to the Housing Development Team for continuing to overcome the difficult challenges of delivery in this area.

**8. GREENER HOUSING STRATEGY 2022-2032 (MINUTE NO 19)**

The Cabinet, having considered the detailed work of the Greener Housing Task and Finish Group and the recommendations of the Housing and Homelessness Overview

and Scrutiny Panel, is recommending the adoption of a Greener Housing Strategy to Council.

The Government's pledge to reduce carbon emissions to zero by 2050 will place significant requirements on social housing landlords to provide a range of measures to create more energy efficient homes by 2030, and a complete housing stock with net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

A key priority in the strategy is to work with private sector landlords and owners and lever in funding to the District which facilitates the decarbonisation and improvement in energy efficiency of the private sector housing stock. This is a cross cutting priority for the Council as a whole.

The Cabinet refer Members to the detailed financial implications in the Cabinet report which identify the commitment needed to meet Government targets, alongside the corporate work on Climate Change and Nature Action Plans.

At the Cabinet meeting, the report received support from a number of Members and it was acknowledged that delivery of the strategy was ambitious, requiring the maximising of funding streams, including the direct support of Government to Housing Authorities.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- 1. That the proposed Greener Housing Strategy be approved; and**
- 2. That the potential financial implications of delivering the strategy to meet Government targets, be noted, to ensure it complements the corporate work that is ongoing to deliver the Council's Climate and Nature Change Action Plans, following the declaration of a Climate Change and Nature emergency in October 2021.**

**9. SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES – REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL (IRP) (MINUTE NO 20)**

The Cabinet are recommending the adoption of the Independent Remuneration Panel's (IRP) recommendations, with regard to the Scheme of Members' Allowances to apply from 1 April 2022. This follows a review of allowances by the IRP.

**RECOMMENDED:**

***That the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, for the Scheme of Members' Allowances to apply from 1 April 2022, be adopted.***

**COUNCILLOR E HERON  
CHAIRMAN**