

REPORT OF CABINET

(Meeting held on 5 April 2017)

1. SAFER NEW FOREST PARTNERSHIP PLAN - 2017-18 (MINUTE 66)

The Cabinet is recommending the approval of a detailed action plan, as attached as Appendix 1 to Report Item 4 to the Cabinet, to support the delivery of the identified priorities in the Safer New Forest Partnership Plan for 2017/18. The priorities are:

1. Tackle the cause and effects of anti-social behaviour
2. Tackle the causal effects of offending behaviour, with a focus on violent crime
3. Continue to support the partnership and community in preventing arson related incidents
4. Support victims of domestic abuse
5. Promote road safety with an emphasis on killed and seriously injured
6. Reduce rural crime

These priorities have been set following consideration of the annual strategic assessment of prescribed information relating to crime and disorder. This Council is one of the prescribed agencies and other bodies that make up the local community safety partnership, "Safer New Forest". This year the Association of Town and Parish Councils has been consulted on the proposed action plan. Each of the actions has an assigned lead organisation with responsibility for taking it forward.

This Council is the joint lead partner, with the police, for actions relating to reducing anti-social behaviour and is also the lead partner for reducing domestic abuse. With respect to tackling antisocial behaviour, the Community Safety Team will work with the Supporting Families Programme and its partners, and also Partnership Intervention Panels to both prevent and respond to incidents, retaining a focus on the impact on victims. The Restorative Justice Programme will also be used as a deterrent and for reparation. It is intended to direct resources towards responding to seasonal events such as Halloween. Awareness programmes through schools and youth centres will also increase awareness of the effect of antisocial behaviour.

With respect to domestic abuse, in addition to continuing a positive awareness campaign, this Council's Housing staff will be trained on the use of screening tools to identify victims of domestic abuse. The Council will also continue to work through the Domestic Abuse Forum to identify areas of need, emerging issues and training.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Safer New Forest Partnership Plan 2017/18, as attached as Appendix 1 to Report Item 4 considered by the Cabinet, be approved.

2. CEMETERIES REGULATIONS REVIEW (MINUTE NO 67)

The Regulations for the operation of the Council's cemeteries have been subject to a detailed review to update them in accordance with developing best practice across the industry and to achieve greater clarity and consistency about what can, and cannot, be done. In addition, the Registration Scheme for Stonemasons and Funeral Directors operating in the Council's cemeteries has been updated. The review had been undertaken by a task and finish group appointed by the Environment Overview and

Scrutiny Panel, who had commended the revised documents to the Cabinet for adoption. Industry representatives locally had been consulted on the proposed revised Regulations and Registration Scheme. Members expressed their appreciation for the work of the officers and of the task and finish group in progressing this important review.

A summary of the main changes is set out in paragraph 3 of Report Item 5 considered by the Cabinet.

Of particular note is that, in future, the fees paid in respect of a young person between 12 and 18 years of age will be at the reduced rate for children, instead of being charged at the adult rate.

The Cabinet consider that the greater clarity of the revised Regulations will improve the management of the Council's cemeteries and, most importantly, greatly assist bereaved families in making the necessary arrangements.

3. ELING TIDE MILL AND LEARNING CENTRE (MINUTE NO 68)

The Cabinet has agreed an additional budget of £33,618 to allow the project at Eling Tide Mill and Learning Centre to proceed.

On 8 September 2014 (Minute 24 refers), the Council adopted a Cabinet recommendation to the effect that this Council should become the Accountable Body to progress works to the Eling Tide Mill and Learning Centre, with the total cost being largely met by the Heritage Lottery Fund. A budget contribution of £165,000 was agreed as this Council's contribution to the scheme, with 83% of the total cost being met by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Totton and Eling Town Council are also contributing and there are other funding sources.

The project has proved more complex than expected, leading to delays, which have contributed to the cost of the project, as established through a tendering process, significantly exceeding the original budget. Inflationary increases of 17.5%, in particular, have had a marked effect. The shortfall against the budget is £398,135, even after negotiations to reduce the cost. The Heritage Lottery Fund was approached to seek a further contribution towards the cost of the project, on the basis of them meeting the same proportion, 83% of the total cost, as the original funding arrangement. The Heritage Lottery Fund has now agreed to pay this contribution, which amounts to £330,900. An additional budget contribution of £33,618 is needed from this Council to allow the project to proceed. Totton and Eling Town Council have also approved additional funding.

4. WRITE OFF POLICY (MINUTE NO 69)

The Cabinet has approved revisions to the process and policies for writing off debts. The writing off of debts is the responsibility of the S151 officer who sees a schedule of potential write offs, coded against the agreed criteria for write off. Any non –standard write offs must be supported by full information and submitted via Internal Audit.

The Code of Practice has been updated to reflect the new management structure; and minor changes have been made to the upper limits per debtor and to allow the S151 officer to agree write off limits for any new sources of income that might come forward.

The revised Code of Practice and Criteria for Writing off are attached as Appendices 1 and 2 to Report Item 7 considered by the Cabinet.

5. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT - 2016/17 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN AND 2017/18 INITIAL BUDGET UPDATE (MINUTE NO 70)

The Cabinet has been updated on actual expenditure in 2016/17. The current final outturn figure for the General Fund is £15.305 million, which is significantly less than the originally agreed budget of £17.192 million. The variations that have been identified since the Cabinet last considered the budget are set out in sections 3.5 to 3.7 of report item 8 considered by the Cabinet. The level of incomplete projects, and consequent rephasings required from the 2016/17 budget, mean that it is necessary to review the total revised programme for 2017/18 to ensure that it is deliverable. The outcome of this review exercise will be included in the first Financial Monitoring report for 2017/18.

The Cabinet are particularly pleased that better than expected income generation has contributed to the improved end of year outturn. In addition, further savings have been identified, in advance of requirement.

Recent variations to the Capital Programme result in a revised budget of £17.799 million, following identified savings of £1.855 million; the addition of new, but already approved, requirements amounting to £361,000; and net rephasings amounting to £2.050 million. Further details of these variations are set out in Section 4 of Report Item 8 considered by the Cabinet.

The Housing Revenue Account will continue to be maintained as a balanced budget, with any underspend, after ensuring the optimum use of capital and revenue resources, transferred to the Acquisitions and Development Fund. New variations are set out in paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of Report Item 8 considered by the Cabinet.

**Councillor B Rickman
CHAIRMAN**