

Leader's Portfolio Oct 2016

Priorities of the Portfolio

- Helping local business grow
- Service outcomes for the community
- Living within our means
- Working with others to achieve more

Performance

'Our corporate plan' has been introduced setting out a clear statement of intent that is both direct and easy to understand. It is supported by a delivery plan which sets out in more detail the context of the main issues the plan aims to address and key delivery actions for 2016/17 which will contribute to the delivery of the plan.

Changes to senior management have contributed to an additional annual saving of £400k and resulted in the reduction in the total number of full time equivalents by a further 25 this year. The Chief Executive is supported by a new streamlined management structure of Executive Heads and Service Managers.

Devolution discussions have been ongoing throughout the year. The Council in responding to the three consultations from Solent, Heart of Hampshire and Dorset, is looking to ensure the wider interests of the New Forest Community are at the forefront of any decision.

Working with the New Forest Business Partnership the business expo was even more successful with 80 local companies showcasing their products and services and 24 businesses celebrated their success at the tenth brilliance in business awards.

A new internal Emergency Response plan, in line with legislative requirements has been published.

Challenges

In 2016 the Council's overall budget spending will have reduced by 15.8% since 2010 due to central government austerity measures. Over the next four years the government has indicated a level of central funding that will require a further 11.7% reduction in the budget from that in 2016. Any future plan must address this major challenge.

The delivery plan has identified a number of service reviews that each portfolio holder will be reviewing in key areas of budget spend and activity with the emphasis on reducing budget expenditure. The focus will remain on ensuring key frontline services to the community are prioritised (living within our means and working with others to achieve more).

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 and the area of the New Forest.

The highest risk identified for the Portfolio is that economic conditions limit growth and employment in the district and local businesses fail to prosper. Attempts will be made to mitigate against this risk by reviewing the best way to support local businesses in the future and continuing to work with relevant Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to the benefit of businesses in the District.

A review is also underway as to how the Council can best support the tourism sector taking account of changes to the way that visitors obtain information, the ways in which the destination can be best promoted and future funding restrictions on the role the Council should play. This will involve close liaison with the tourism sector to determine how best the service can be delivered.

The new apprenticeship levy will be introduced in May 2017 which will provide an opportunity to increase the number of apprentices across the council and apprenticeship places across the district.

There is continuing pressure on employment costs arising from an increase in National Insurance payments and national living wage implementation.

Corporate Requirements

- Undertake reviews and key activities as identified in the corporate plan (delivery plan) to improve services for our customers and meet the budget shortfall, including an increased focus on collaborative working.

Key Activities

- Review with partners, including the New Forest Business Partnership, the best way to support local businesses in the future together with pursuing its engagement with LEPs
- Review with partners, the support which the Council can give to the promotion of tourism in the area
- Review of pay and reward to determine a fit for purpose pay & reward strategy related to performance and productivity
- Support enhanced Broadband coverage in the New Forest

Supporting Information

In support of this plan the following documents are available:

- 1) The Portfolio's Performance Scorecard
- 2) Summary of Net Portfolio Spend