

REPORT OF CABINET

(Meeting held on 4 July 2018)

1. RESOURCES FOR THE DELIVERY OF FUTURE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT (MINUTE NO 9)

The Cabinet has agreed to increase staffing resources to allow the Council to respond to the expected forthcoming levels of development in the District. The current staffing resource is based on the restricted growth levels defined in the current Local Plan. The number, scale and complexity of applications to be determined will increase markedly under the new Local Plan. The Cabinet considers that it is important to be adequately resourced to ensure that applications are determined in a professional and timely fashion; and also that the developments are constructed to a high standard in order to protect the special character of the area. Planning applications will need to be carefully assessed and their implementation monitored to ensure that there is no diminution in quality.

The additional posts will be funded, in due course, from additional fee income, work chargeable to the Community Infrastructure Levy and increased charges to developers in respect of land transfers and the management and maintenance of that land. Fee income is unlikely to cover the additional costs in the initial stages.

The additional staff will be in the Policy and Strategy and Development Control Service areas, with additional staff also in the Open Spaces team.

In response to comments made at the meeting it has been agreed that a report will be brought to a future meeting of the Cabinet on the level of resource that will be needed in the Legal Service to support the forthcoming additional workload on planning.

Members were advised that the National Park Authority has now responded to this Council's invitation to discuss ways of improving the working arrangements between the two organisations (Minute 76, 7 March 2018 refers). The Park Authority do not wish to consider a single managed planning service, but have welcomed the opportunity to discuss formal leadership engagement between the two organisations; working together and shared services. The Chief Executive has been authorised to continue discussions on this basis.

2. LITTERING ENFORCEMENT - LITTERING FROM VEHICLES OUTSIDE LONDON (KEEPERS: CIVIL PENALTIES) REGULATIONS 2018 (MINUTE NO. 10)

The Cabinet has agreed that the Council should use the new powers that are now available in respect of littering from vehicles. Action can now be taken against the keeper of a vehicle from which litter had been thrown, whereas in the past it was difficult to take any action because of the difficulty in identifying which person in the vehicle had committed the offence. These new powers are in addition to the existing fixed penalty notice powers in respect of other littering offences.

It is important that the Council develops a cohesive approach with key partner organisations to identify how to make the most effective use of the new powers in the Forest and it has therefore been agreed that an officer working group will be established with members drawn from the Forestry Commission, County Council,

Verderers and the National Park Authority. In response to suggestions made at the meeting, the possibility of including the National Trust and Keep Britain Tidy will be considered. They will be looking at the extent of the problem of littering from vehicles in the New Forest and identify how the use of the new Regulations can be supported, including enforcement options and publicity opportunities. They will report back to the Council as soon as possible. A key feature will be work with the fast food outlets to promote anti-littering messages and the need for the responsible disposal of food and drink packaging.

It has been agreed that a report on the implementation of the new powers will be submitted to the Cabinet in about a year's time to see how effective the new measures are proving, with the focus being on measures of the amount of litter being dropped to establish whether there has been any reduction.

New procedures will need to be established to process civil penalty notices up to and including the appeal stage. Some delegations of powers to officers have been put in place to allow the necessary action to be taken.

3. ACQUISITION OF NEW COUNCIL HOMES - SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET APPROVAL (MINUTE NO. 11)

An opportunity has arisen for the Council to acquire an additional 16 newly built housing units, with the proposed funding coming from the Housing Revenue Account's acquisition and development reserve.

The Cabinet is therefore delighted to be recommending the approval of a supplementary budget of £4.5 million, to allow these much needed new units to be acquired and to provide scope for other potential projects. This brings the total budget allocation for new council housing to £17.4 million in 2018/19. The programme of acquisitions of new affordable housing is increasing as every effort is made to increase the Council's housing stock.

Decisions on individual sites or properties will be made by the Housing Portfolio Holder.

RECOMMENDED:

That the 2018/19 Housing Capital Budget be increased by £4.5 million

4. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND PROVISIONAL BUDGET OUTTURN MINUTE NO 12)

The Cabinet received an overview of the Council's performance and achievements over the last 12 months and provisional details of the 2017/18 projected financial outturn positions for the General Fund, Capital Programme and Housing Revenue Account. In recognition of some of the challenges moving forward the overview also sets out key strategies for implementation during 2018/19.

A summary of the budget outturn figures was attached as Appendix 3 to Report Item 7 to the Cabinet, reflecting the variations that have been reported throughout the year. Members were pleased to note an outturn position of £14.558 million on the General Fund (a saving of £2.029 million against the original budget); for Housing Revenue Account Income the outturn is £27.965 million (an improvement of £0.05

million against the original budget of £27.919 million); and the Housing Revenue Account expenditure outturn is £26.153 million (a saving of £1.77 million against the original budget). There has been an increase in capital expenditure of £3.652 million, with the outturn figure being £24.918 million.

A summary of performance and achievements was set out in Appendix 1 to the report. Members were pleased to note that performance continues to be maintained despite continuing funding reductions.

Appendix 2 sets out the key strategies in development for 2018/19 that will contribute to delivering the level of service that the local population expects, notwithstanding the continuing reductions in Government funding.

5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2018-2023 (MINUTE NO. 13)

The Cabinet is recommending the adoption of an Economic Development Strategy for 2018-2023, as attached as Appendix 1 to Report Item 8 to the Cabinet. The Strategy sets out a vision and related activities to tackle identified barriers to economic growth under the following 5 themes:

- Developing a skilled workforce
- Increasing growth and productivity
- Developing local infrastructure
- Facilitating vibrant towns and villages
- Promoting the unique New Forest offer

The Strategy highlights the need to balance support for the existing base of 9000 businesses with the encouragement of appropriate new investment into the District. In addition, it recognises that sustainable economic growth must be within the context of the special characteristics of the natural landscapes of the Forest.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Economic Development Strategy 2018-2023, as attached as Appendix 1 to Report Item 8 to the Cabinet, be approved.

6. ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY 2018-2022 (MINUTE NO 14) AND HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY (MINUTE NO 15).

The Cabinet has approved an Organisational Strategy for the Council for the period 2018-2022. The Strategy sets out the Council's approach and plans for the future delivery of services, demonstrating how this will support the corporate plan. It provides the framework for discussions and decisions on future operating models. The Strategy is attached as Appendix 1 to Report Item 9 to the Cabinet. It will be delivered through accommodation, customer, human resources and ICT strategies. The Cabinet also approved the linked Human Resources Strategy, which was attached as Appendix 1 to Report Item 10 to the Cabinet.

7. ICT STRATEGY 2018-2022 (MINUTE NO.16)

The Cabinet is recommending approval of the proposed ICT Strategy 2018-2022, which sets out the Council's approach and plans for the future delivery of ICT services, demonstrating how this will support the Organisational Strategy (See item 6 above). It will provide the framework for discussions and decisions on future ICT operational and transformational priorities over the coming years, and integrate with the human resources, customer and accommodation strategies.

RECOMMENDED:

That the ICT Strategy 2018-2022, as attached as Appendix 1 to Report Item 11 to the Cabinet, be approved.

8. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY (MINUTE NO. 17)

The Cabinet has also approved an updated Procurement Strategy, to cover the period 2018-2022. The new document reflects the change to a centre led procurement model and also recent changes to Contract Standing Orders. The aim of the new Procurement Strategy is to support the delivery of value for money through planned and responsive procurement that contributes to delivering the Council's Corporate Plan and meets the needs of customers and local businesses. Members are particularly pleased to note the efforts being made to encourage local businesses of all sizes to consider being a supplier to the Council.

Members were pleased to note that a number of workshops have been held to brief local businesses on the opportunities that are available to them to bid to provide services to the Council and these events have been well attended.

9. CONTAMINATED LAND STRATEGY (MINUTE NO. 18)

The Cabinet is recommending approval of an updated Contaminated Land Strategy to reflect changes in statutory and technical guidance. The emphasis in the Strategy reflects the current ethos in the legislation, favouring a voluntary approach to remediation, with the most common route being through the development control or building control processes. The Council will be taking a strategic risk based approach to the potentially contaminated sites that have been identified in the District. Should a site represent a risk to health or to ecological interests the owners of the contaminated site will be able to agree a realistic timetable of remediation with the Council; and enforcement powers will only be used as a last resort.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Contaminated Land Strategy 2018, as attached as Appendix 1 to Report Item 13 to the Cabinet, be approved

**COUNCILLOR B RICKMAN
CHAIRMAN**