

REPORT OF CABINET

(Meeting held on 1 March 2023)

1. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (MINUTE NO 84)

In the Leader's absence, the Deputy Leader reported that the work to address the Climate and Nature Emergency is gaining momentum, as demonstrated in the annual report discussed by Members in February. The Council is working to shape the strong ambitions into a refined strategy and action plan, to be published later in the year, the support for which is demonstrated by the continued funding in this year's budget agreed by the Council at its meeting in February.

Members of the District, Town and Parish Councils will be meeting to hear about what the Climate Change & Nature Emergency that this Council declared in 2021 means for local residents, businesses and visitors. Officers and speakers from partner organisations will outline what action is being taken to address the emergency and what Councillors and their communities can do to get involved. There will be more engagement going forwards as it is by working together that all partners can safeguard the New Forest from the impacts of climate change and habitat loss, now and for future generations.

2. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER UPDATE (MINUTE NO 88)

The Cabinet reviewed and noted the contents of the Strategic Risk Register as part of the 6 monthly review process.

The updated Risk Management Policy and the Strategic Risk Register (SRR) were both reported to Cabinet in September 2022 and this is the first refresh of the SRR.

The SRR attached as Appendix 1 to Cabinet report 4 of the Cabinet agenda captures the most significant cross cutting risks to the delivery of the current Corporate Plan and the proposed actions to mitigate these risks.

The SRR includes the same 7 Strategic Risks as those included on the previously adopted register. The update provides a progress narrative on the actions required to further manage residual risk, noting that some of the actions are continual, whereas others are finite.

3. RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND (MINUTE NO 89)

The Cabinet noted the content of the report and agreed the proposed mechanism for the allocation of the Business Support element of the Rural England Prosperity Fund. The Cabinet also agreed that an Investment Plan be prepared for Cabinet approval to allocate the Community Infrastructure Improvements.

The Rural England Prosperity Fund is a top-up to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) launched by Government in April 2022 as part of its Levelling Up agenda. It is available to eligible local authorities in England.

To access funding under the Rural England Prosperity Fund (otherwise known as Rural Fund) local authorities were asked to provide specific additional information as an addendum to their UKSPF Investment Plan. The Council submitted its Investment Plan in August 2022. Additional information in the form of an addendum to the UKSPF Investment Plan was submitted on 30 November 2022 and a response is awaited on this process.

The Rural Fund allocation for the New Forest is £540,115. It is to top-up to help address the extra needs and challenges facing rural areas.

The New Forest Rural Fund allocation will be split 60/40 between projects to support businesses and those supporting community infrastructure. It is a capital grant programme only and limited to small and medium sized enterprises in the programme area.

£216,046 of the Rural England Prosperity Fund has been allocated towards capital improvements across rural community venues. Work is underway to ascertain those communities at greatest risk of isolation, and where there is opportunity to improve facilities and affect change. It was recognised when preparing the UKSPF bid that there is a need for improvements to St George's Centre at Calshot which provides a range of community services for residents of Fawley and Calshot. This is seen as a priority project which will be highlighted in an Improvement Plan. The Improvement Plan will be developed following a review of those communities at greatest risk of isolation and where there is an opportunity to improve facilities, and this will identify capital projects which can be delivered.

At the Cabinet meeting, Members expressed their support to the Rural England Prosperity Fund and recognised the funding will support rural businesses and in turn have a positive impact on the local economy of the New Forest.

4. THE LEVELLING UP AND REGENERATION BILL – REFORM TO NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY CONSULTATION (MINUTE NO 90)

The Cabinet considered the content of the report and approved the suggested approach to the Council's response to the Reform to the National Planning Policy consultation and delegated authority to the Executive Head of Planning, Regeneration and Economy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Infrastructure to make minor amendments to the response.

The consultation is wide ranging and seeks views on the proposed approach to updating the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It also seeks views on the proposed approach to preparing National Development Management Policies, how it might develop policy to support levelling up and how national planning policy is currently accessed by users.

The consultation includes proposes changes to be brought forward in relation to the following:

- Housing Need
- Alternative method for calculating housing need in limited circumstances
- Role of Green Belt in meeting future needs
- Constraints to meeting housing need
- Changes to five-year housing land supply
- Changes to the housing delivery test
- Wider review
- National Development Management Policies
- Biodiversity and Climate Change
- Ending the Duty to Co-operate
- Revised Planning System 2024-34
- Streamlining local plan

The consultation closes on 2 March 2023 and the Government has suggested that they will respond to the consultation in the spring, publishing an updated NPPF as part of that

response. The proposed response from the District Council is attached as Appendix 1 to Cabinet report 6 of the Cabinet agenda.

At the Cabinet meeting, Members spoke in support of the report and proposed consultation response, recognising the unique geography of the New Forest District, with the majority of the area being within the National Park and therefore increasing the pressure on the land outside of the National Park.

5. TOTTON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (MINUTE NO 91)

The Cabinet considered and supported progressing the delivery of the projects that have been identified as 'quick wins', they supported in principle the 6 Design Principles which set the vision for Totton and it was agreed that further consultation take place to seek views from key stakeholders such as the Town Council, County Council and Neighbourhood Plan Team. The Cabinet also supported more detailed technical work, as set out in the report to progress a Regeneration Plan for Totton which will also inform future Local Plan work.

A Community Engagement exercise was undertaken across the summer of 2022. The exercise explored ways in which Totton town centre could be improved. Suggestions include changes to the events, activities, and the retain offer so the town centre could better act as a destination for the local area all with the backdrop that the nearby Waterside area will accommodate substantial grown in the coming decade.

Seven key themes emerged from the engagement phase. The collective results have been translated into a series of potential design principles as follows:

- The Modern Market Town
- Independence
- Cohesive Community
- Connected & Permeable
- Links to Landscape
- Flexible & Adaptable

The level of response received demonstrated the passion and strength of feeling the community has for Totton. The work has identified a number of quick wins that can be worked up into projects. The UK shared Prosperity Fund allocated £220,000 for Town Centre Improvements with the schemes proposed including activities such as one-off markets and cultural events with early pilots in Totton.

The engagement work has also identified more strategic issues that will inform the next stage of more detailed technical work.

At the Cabinet meeting, Members welcomed the report and expressed their support to the recommendations.

6. DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT: PLANNING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE (MINUTE NO 92)

The Cabinet, agreed the draft Supplementary Planning document "Planning for Climate Change" be published for a six-week public consultation in May 2023 and that any final editorial changes to the draft document prior to publication be agreed by the Executive Head for Planning, Regeneration and the Economy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Infrastructure.

The SPD will be used in the determination of planning applications for the construction of new homes, commercial and community buildings. The SPD provides guidance on the interpretation and implementation of policies in the adopted Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy.

The key objectives of the SPD are to encourage the development industry to take all reasonable steps to minimise expected carbon emissions when designing and constructing new buildings, and to make new development more sustainable and climate change adapted.

The SPD will be published for at least 6 weeks for public consultation in May 2023. It is envisaged that the results of the consultation and the SPD in final form will be reported to the Cabinet and to the Council for formal adoption in late summer 2023.

Members commended the report and draft SPD, recognising the importance of climate change on the Council's agenda and the need for sustainable development.

**COUNCILLOR J CLEARY
CHAIRMAN**