

**15 DECEMBER 2025**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held on Monday, 15 December 2025

- \* Cllr John Sleep (Chairman)
- \* Cllr Dave Penny (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

John Adams  
\* Alan Alvey  
\* Peter Armstrong  
\* Geoffrey Blunden  
\* Hilary Brand  
Mark Clark  
\* Steve Clarke  
\* Jill Cleary  
\* Kate Crisell  
\* Sean Cullen  
\* Jack Davies  
\* Steve Davies  
\* Philip Dowd  
\* Barry Dunning  
\* Jacqui England  
\* Richard Frampton  
\* Allan Glass  
David Harrison  
Matthew Hartmann  
\* David Hawkins  
John Haywood  
\* Jeremy Heron  
\* Nigel Linfoord

**Councillors:**

\* Patrick Mballa  
\* Colm McCarthy  
\* David Millar  
\* Ian Murray  
Stephanie Osborne  
\* Alan O'Sullivan  
Adam Parker  
\* Neville Penman  
\* Dan Poole  
\* Caroline Rackham  
Alvin Reid  
\* Joe Reilly  
\* Janet Richards  
\* Barry Rickman  
\* Steve Rippon-Swaine  
\* Michael Thierry  
\* Derek Tipp  
\* Neil Tungate  
\* Alex Wade  
\* Malcolm Wade  
\* Christine Ward  
\* Phil Woods  
\* Richard Young

\*Present

**Officers Attending:**

Kate Ryan, Alan Bethune, James Carpenter, Sara Hamilton, Richard Knott, Peter Matthew, Chris Noble, Daniel Reynafarje, Karen Wardle and Matt Wisdom

**Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Adams, M Clark, Harrison, Hartmann, Haywood, Osborne and Reid.

**51 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meetings held on 25 September (Special meeting), 13 October and 3 November 2026 (Special meeting), be confirmed.

**52 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Cllr J Davies declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 5, Taxi Licensing Policy – Amendments to Appendix B, due his employment by a taxi operator, he reported that he would not comment or vote on this item.

**53 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced with sadness, the passing of the long-standing MP Sir Patrick McNair-Wilson. He had been the MP for the New Forest from 1968 through to 1997. The Chairman acknowledged that he had played a special role for so many at the meeting, representing the New Forest constituents with such commitment. He spoke on behalf of the Council, and placed on record the appreciation for Sir Patrick's service and that thoughts were with his family.

**Engagements**

The Chairman reported that it had been a busy period since his last update on his civic engagements and spoke on the following:

Minstead Trust Showcase and Award Event

On Thursday 6 November, he had attended Minstead Trust Showcase and Award event which had been well supported by civic heads across Hampshire.

Remembrance Services

He had been honoured to represent the District at the Remembrance Service in Lyndhurst on Sunday, 9 November, along with the Leader, Cllr Jill Cleary. The Vice Chairman, Cllr Dave Penny had represented the District at the Totton Service.

Signing of the Armed Forces Covenant

On Monday 10 November, the Chairman reported he had had the pleasure of welcoming Deputy Lieutenant, Mr. Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre, to witness the signing of the revised and updated Armed Forces Covenant by himself, the Chief Executive and the Commanding Officer of 17 Port and Maritime Regiment, Lt Col Tom Goodall MBE. Also in attendance were other senior officers from the Regiment along with some of our veterans. The new covenant reaffirmed the commitment to supporting the Armed Forces Community of HQ Solent Station. Special thanks were expressed to Anne-Marie Cranton of HQ Solent Station, whose dedicated support had been vital in maintaining the strong link with the Military at Marchwood.

Armistice Day

The Council held the annual Armistice Day commemoration at Appletree Court on 11 November. The Chairman reported he had attended this along with Cllr Cleary and 17 Port and Maritime Regiment, as well as staff where wreaths were laid at the flagpole. Thanks were expressed to Cllr John Adams for attending in full regalia to play the bagpipes during the event.

### Solent Mind Annual Celebration Event

On Thursday 13 November, the Chairman reported he had attended Solent Mind Annual Celebration Event where Dr Lesley Stephens, from Hampshire & Isle of Wight NHS Foundation, gave a speech on the 10-year plan to revolutionise the operations of the NHS and the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprises. This was followed by a presentation from the Chief Executive Officer of Solent Mind, Sally Arscott, where volunteers, who had received support on their life issues, were now helping others. It was a very moving and well-supported event.

### New housing development openings

On Tuesday, 18 November, the Chairman reported he had attended the official openings of the new housing developments at White House Way, formally Hythe Hospital and the following week Monday, 24 November, at Compton Road and Old Milton Road, New Milton, formally the offices of the Advertiser and Times. Both were amazing housing projects, and the Council should be immensely proud of them.

Other events attended included the Beaulieu Estate Dinner, at the invitation of Lord & Lady Montague and the Council's long service awards. Cllr Penny had represented the Chairman, at the New Forest Brilliance in Business Awards along with Cllr Tipp, which he understood to be a great success.

Finally, the Chairman reported that the Vice-Chairman and himself had attended several Christmas Carol Services which had put them in the Christmas spirit and wished everyone a lovely Christmas and Happy New Year.

## **54 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader reported that as the end of 2025 came to an end, the year that local government reorganisation began, she had looked back on some of the updates she had given and acknowledged the excellent work that members and staff had provided to residents.

This included the largest operational change with the new waste and recycling service, new housing developments, the launch of a community lottery, ongoing coastal maintenance, the championing of local businesses and youth skills, awarding essential grants to community organisations, planting hundreds of trees, and continuing the regulatory and enforcement activity that keeps residents safe and protects the Forest environment, this was just a small snapshot.

The Leader was also pleased that the corporate peer challenge revisit, one year on, found that good progress had been made with the improvements identified in the corporate plan. The team had also recognised the commitment of staff and the positive way they were delivering services for our communities. All work highlighted was down to the dedication and resilience of staff, frontline; service-based, and the staff in our corporate services teams who provide vital but often unseen work. She acknowledged that staff would carry this into 2026 and beyond and thanked them for the commitment they bring every day to help improve the district for residents.

And finally, the Leader reported of a special Christmas news story. The Freedom Leisure team would be distributing Christmas presents kindly donated by leisure centre users. This year the presents would be distributed throughout the New Forest to the Handy Trust, St Barbs holidays and activities food programme, Fair

Share food bank, Youth and Families Matter and New Milton Youth Trust. The Leader reported that the fantastic initiative would ensure that a significant number of children would receive presents, who otherwise might not have done so. The Leader expressed her sincere thanks to Freedom Leisure and to the Portfolio Holder, Cllr Dan Poole for leading and supporting the amazing initiative.

## **55 TAXI LICENSING POLICY – AMENDMENTS TO APPENDIX B**

Cllr J Davies declared a pecuniary interest, due his employment by a taxi operator. He reported that he would not comment or vote on this item.

Cllr Tungate introduced the report and moved the recommendations, highlighting that the proposed amendments to the taxi licensing policy were in line with the Institute of Licensing's Suitability Guidance and that no responses had been received through the public consultation.

Cllr Young seconded the motion.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the updated Appendix B of the Taxi Licensing Policy be approved.

## **56 REPORT OF CABINET - 5 NOVEMBER 2025**

### **PART I – ITEMS RESOLVED BY CABINET**

There were no speakers on items 1-2 resolved by Cabinet at its meeting on 5 November 2025.

### **PART II – RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**

#### **Item 3 – Financial Monitoring Report (based on performance April – September 2025 inclusive)**

##### **Part 1 – Recommendations resolved by Cabinet**

A councillor spoke on the recommendations for Cabinet, noting that the report highlighted a shortfall in the projected income for car parking, and that it was expected that the variance would reduce by £29,000. This was due to the increase in fees and charges which would be introduced in January 2026. It was felt that each time the council increased car parking fees and charges, fewer people paid for parking and therefore it was suggested that they not be increased each year.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate responded, confirming that the target had not been met, however overall, there had actually been a net increase in income over the previous year. The Portfolio Holder reminded members that the short stay parking clock offered good value for money for car parking and was very popular.

##### **Part II – Recommendation to Council**

Cllr Heron introduced the report and moved the recommendations. Cllr S Davies seconded the motion.

**RESOLVED:**

That £1.5 million is transferred from the Budget Equalisation Reserve to the Local Government Reorganisation Reserve, with the previous approved delegation to cover this increased balance.

**57 REPORT OF CABINET - 3 DECEMBER 2025****PART I – ITEMS RESOLVED BY CABINET****Item 1 – Medium Term Financial Plan – General Fund Update**

A councillor referenced the revenue contribution to capital outlay and that the income received from interest rates was likely to be higher than that anticipated. It was felt that consideration should be given to reviewing financial management from a different perspective in light of Local Government Reorganisation and the expected finite future of the District Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate responded highlighting that the future was uncertain, however there continued to be a need to plan for the long term and of the importance of sound financial management.

**Item 2 – Medium Term Financial Plan – Housing Revenue Account**

There were no speakers on this item.

**Item 3 – Allocation of community infrastructure levy (CIL) to local infrastructure projects**

A member sought clarity on whether the District Council or the new unitary authority would determine the bids for the 2027/28 financial year, when applications would be invited in spring 2026. A member highlighted that a two-month window for submission of applications was not a long period of time and it was suggested that officers work and consult with potential applicants to ensure that anyone wishing to apply was able to do so.

Another member expressed the view that as CIL receipts related to developments in the district, that this money should be spent within the district towards projects to benefit the residents of the New Forest, rather than being passed to any new unitary authority.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy reported that it was the intention for CIL monies to be allocated and spent within the district and that should there be any unspent funds, they would pass to the new unitary authority.

**Item 4 – Half Yearly Update Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report**

A councillor highlighted that there had been a discussion at the last Resources and Transformation Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting regarding the rise in complaints, following the roll-out of phase 1 of the waste and recycling service. This was a single issue and therefore needed to be recognised. The next reporting period for complaints would include the roll-out of phases 2 and 3 of the waste service and that this should also be recognised. One member acknowledged that lessons had been learnt from the first phase of the roll-out.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate acknowledged the points made and confirmed that it was important to be careful when looking at the figures, to ensure that a single issue did not skew the report.

## **PART II – RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**

### **Item 5 – Council Tax 2026/2027**

Cllr Heron introduced the report and moved the recommendations. Cllr S Davies seconded the motion.

A councillor acknowledged that the report included the number of second homes in the district which had had an impact on the figures. Thanks were expressed to officers for calculating this.

Cllr Heron responded to this, reporting that last year the council tax base had been calculated using an estimate for the number of second homes in the district. The calculation within the report had been based on the actual number of second homes which had made a difference to the tax base outcome.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That Council approved:

1. The calculation of the tax base for the year 2026/27 of 74,305.8; and
2. Pursuant to the report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by this Council as its council tax base for the year 2026/27 as detailed in paragraph 13 of the Cabinet report.

### **Item 6 – Council Tax Support Scheme, Council Tax Premiums, S13A Policy, Discretionary Housing Payments Policy and Crisis Resilience Fund**

Cllr Heron introduced the report and moved the recommendations. Cllr S Davies seconded the motion.

A councillor highlighted that he had asked a question about the number of people who had been disproportionately affected by the last approved changes to the support scheme and payments policy but had not received a full explanation. Cllr Heron reported he would be happy to speak directly with the councillor outside of the meeting to ensure that he was provided with an answer to his query.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That Council approved:

1. The current Council Tax Reduction scheme continues from 1 April 2026 with no proposed changes;
2. The current application of Council Tax Premiums continues from 1 April 2026 with no proposed changes;
3. The S13A (1) (C) Policy be approved; and

4. The Discretionary Housing Payments Policy be approved

### **Item 7 – Lymington and Pennington Neighbourhood Development Plan, Examiner's Report**

Cllr Tipp presented the report and moved the recommendations, highlighting that the plan had been nine years in the making and congratulated the hard work of Lymington and Pennington Town Council in developing it.

A few members spoke in support of the recommendations recognising the time and work which had been put into the production of the development plan. They reported they were pleased to see it being taken forward and hoped that it would be supported.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That Council:

1. Noted the recommendations made in the Examiner's Report (Appendix 1) into the Lymington and Pennington Neighbourhood Plan (Appendix 2 shows the submission plan);
2. Agreed the Examiner's proposed modifications (including further minor modifications identified by the two planning authorities) and the NFDC responses to them as set out in the Decision Statement (Appendix 3); and
3. Subject to the separate agreement of the New Forest National Park Authority, agree for officers to make the necessary arrangements for the Lymington and Pennington Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to Referendum (the date of the referendum is anticipated to be towards the end of January 2026).

### **Item 8 – Waste Service Budgetary Position**

Cllr Blunden introduced the report and moved the recommendations. Cllr Blunden reported that it detailed the current position on the roll out of the council's new waste collection service and the steps needed to maintain its success. The service had been delivering clear environmental benefits including improved recycling rates and a reduction in littering. It was essential to continue to meet the statutory obligations under the Environment Act 2021.

The Portfolio Holder clarified, there had been an updated confirmation of the bin manufacturing schedules and that the delivery of bins to households in phase 3 would commence in March, with the new service collections for residents commencing in early May 2026. This would see the whole district on a new modernised service which would see increased recycling rates, cleaner streets and be better for the hard-working crews.

The report addressed the operational challenges in the areas of the district where there was free roaming livestock, and it recommended making permanent the behind the gate collection policy for food waste caddies in these areas. The policy had proved effective in reducing animal interactions and safeguarding the reputation of the service. The report also sought the approval of additional funding to maintain the service continuity and the bring sites provision.

The Portfolio Holder reported that the recommendations included a commitment to a full review after the roll-out of phase 3 had been completed, set out in paragraphs 30 and 31 of the report. The review would also allow the consideration of wider approaches to collections in these areas in the future, including the bring sites and would be informed by data, financial modelling and operational experience. The recommendations were clearly financially significant, but they would ensure that the service remained resilient, environmentally responsible and legally compliant, while leaving scope for further consideration of longer-term operations once the service had bedded in.

Cllr S Davies seconded the motion.

Several councillors spoke about the waste hierarchy and the importance of education to reduce the volume of waste collected throughout the district. It was hoped that this could be considered through the proposed review of the service following the roll-out of phase 3.

It was questioned by one member whether the complaints received had been dealt with appropriately, recognising that there had been a back log with the roll-out of phase 1.

A councillor noted that a recommendation was to carry out a review following the roll-out of phase 3 and sought assurance that it would be carried out in a timely matter.

A number of members spoke about the roll-out of phases 1 and 2 and highlighted issues of concern, as well as the success of the roll-out, particularly with the roll-out phase 2 and lessons being learnt from phase 1. It was recognised that more resources had been put into the service and that residents in phase 3 would benefit from this.

A councillor raised concern about fly tipping, and the impact on bring sites, particularly with the next phase of the roll out which might increase the problem further.

A recommendation within the report related to a supplementary budget of £301,000 to support the management of bring sites. Further information was sought by one councillor to ascertain how this would be spent, in particular whether it would try to reduce the waste collected at the bring sites, possibly through education.

Cllr Blunden responded at the end of the debate and agreed with the points made on the importance of educating residents on waste reduction. He confirmed that the complaints received had been responded to. In relation to the review which was proposed to be conducted following the roll-out of phase 3, this would be carried out swiftly and any proposed actions would be implemented in a timely manner. Lessons had been learnt from phase 1 and this had been seen through the roll-out of phase 2 and it would continue in relation to phase 3. The problems around the bring sites and fly tipping were recognised. The data from the materials collected at the bring sites, suggested that they differed from those of fly tipping incidents, often relating to business waste. He reported that he would respond directly to the councillor who had asked for further detail on how the supplementary budget would be spent to support the management of the bring sites.

**RESOLVED:**

That Council:

- a) Approved an additional £1.500m of annual budget to be added to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan from 2026/27 onwards to maintain collection service continuity, bring site services and retain the collections of food waste containers from behind gates in areas open to free roaming livestock;
- b) Approved an additional £967,000 to be added to the Council's Capital Programme for 2026/27 to accommodate the purchase of the additional vehicles required to support Cabinet recommendation 1; and
- c) Approved a supplementary budget of £301,000 to 2025/26 to support the continued bring-site service.

**58 QUESTIONS**

Questions were put and answered under Standing Order 22, as follows:-

- From Cllr Dunning to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy, Cllr Tipp, regarding the development at Lymington Shores in Lymington and the footbridge.
- From Cllr Young to the Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing, Cllr Poole regarding an update on the progress of the CCTV programme.
- From Cllr Millar to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Blunden, regarding requests for smaller and larger bins as part of the waste programme roll-out.
- From Cllr McCarthy to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Blunden, regarding the operational implications and the cost of switching to the "behind the gate" collection service to reduce incidents of animal interference with food waste caddies.
- From Cllr M Clark to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate, Cllr Heron regarding the assumptions within the Medium-Term Financial Plan and the fair funding review.
- From Cllr Rackham to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Blunden, regarding the bring sites and modelling work around behaviour change as part of the roll-out of the new waste service.
- From Cllr Cullen to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Blunden, regarding assisted collections.
- From Cllr J Davies to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Blunden, regarding a timescale for the upgrade of the public conveniences in New Street, Lymington.
- From Cllr A Wade to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Blunden, regarding communication with residents in phase 3 of the roll-out of the new waste and recycling service.

**59 NOTICE OF MOTION**

The Chairman announced that in accordance with Standing Order 42.2 that he would allow the motion to be dealt with at the meeting, as he considered it to be convenient to the despatch of business.

In accordance with Standing Order 21, Cllr M Wade moved the following motion:

*This Council Notes Associated British Ports have been holding public consultation meetings on their plans for their Strategic Land Reserve on Dibden Bay.*

*Dibden Bay has not been identified in this Council's Current statutory planning document, the District Local Plan 2016 -2036, as an allocated site for port expansion. However, a decision on whether port operations can be expanded looks to be taken out of our hands on the basis that it is nationally significant.*

*This Council believes that the likely local impacts to the environmental sites on Dibden Bay along with being so close to our National Park outweigh the potential economic benefits. Notwithstanding this, the decision should be taken by locally elected Councillors.*

*Therefore Council resolves to write to the Prime Minister accordingly, urging him to give local people, through their local councillors, the final say and in doing so reminding him of his commitment to localism.*

Cllr M Wade in presenting the motion, stated that that localism was the bedrock upon which all local government was founded. Local councillors had been elected by local residents to take decisions on their behalf, they knew the district, their communities and their residents wishes and concerns. Cllr Wade expressed the view that members of the planning committee, armed with their local knowledge, should be able to balance the considerations against the commercial, environmental as well as national and strategic factors as a regulatory body, to decide what was not only best, but legally appropriate for the area.

Cllr Wade explained the geography around Dibden Bay, that it was sited on the edge of the Waterside peninsular with Southampton Water on the east and the National Park on the west, with one road, the A326 running north to south, to South Waterside. Reference the environmental importance of the land on or adjacent to Dibden Bay, in that there were areas of formal conservation designation, a triple SSI on the site itself as well the Solent and Southampton Water SPA and RAMSAR site. It was also on the edge of the New Forest National Park Authority, which needed to be protected.

Cllr Wade spoke of the ABP proposal in 2002 for a container port which had been unsuccessful due to the environmental impact. ABP had since been developing a new proposal for its automotive business and that ABP currently handle over 820,000 vehicles per year. ABP wanted to expand its business at Dibden Bay to be the largest most important vehicle importer and exporter in Europe. It was highlighted that the majority of the vehicles would enter or leave the port by road, therefore increasing the traffic along the A326. Hampshire County Council was proposing a £187 million road improvement project to the A326. This was a complex project taking 3-4 years to be completed which would have a significant impact to traffic and cause delays to journey times.

Cllr Wade recognised the scale of that the proposal at Dibden Bay and that no district councillors would be involved in the decision. The motion sought to request that the application be determined by the district council rather than the government, using local knowledge and experience. Cllr Wade asked members to support the motion.

Cllr Dowd seconded the motion.

Cllr Tipp proposed a number of amendments to the motion. He explained that local councillors could not make a decision on the proposal due to the legislation, in particular the Planning Act 2008, requiring nationally significant developments to be determined by the Secretary of State. Cllr Tipp explained that he did not want to ask the Minister to change the law, which would be the only way that the decision could be taken locally.

Cllr Tipp also explained that paragraph 3 of the motion stated that the likely environmental impacts outweigh the potential economic benefits. Given that no environmental assessment had been carried out to date, it was not possible to make a judgement without all the evidence and therefore he proposed that the wording of the motion be amended to reflect this. Cllr Tipp also proposed a number of other amendments to the motion, set out below. These were circulated to all members by email as well as displayed on the screens in the council chamber, as follows:

*This Council Notes Associated British Ports have been holding public consultation meetings on their plans for their Strategic Land Reserve at Dibden Bay.*

*Dibden Bay has not been identified in this Council's Current statutory planning document, the District Local Plan 2016–2036, as an allocated site for port expansion. However, a decision on whether port operations can be expanded looks to be taken out of our hands on the basis that it is nationally significant.*

***The Council's current statutory planning document, the District Local Plan 2016–2036, acknowledges Dibden Bay as ABP's Strategic Land Reserve but does not allocate the site for port expansion.***

***Planning law and our adopted Local Plan make clear that any proposal for port-related development at Dibden Bay would constitute a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project under the Planning Act 2008 and therefore be determined by the Secretary of State, not this Council.***

*This Council believes that the likely local impacts on internationally designated environmental sites at Dibden Bay, combined with its proximity to the along with being so close to our New Forest National Park, must be fully considered in any decision-making process outweigh the potential economic benefits. Notwithstanding this, the decision should be taken by locally elected Councillors.*

***Therefore, this Council resolves to write to the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister, accordingly, urging him them to ensure that give local views are given significant weight in the examination process, and people, through their local councillors, the final say and in doing so reminding him them of his their Government's stated commitment to localism.***

Cllr S Davies seconded the amendments to the motion.

Those who supported the amendment to the motion expressed that view that it allowed local people to be involved in the process and express their views, whilst remaining within the current legislation. It was felt that the Government should not be asked to change the law and that it was unlikely that any request to make a change would be successful. It was suggested that the amendment, was

achievable, realistic and was the best way to support the local community and the area.

It was felt that the potential environmental impacts were acknowledged within the motion and that the area was recognised as being important and needed to be protected, particularly in relation to wildlife. Furthermore, it was highlighted that the detail of the application and the potential environmental impacts had not been quantified to date and therefore the amendment should be supported.

Those who did not support the amendment expressed that view that it supported the economy and local industry at the detriment of the local environment. Concern was expressed that the Secretary of State would not fully consider the views of the local community and that the district council was best placed to consider local views. Local members would also be able to consider all matters in any future application, including the impact of the development to residents, wildlife, pollution and flooding, for example.

It was felt that the proposed letter, whilst acknowledging that a change in legislation would be required in order for a decision to be taken locally, it was considered to be entirely appropriate and reasonable to ask the Prime Minister to do this. Members opposing the amendment, felt that it watered down the motion and did not support localism.

Put to the vote, the amendment was carried.

Members went on to debate the substantive motion.

In support of the motion, the view was expressed that the Nationally Significant Infrastructure process for decision making guaranteed that there be local engagement and that the decision would be taken considering the views expressed by local people, the needs to the area and the impact on the environment. It was therefore felt that the decision being taken by the Secretary of State addressed the concerns raised at the meeting.

In objection to the motion, it was further highlighted that the decision on any future application should be taken locally and that the motion had been weakened with the amendments. It was also highlighted by a councillor, that the motion had been brought forward having listened to the view of local residents. They had been concerned regarding the degradation of land at Dibden Bay and that there was no clear record on the state of the land at the current time. They were also concerned that their views would not be considered fully if the decision were taken by the government.

**RESOLVED:**

That the following motion be supported:

This Council Notes Associated British Ports has been holding public consultation meetings on their plans for their Strategic Land Reserve at Dibden Bay.

The Council's current statutory planning document, the District Local Plan 2016–2036, acknowledges Dibden Bay as ABP's Strategic Land Reserve but does not allocate the site for port expansion.

Planning law and our adopted Local Plan make clear that any proposal for port-related development at Dibden Bay would constitute a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project under the Planning Act 2008 and therefore be determined by the Secretary of State, not this Council.

This Council believes that the likely local impacts on internationally designated environmental sites at Dibden Bay, combined with its proximity to the New Forest National Park, must be fully considered in any decision-making process.

Therefore, this Council resolves to write to the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister, urging them to ensure that local views are given significant weight in the examination process, and reminding them of their Government's stated commitment to localism.

**60 ALLOCATION OF SEATS AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND PANELS**

Cllr Cleary presented the report and moved the recommendations. Cllr S Davies seconded the motion.

**RESOLVED:**

That Council:

1. Considered the allocation of seats to committees and panels in accordance with the principles set out in the report, and in doing so, agreed to the allocation set out in the table in Appendix 1, which proposed no change to the previous position agreed on 13 October; and
2. Appointed councillors to individual committees and panels, as identified in Appendix 2, for the remainder of the four year period ending May 2027.

**61 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Council Meeting scheduled for 6.30 pm, Monday, 23 February 2026, be moved to 6.30pm, Thursday, 26 February 2026.

CHAIRMAN

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## Council – 15 December 2025

### Questions Under Standing Order 22

#### **First Questions**

##### **Question 1**

##### **From Cllr Barry Dunning to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy, Cllr Derek Tipp**

Can the Portfolio holder for Planning and Economy, please update the Council on the current position of the ongoing legal dispute between this Council and Redrow/Barratt over the development at Lymington Shores in Lymington and will the footbridge be built or not?

##### *Reply*

*The Council understands that Redrow and Hampshire County Council are working on resolving matters that are needed to allow for delivery.*

*From the District Councils perspective, there is a restriction on the sale and occupation of the remaining residential units on the site. This restriction is being complied with, and therefore, and as previously advised, there is no breach of planning control.*

*I have asked our officers to make enquiries with Redrow, however, with his own County Councillor hat on, perhaps directing enquiries into the County Council to seek their perspective on what is holding up delivery would be something Cllr Dunning could consider.*

In response to a supplementary question asking the Portfolio Holder whether he agreed that it was time to resolve the matter and that if there were to be a financial settlement whether the money could go to Lymington. The Portfolio Holder agreed that he felt it was time for the matter to be resolved, but that it was not for him to settle it. He also expressed the view that should there be a financial settlement, he could see no reason why it should not be spent in Lymington.

## **Question 2**

### **From Cllr Richard Young to the Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing, Cllr Dan Poole**

Could the portfolio holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing please update us on the progress of the CCTV programme?

*Reply*

*In line with the council's commitment to invest in and enhance the CCTV network across the district, an additional 56 digital cameras have been installed over the past 12 months, with a further four due for completion shortly. Our ongoing commitment to reduce the fear of crime within our communities has been supported by Town and Parish councils, alongside ongoing partnerships with the retail sector. Where appropriate, these positive partnerships have enabled cameras to be mounted on the exterior of retail premises, improving operational coverage while reducing installation costs.*

*To strengthen system resilience and prepare for future digital upgrades, we will replace the analogue line currently used to transmit images to the control room. Throughout 2026, the remaining analogue cameras will be converted to digital transmission, creating opportunities to expand coverage and deliver long-term cost savings for the service.*

## **Question 3**

### **From Cllr David Millar to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Geoffrey Blunden**

The Phase 2 roll-out of the new waste service has thankfully avoided the significant issues we saw in Phase 1. However, many residents are frustrated by the lack of information and delays around both smaller and larger bin requests. Smaller bins matter for manoeuvrability and where there is limited storage space, while some larger households were promised bigger bins but are still waiting, relying on extra sacks in the meantime, which are often missed by the collecting teams who are focused on wheelie bins.

Can you confirm how many requests for small bins and large bins were made in Phases 1 and 2, how many of these requests have been satisfied, when the outstanding requests will be met, how long the longest wait has been, and what has caused the delays?

## *Reply*

*Across phases 1 and 2, 1,114 requests for extra capacity have so far been made, and 89% of these requests have been fulfilled. These requests have been prioritised over requests for smaller bins, as the rationale for the requests often relates to medical needs, children in nappies, and large families.*

*The 100 or so still awaiting larger bins will receive their extra capacity before Christmas and in the meantime, crews are instructed to collect extra bags. If you are aware of specific locations where this is not happening, please let us know and we can investigate further.*

*Smaller bins have only have a marginally smaller footprint when compared to standard bins. We are awaiting a restock of recycling containers from the supplier and will resume deliveries once we have these.*

*We have had a number of residents contacting us to cancel their smaller or larger bin requests as they prefer the containers they were issued in the main rollout. So, residents with an outstanding request for a smaller bin have been contacted to confirm whether the bin is still required, and at the time of writing 296 residents are waiting for smaller bins. While we await new supplies, we continue to collect their waste every week from their existing containers.*

In response to a supplementary question regarding concern about wheeled bins blowing over in the wind and whether there were any recommendations to secure bins against gale conditions, the Portfolio Holder reported that he had not been made aware of this being a problem and that he would ask officers whether there was any advice they could provide to help to resolve this problem.

## **Question 4**

### **From Cllr Colm McCarthy to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Geoffrey Blunden**

Given that Members and Officers had previously been warned about the likelihood of animal interference with food caddies, why did the Council underestimate both the operational implications and cost of switching “behind the gate” collections – resulting in a £1.5m annual pressure and additional vehicle requirements?

*Reply*

*As detailed in the report discussed at Full Council tonight, the additional resource requirement amounting to £1.5m is not solely down to the issue of "behind the gate" collections. In fact, the full explanation is included in that report, and I don't propose to repeat that information again.*

*However, I would reiterate the complexity and significance of the service changes being introduced, which is transforming our services for the benefit of residents, staff and the environment. Quarter 2 of this year saw us reach our highest ever recycling rate of 43%, and that has been achieved with only 38% of households using the new service. Food waste tonnages have been higher than most other council areas – showing what a great success the service has been, and I don't shy away from the need to invest in our services to ensure continued progress is maintained.*

## **Question 5**

### **From Cllr Mark Clark to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate, Cllr Jeremy Heron**

The Medium Term Financial Plan had been built on the expectation of new burdens funding for food waste to bring sites and early positive indicators from the fair funding review. Why were these assumptions not stress tested for downside risk, especially given the Government's track record of late changes to distribution formulas?

*Reply*

*First, a point of clarity, the new burdens funding we were promised, time and time again I might add, was in relation to the kerbside food waste collection service, there is no food waste to bring sites service.*

*I thank Cllr Clark in advance for his support in calling on government to provide a multi year settlement for Local Authorities.*

*Not only would this empower us with a degree of stability but would further stop us from being at the whim of bold announcements, of additional support, being subsumed into the base grant and leaving us shocked at the negligible impact that it has in our overall funding.*

*For a myriad of reasons our Medium Term Financial Plan cannot be a fixed or static document, it must be a living organic financial plan that is capable of evolving and adapting to ever changing circumstances.*

*Perhaps it would help Cllr Clark if I were to read a short snippet from the October MTFP report; And I quote 'the government are currently analysing Fair Funding Review consultation responses, which will include significant representations from authorities who are now forecasting unplanned reductions in their financial settlement position. We cannot therefore be assured of any government backed financial position until the provisional settlement is released during December as illustrated by the potential range in Figure 1'.*

*The figure 1 as referred to then went on to show a rather nice-looking graph outlining the potential range in government funding, anywhere from £10.8m to as low as £7.1m.*

*So Cllr Clark, we constantly stress-test the assumptions, and we made it very clear back in October, as we have done now that there is no security around funding until the point that we receive the settlement.*

*Delaying the incorporation of latest information and knowledge within the MTFP until such time as our settlement is confirmed is simply too late in the financial planning cycle.*

*Your colleagues regularly accuse this administration of holding reserves that they feel are greater than those required, I wonder how they would react to an announcement that the Council was in line for an additional income of one and a half million pounds and that the Conservative administration had failed to incorporate in its financial planning or budget.*

*Let me save you the trouble of having to think about that, I know what they would do. They would accuse us of failing our residents and overtaxing them and would then come forward with a myriad of schemes to spend it.*

*As I said our Medium Term Financial Plan is a living plan available to adapt to the ever changing landscape of Local Government and I will let you into a secret, we are on course to deliver balanced budget for 2026/27.*

*Note: This question was dealt with in writing in the absence of Cllr M Clark.*

## Question 6

### **From Cllr Caroline Rackham to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Geoffrey Blunden**

There has been a rise in visits to the recycling centres and other bring-sites with the roll out of limited size wheelie bins. Can I ask what modelling was used to predict this behaviour change and why it wasn't budgeted for?

#### *Reply*

*The council now provides more capacity for containing recycling on a weekly basis than it used to, under the old sack system. In addition, we offer larger recycling bins for those who need them and will collect small bundles of cardboard when left tidily next to a bin. Larger amounts of cardboard must be taken to local Household Waste Recycling Centres such as those located at Marchwood, Efford and Somerley. Here, there are specialised containers that can adequately deal with large quantities of cardboard. Our bring sites are for small quantities of excess recycling from households. Any businesses using these sites are doing so illegally, and our enforcement teams are working hard to tackle misuse via site visits and new CCTV.*

*I will accept that the issue at bring sites has been larger than we may have expected – but the overall financial prudence of this authority means that, where there are unexpected consequences, we are well-placed to react quickly and flexibly to prioritise our actions and maintain services.*

In response to a supplementary question seeking to understand the reasons for the rise in materials at the bring sites and the modelling used, the Portfolio Holder reported he has already responded to the modelling query. In terms of the bring sites and the large quantities of cardboard which were being deposited, he reported that evidence suggested that this material was being left by businesses, whereas previously it may have been taken away with the domestic collections.

## **Question 7**

### **From Cllr Sean Cullen to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Geoffrey Blunden**

How many assisted collections were requested in phases 1 and 2 and did numbers increase during the rollout? How many have been requested for phase 3 and from the experience of phases 1 and 2, how confident are you that you would be able to satisfy the demand?

#### *Reply*

*Our data on this does not differentiate between a new request, and an annual renewal for an existing assisted collection user. However, I can say that in May 2025 we had a total of 830 assisted collection users, and as of Dec we have 1,613. Of the requests received in this period, which as stated above includes new requests and renewals, 44% were from phase one addresses, 21% from phase two addresses and 35% from phase three addresses.*

*As of 21 October, this year, the council introduced further checks on assisted collection requests coming in, to ensure that our resources can be focussed on helping those residents in genuine need of this important service.*

*We are confident that we can accommodate the support required for our residents that genuinely need the additional assistance.*

In response to a supplementary question seeking the percentage of assisted collection requests being denied and the reasons for the refusal, the Portfolio Holder reported that he did not have that information available at the meeting and that he would respond directly to the councillor.

## **Question 8**

### **From Cllr Malcolm Wade to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Jill Cleary**

In the spirit of devolution and understanding it will take a level of resourcing, transferring assets to the people of the New Forest District will be a positive lasting testament of this authority's legacy. Therefore, will this administration support this council devolving assets to Town and

Parish councils across the district, where they have requested it to do so, where it is practical and sustainable to do so.

*Reply*

*I am supportive of the recent letter that has been sent by officers to Town & Parish clerks setting out very clearly the next steps in our process towards delivering on our Strategic Asset Management Plan. This includes the ability for the Town & Parish councils to advise the district of assets that they would like us to consider for transfer.*

*Cllr Wade will however be very aware of the significant task ahead of us as Councillors, and of our officers in supporting the establishment of a new authority in just over 2 years' time. I think it's important therefore that we continue to manage expectations and confirm that a large number of asset transfers to town and parish councils will not be feasible. In terms of delivering on our strategic asset management action plan, our priority remains on getting a really clear understanding of our own asset base, making improvements where possible, and building a comprehensive asset list, to include information on where town and parishes have expressed a will to take on any assets, for future consideration by the new unitary authority.*

In response to a supplementary question regarding the transfer to assets to town and parish councils, when requested, where it was practical and sustainable to do so in order to leave a positive legacy, the Leader reported that she supported this in theory, but had concerns about how this would take place. She reported she would consult with officers and the relevant Portfolio Holder, as she supported the aspiration to leave a positive legacy to the residents of the New Forest.

## **Question 9**

### **From Cllr Jack Davies to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Geoffrey Blunden**

It was good to hear Cllr Heron state at the most recent Resources and Transformation Scrutiny Panel that New Street Public Conveniences in Lymington will be upgraded. Does the Portfolio Holder have a timescale for when these upgrades will be completed?

*Reply*

*I welcome the question, as despite seeing Cllr Davies taking credit for the New Street block being identified as a priority for renovation, it gives me an opportunity to confirm that I have had oversight of the evidence led condition survey process which has resulted in the New Street toilet as being identified as a strong candidate for upgrading. Officers are in the process of devising the detailed programme, which I understand will be included in the Capital Programme for Council consideration and approval in February.*

*I will welcome Cllr Davies' endorsement of the administration's budget when it comes to this chamber in February to ensure that these improvements can be achieved within the next 2 financial years.*

In response to a supplementary question asking that this be a full refurbishment of public conveniences, the Portfolio Holder reported he noted this request.

## **Question 10**

### **From Cllr Alex Wade to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Geoffrey Blunden**

Ahead of Phase 3 of the introduction of wheelie bins next year, what review of communication to Residents is being considered to mitigate ongoing concerns such as missed daily collections, and the general consensus of Waterside Residents disappointed by the whole bin bag delivery process? Will Ward Cllrs be included in steering groups and be utilised to assist in updating Residents when required, supporting our hard working operational teams?

*Reply*

*We understand that missed collections are currently at a level typical in an operation of this scale, and none of the data I am seeing in my role as Cabinet member is suggesting a live issue, but I'm happy for Cllr Wade to share any concerns he has with me directly.*

*In terms of communication, residents will again receive three separate direct communications to their household ahead of the phase 3 go live*

*date, and all the feedback and evidence we have is that this was both clear and effective in the first two phases.*

*We acknowledge that our Liberal Democrat colleagues have been very vocally stoking the fear of missing out on free bin bags in the Waterside, whilst we prioritised our legal responsibilities of actually collecting the waste. The good news is that this task is completed and most of these residents will be able to replace their council provided bin bags with a council provided wheelie bin instead once phase 3 is up and running.*

*We will continue to keep councillors updated through regular emails and planned briefing sessions, and conscious that Cllr Wade and a number of other colleagues were not able to attend the most recent briefing for members by waste officers, on Thursday 27 November, I can of course remind you that there is regular opportunity to engage and a whole host of relevant information already available to him, as a phase three member, on the Members site.*

In response to a supplementary question regarding ward members being included in the waste steering group, the Portfolio Holder reported that this had been asked before and reminded members of the regular briefings for all members as well as the weekly updates provided to members to ensure that all were kept informed.