



### County Council

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester,  
DT1 1XJ on Monday, 15 February 2016.

#### Present:

John Wilson (Chairman)

Pauline Batstone, Michael Bevan, Richard Biggs, Mike Byatt, Andrew Cattaway, Ronald Coatsworth, Robin Cook, Toni Coombs, Barrie Cooper, Hilary Cox, Deborah Croney, Lesley Dedman, Janet Dover, Fred Drane, Beryl Ezzard, Peter Finney, Spencer Flower, Ian Gardner, Robert Gould, Peter Hall, David Harris, Jill Haynes, Colin Jamieson, Susan Jefferies, Mervyn Jeffery, David Jones, Trevor Jones, Ros Kayes, Paul Kimber, Rebecca Knox, Mike Lovell, David Mannings, Peter Richardson, Ian Smith, Clare Sutton, William Trite, Daryl Turner, David Walsh, Peter Wharf and Kate Wheller.

Officers Attending: Richard Bates (Chief Financial Officer), Catherine Driscoll (Director for Adult and Community Services), Patrick Ellis (Assistant Chief Executive), Mike Harries (Director for Environment and the Economy), Jonathan Mair (Monitoring Officer), Rachel Partridge (Assistant Director of Public Health), Sara Tough (Director for Children's Services), Lee Gallagher (Democratic Services Manager) and Denise Hunt (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

(Note: These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the County Council to be held on **Thursday, 10 March 2016.**)

#### Apologies for Absence

- 1 Apologies for absence were received from Andy Canning, Steve Butler, Margaret Phipps, Mark Tewkesbury and Debbie Ward (Chief Executive).

#### Code of Conduct

- 2 There were no declarations by members of any disclosable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

With reference to minute 25, a general interest was declared by Cllr Daryl Turner and Cllr Trevor Jones as chairmen of committees in receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance regarding the Scrutiny Review. As this was not a disclosable pecuniary interest Cllr Turner and Cllr Jones remained in the meeting and took part in the debate.

#### Minutes

- 3 The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2015 were confirmed and signed.

However, it was noted that a request was made by Cllr Mike Byatt at the last meeting in relation to the special County Council meeting being arranged for 10 March 2016 to consider options for the future of Local Government in Dorset.

#### Public Participation

- 4 Public Speaking  
Public questions were asked by Cllr Nowak, Chair of Portland Town Council, to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People in relation to Youth Services in accordance with Standing Order 21(1).

A public statement was received from John Grantham in relation to options for the future of Local Government in Dorset in accordance with Standing Order 21(2).

The questions, answers and statement are attached as an annexure to these minutes.

### Petitions

There were no petitions received at the meeting in accordance with the County Council's Petition Scheme.

### **Chairman's Announcements**

5 The Chairman reported on the following deaths of former members of the Council.

- Frederick James Wretham on 21 December 2015 who served on the County Council from 1981 to 1997 representing a Poole division.
- The Reverend Colin Hodge on 24 January 2016 who served on the County Council from 1970 to 1981 and 1983 to 1997 representing the Wareham division.

Members paid tribute to the dedication and commitment of the former members to Dorset and within their divisions. The County Council then stood in silent tribute.

The Chairman reported the following events since the last meeting:-

- (i) Launch of Dorset Arts Development Company – 19 December 2015  
The Chairman attended the launch event for the Arts Development Company as the first service from the Council to be set up as a Public Service Mutual (an employee owned company).
- (ii) Funeral – Wilfrid Weld – 5 January 2016  
The Vice-Chairman attended the funeral of Wilfrid Weld of Lulworth who was a past High Sheriff of the County and was well known for his support of many charities and other causes.
- (iii) Launch of Agagia Exhibition – 28 January 2016  
The Chairman announced that Lady Elizabeth Butler's painting of the success of the Dorset Yeomanry at the battle of Agagia in Namibia in 1915 from the Members' Room had been loaned to the County Museum as part of an exhibition to commemorate the history of the Yeomanry linked to the First World War.
- (iv) Youth Parliament Elections – 3 February 2016  
The Chairman announced that the annual Youth Parliament elections took place on 3 February 2016 and the results would be announced on 23 February 2016.
- (v) Other Events  
The Chairman reported that a number of other events had been attended by himself or the Vice-Chairman which included a Poole Harbour Commissioners function, some Christmas receptions and charity events, and four Citizenship ceremonies.

### **Leader's Announcements**

6 The Leader of the Council updated members on discussions at a recent meeting of the Leaders Growth Board on 21 January 2016 and reported on the following points:-

- Proposals for a combined authority of 9 councils would shortly be submitted to Central Government and it was hoped that the response would be favourable.
- Work on the devolution of powers for Dorset was being funded by the transformational challenge fund and assisted by external auditors KPMG. This would be reported back to the Board on 7 March 2016 with ministerial challenge expected in April 2016.
- Consultation on a new economic vision in Dorset was currently being undertaken with partners and considered again on 7 March 2016. It would be

important to work closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and to have a clear strategy and criteria in place to ensure that the whole County had the best possible opportunity of securing benefits at such time as the growth deal was announced.

Members asked whether a combined authority would include a transport authority role to enable a holistic approach to the development of the transport infrastructure.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that it had been agreed to include transport, including public transport, in a combined authority. Concerns had been expressed by some partners that would be the subject of later discussions in the event that there was any devolvement of transport back to individual councils. However, he hoped that this would not be necessary as the transport network needed to be viewed on a strategic and integrated level and that the economy, education and training required strong links to transport accessibility.

A member expressed the view that budgets or single issues should not be looked at in isolation and that the challenge for the Council was to be innovative and strategic in its approach and that the relationship with the LEP would be central in this regard.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that the budget was predicated on economic growth and that the ability to integrate as a combined authority would offer a more joined up approach with regard to issues such as housing, employment, infrastructure (not just roads) and ultrafast broadband. Some work had already commenced on an enterprise zone referred to in the Chancellor's budget, however there was much more to do.

A request was made for a short report setting out the original proposal for a combined authority and the progression made towards the current proposal in order to provide clarity for members. The Leader of the Council confirmed that a synopsis could be provided for the Special County Council meeting on 10 March 2016. He confirmed that this meeting would provide a sense of direction and ensure that the issues were clearly expressed and understood.

### **Questions from County Councillors**

7 The following questions were asked under Standing Order 20:

- Cllr Paul Kimber asked the Cabinet Member for Environment questions in relation to fracking in Dorset
- Cllr Kate Wheller asked the Cabinet Member for Environment questions in relation to the Wyke Regis Bypass.

The questions and answers are attached to these minutes as an annexure.

### **Reports of the Cabinet**

8 The reports of the Cabinet meetings held on 2 December, 16 December 2015 and 13 January 2016 were presented for adoption, together with recommendations from the meeting held on 16 December 2015 for approval.

#### Meeting held on 2 December 2015

9 **Resolved**

That the report of the Cabinet on 2 December 2015 be adopted.

#### Meeting held on 16 December 2015

10 The following matters were raised under the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2015:-

#### Medium Term Financial Plan

In relation to minute 435, a request was made for clarification regarding the pace of

the Medium term Financial Plan to facilitate commercialisation and income generation with innovation, inclusion and engagement but also follow due process. Assurance was given that there would be no lack of pace or energy, and the Commercialisation and Income Generation Policy had recently been approved by the Cabinet.

Recommendation 439 - Asset Management Capital Priorities

In relation to recommendation 439, it was suggested that it would be appropriate to consider the capital priorities following the outcome of the discussion regarding the Medium Term Financial Plan. It was agreed to consider the recommendation as part of minute 15.

A concern was expressed at this point in relation to the spend on updates to workspaces at County Hall at a time when services were being cut and it was questioned whether this was the right time or financial climate in which to modernise workspaces.

**Resolved**

That the report of the Cabinet on 16 December 2015 and recommendation 445 be adopted.

Recommendation 445 – Cultural Strategy 2016-2021

*445. That the County Council be recommended to give support to and approve the Dorset Cultural Strategy 2016 – 2021.*

Reason for Recommendation

*446. The proposed cultural strategy promoted collaborative working. This would contribute to the Council's vision of working together for a strong and successful Dorset and two main areas of focus: enabling economic growth and promoting health, wellbeing and safeguarding.*

Meeting held on 13 January 2016

11 The following matters were raised under the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2016:-

Youth Services – Strategic Outline Case

In relation to minute 6, a number of members expressed concern regarding the changes agreed by the Cabinet regarding the introduction of targeted provision and the removal of youth workers based in youth centres. Clarification was sought in respect of the impact on local divisions to contact those who are vulnerable, the rationale for the cut in budget as a driver for change to the service, how youth workers would work and be based. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People confirmed that the purpose was to apply a common model across the County that was based on zones aligned with school pyramids but not building or location centric and that efficiency was driving the change, not cuts. She also committed to meeting with any members about their local divisions.

It was noted that expressions of interest to run all 22 of the Council run youth centres in Dorset had been received including one expression of interest from one party to take on all youth centres, but discussions were required with communities and the preference would be for communities to be responsible for their own centres where possible.

Dorset Waste Partnership Joint Committee – 14 December 2015

In relation to minute 9, a request was made for details regarding the membership of the Dorset Waste Partnership Scrutiny Committee, to which it was confirmed that the appointment had not yet been made and that details would be available in due course.

**Resolved**

That the report of the Cabinet on 13 January 2016 be adopted.

**The County Council's Budget**

- 12 The County Council considered reports by the Leader of the Council, considered by the Cabinet on 11 February 2016. The recommendations from the Cabinet were also circulated in advance of the meeting.

**Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Budget 2016/17 to 2019/20**

- 13 (Note: Members had been granted dispensations in order to take part and vote in relation to the budget and council tax setting items on the agenda following the elections held in 2013.)

The Chairman highlighted that the Council was required to take a recorded vote following discussion of the budget.

The Leader of the Council presented the budget for 2016/17 to 2018/19 (a copy of the Leader's speech is set out in an annexure to these minutes). He proposed the recommendations put forward by the Cabinet, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by the Council in relation to the very late Government financial settlement, which required additional savings to provide a balanced budget, even after transitional relief had been included in the settlement. The proposals were seconded by the Deputy Leader.

Cllr Janet Dover, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, then addressed the meeting and expressed concern regarding continued cuts to budgets and services, the amount of reserves and balances, the level of borrowing, and the influence of Government on Council funding for 'life and death' services for children and adults. Particular concern was raised in respect of future planned savings regarding rural bus subsidies which could leave people isolated and impact on travel to medical appointments, education and employment. A further concern was expressed in relation to cuts to youth services and felt that there was a case to ring-fence and support funding for youth provision. In addition Cllr Dover was given confirmation by the Leader of the Council that the proposed formation of a Budget Strategy Task and Finish Group would produce public notes as far as possible and be politically proportionate. She summarised by indicating that the Liberal Democrat Group would support a council tax increase of 3.99% to ensure people received services at an acceptable level, but that this did not mean that the Group agreed with the budget strategy.

Cllr Paul Kimber, Leader of Labour and Cooperative Group, welcomed the use of mutualisation of the arts service and advocated the model for other services including the possibility of youth services. Concern was expressed about the changes being implemented to youth provision, especially in relation to Portland. He encouraged the Council to provide clear leadership to communities regarding future savings and any changes, including local coordination with and representation by MPs and MEPs. Concern was also expressed in relation to the Council being let down by Government. In summary, he thanked the Council's workforce for working hard when morale was low, and committed to the Labour Group taking part in the Budget Strategy Task and Finish Group.

Members took the opportunity to ask questions regarding the budget setting process and particular items within the budget, and Cabinet members responded to each of the individual points raised. Issues discussed included the ability of the Council to react to Government spending reviews, lobbying of MPs and MEPs, impact of budget pressures on residents, future provision of Youth Services, rural bus services and community transport, day centres, the need for increased member engagement in local division issues, capital financing requirements, the social care additional precept of 2%, the future of local government in Dorset, recovery of misapplied council tax

payment for the past three years, and the need for an increased economic growth focus within financial planning.

An amendment to the budget recommendations by Cllr Kate Wheller was discussed regarding a deferral of the decision to change youth service provision for up to 12 months to give communities more time to prepare business cases. Assurance was given by the Leader of the Council that flexibility would be given to communities regarding timing, support and developing options if there was a genuine reason for providing more time. The amendment was withdrawn following the assurance given.

An amendment was proposed by Cllr Mike Byatt, and seconded by Cllr Paul Kimber, to improve social and economic growth through support towards the provision of housing. It was therefore proposed that recommendation 24a(1c) be amended to read 'the position on general balances and reserves, and to set aside £4m to invest in a strategic housing development partnership including social housing'. On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

In accordance with Standing Order 44, the votes for and against Recommendation 24a(1a) were recorded as follows:-

For (25)

Pauline Batstone, Michael Bevan, Andrew Cattaway, Ronald Coatsworth, Robin Cook, Toni Coombs, Hilary Cox, Deborah Croney, Lesley Dedman, Peter Finney, Spencer Flower, Ian Gardner, Robert Gould, Peter Hall, Jill Haynes, Colin Jamieson, David Jones, Rebecca Knox, Mike Lovell, Peter Richardson, William Trite, Daryl Turner, David Walsh, Peter Wharf and John Wilson.

Against (16)

Richard Biggs, Mike Byatt, Barrie Cooper, Janet Dover, Fred Drane, Beryl Ezzard, David Harris, Susan Jefferies, Mervyn Jeffery, Trevor Jones, Ros Kayes, Paul Kimber, David Mannings, Ian Smith, Clare Sutton and Kate Wheller

In accordance with Standing Order 44, the votes for and against Recommendation 24a(1b), (1c), 2 and 3 were recorded as follows:-

For (37)

Pauline Batstone, Michael Bevan, Richard Biggs, Andrew Cattaway, Ronald Coatsworth, Robin Cook, Toni Coombs, Barrie Cooper, Hilary Cox, Deborah Croney, Lesley Dedman, Janet Dover, Fred Drane, Beryl Ezzard, Peter Finney, Spencer Flower, Ian Gardner, Robert Gould, Peter Hall, David Harris, Jill Haynes, Colin Jamieson, Susan Jefferies, Mervyn Jeffery, David Jones, Trevor Jones, Rebecca Knox, Mike Lovell, David Mannings, Peter Richardson, Ian Smith, Clare Sutton, William Trite, Daryl Turner, David Walsh, Peter Wharf and John Wilson.

Against (3)

Mike Byatt, Paul Kimber and Kate Wheller.

(The following member abstained from voting on the recommendations: Ros Kayes)

**Resolved**

That the recommendation of the Cabinet be adopted.

**Recommendation 24a – Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Budget 2016/17 to 2019/20**

1. That the County Council be recommended to approve:
  - a) the revenue budget strategy for 2016/17 to 2019/20;
  - b) the budget requirement and precept for 2016/17; and
  - c) the position on general balances and reserves;
2. That the Chief Financial Officer be required to present to the County Council a schedule setting out the Council Tax for each category of dwelling and the precepts on each of the Dorset Councils for 2016/17.

3. That a cross party Budget Strategy Task and Finish Group be established in order to develop savings proposals to address budget gaps over the remainder of the MTFP period.

Reason for Recommendations

To approve the Council Tax increase for 2016/17 and to enable work to continue on refining and managing the County Council's budget strategy for 2016/17 and beyond.

Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Prudential Indicators for 2016-17

- 14 The Council considered the Cabinet report of 11 February 2016 in relation to Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators. The Cabinet recommendation was circulated in advance of the meeting.

In accordance with Standing Order 44, the votes for and against Recommendation 24b were recorded as follows:-

For (39)

Pauline Batstone, Michael Bevan, Richard Biggs, Mike Byatt, Andrew Cattaway, Ronald Coatsworth, Robin Cook, Toni Coombs, Hilary Cox, Deborah Croney, Lesley Dedman, Janet Dover, Fred Drane, Beryl Ezzard, Peter Finney, Spencer Flower, Ian Gardner, Robert Gould, Peter Hall, David Harris, Jill Haynes, Colin Jamieson, Susan Jefferies, Mervyn Jeffery, David Jones, Trevor Jones, Ros Kayes, Paul Kimber, Rebecca Knox, Mike Lovell, David Mannings, Peter Richardson, Ian Smith, William Trite, Daryl Turner, David Walsh, Peter Wharf, Kate Wheller and John Wilson

Against (0)

(The following members abstained from voting on the recommendations: Barrie Cooper and Clare Sutton)

**Resolved**

That the recommendation of the Cabinet be adopted.

Recommendation 24b – Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Prudential Indicators for 2016-17

*That the County Council be recommended to approve:*

1. *The Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2016/17 to 2018/19.*
2. *The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement.*
3. *The Treasury Management Strategy.*
4. *The Investment Strategy.*
5. *Delegation to the Chief Financial Officer to determine the most appropriate means of funding the Capital Programme.*

Reasons for Recommendations

1. *The Prudential Code provided a framework under which the Council's capital finance decisions were carried out. It required the Council to demonstrate that its capital expenditure plans were affordable, external borrowing was within prudent and sustainable levels and treasury management decisions were taken in accordance with professional good practice. Adherence to the Prudential Code was mandatory as set out in the Local Government Act 2003.*
2. *The report recommended the indicators to be applied by the Council for the financial years 2016/17 to 2018/19. The successful implementation of the code would assist in the objective of developing 'public services fit for the future'.*

**Asset Management Capital Priorities**

- 15 As agreed earlier in the meeting at minute 10, the Cabinet recommendation in relation to asset management capital priorities was considered following the consideration of the Medium Term Financial Plan. In accordance with Standing Order 44, the votes

for and against Recommendation 439 was recorded as follows:-

For (26)

Pauline Batstone, Michael Bevan, Richard Biggs, Andrew Cattaway, Ronald Coatsworth, Robin Cook, Toni Coombs, Hilary Cox, Deborah Croney, Lesley Dedman, Peter Finney, Spencer Flower, Ian Gardner, Robert Gould, Peter Hall, Jill Haynes, Colin Jamieson, David Jones, Rebecca Knox, Mike Lovell, Peter Richardson, William Trite, Daryl Turner, David Walsh, Peter Wharf and John Wilson

Against (11)

Mike Byatt, Barrie Cooper, Janet Dover, Fred Drane, Beryl Ezzard, Mervyn Jeffery, Ros Kayes, Paul Kimber, David Mannings, Ian Smith and Kate Wheller

(The following members abstained from voting on the recommendations: David Harris, Susan Jefferies, Trevor Jones and Clare Sutton)

**Resolved**

That the recommendation of the Cabinet be adopted.

Recommendation 439 – Asset Management Capital Priorities

*439.1 That the County Council be recommended to approve the bids to be included in the Capital Programme 2016/17 to 2018/19, subject to any changes arising from the financial settlement on 17 December 2015; and,*

*439.2 To note the revisions to the Council's calculation method for MRP and the impact this has had on our budget strategy.*

Reason for Recommendations

*440. The available resources after taking account of committed projects were insufficient to meet all the new bids in their entirety. It was therefore necessary for the Cabinet to confirm priorities for inclusion in the capital programme.*

**Reports of Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

16 The reports of the following meetings were presented:-

Children's Services - 18 January 2016

17 **Resolved**

That the report be adopted.

Environment and Economy - 19 January 2016

18 **Resolved**

That the report be adopted.

Adult and Community Services - 20 January 2016

19 The following matters were raised under the minutes of the meeting of the Adult and Community Services Overview Committee held on 18 January 2016:-

Future of the School Library Service

The Chairman of the Adult and Community Services Overview Committee advised that the recommendation on the school library service had been deferred for further consideration.

The Care Act – Progress with Implementation

A member asked whether the cost of implementation of the Care Act was known and whether some of this would be funded from the Council's own services.

The Director for Adult and Community Services advised that additional funding of £1.8m had been received from Central Government via the Better Care Fund and that a further £1.4m had been included in the projection to cover responsibilities under Part II of the Care Act.



**Resolved**

That the report be adopted.

Audit and Scrutiny - 24 November 2015

20 The following matters were raised under the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 November 2015:-

Review of Council Tax Single Person's Discount

The Chairman of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee highlighted the substantial financial gains that had been made as a result of a review of ineligible claimants of the single person's council tax discount. Whilst this was undoubtedly good news, it had unfortunately taken a period of 5 years to achieve.

In response to a question, members were informed that some charging had been applied retrospectively up to 3 years in some cases.

Support Services Transformation – Results of Consultation

It was confirmed that officers were currently working on some revised SMART targets and a report would be prepared for consideration by Cabinet in March 2016.

**Resolved**

That the report be adopted.

Audit and Scrutiny - 15 December 2015

21 The following matters were raised under the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 December 2015:-

Property Rationalisation

A member drew attention to this as an area for potential investment and commercialisation that could create opportunities for income generation.

In relation to minute 265.7 and 265.8, the importance of the involvement of local members was highlighted in order to ensure that their local knowledge was fully utilised when considering the disposal of assets in their wards. It was therefore suggested that minute 265.8 be amended to include the word "local" as follows:-  
*"That local members should be involved at the earliest stages of property identification for disposal."*

The local members were particularly disappointed that they had not been consulted on changes to the parking arrangements on the County Hall campus.

**Resolved**

That the report be adopted, as amended.

Audit and Scrutiny - 21 January 2016

22 The following matters were raised under the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 January 2016:-

Corporate Performance Monitoring Report

In relation to minute 10.4, the Vice-Chairman highlighted that the introduction of the Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) and the development of a Skills Strategy had yet to be achieved.

It was highlighted that lessons had been learned during the setting up of Tricuro and the importance of waiting for the right person for a particular job role had been recently agreed at a Cabinet meeting.

**Resolved**

That the report be adopted.

**Health Scrutiny - 16 November 2015**

- 23 The following matters were raised under the minutes of the meeting of the Health Scrutiny Committee held on 16 November 2015:-

**Briefings for Information/Noting – NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group – Clinical Services Review (CSR) Update**

In relation to minute 87.4, a member highlighted the need for the widest possible member engagement and awareness in respect of the CSR, including the County and District Councils.

The Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee advised that a Joint Health Scrutiny Committee meeting had been convened in April 2016 to consider the CSR and that any member would be welcome to attend this meeting.

**Resolved**

That the report be adopted.

**Recommendations from Quasi/Legal Committees, Joint Committees and Other Committees**

- 24 The recommendations of the Standards and Governance Committee and Staffing Committee were duly moved and seconded.

**Recommendation 10 - Scrutiny Review 2015 - Task and Finish Group Proposals**

- 25 The Council received a detailed summary of the scrutiny review from Cllr Andrew Cattaway, as the Chairman of the Task and Finish Group commissioned by the Standards and Governance Committee which considered the future arrangements for overview, scrutiny, audit and governance which had a widespread appetite for change. It was noted that the review had resulted in a recommendation for the future which was aligned with the corporate aims and the external focus of the Council on the outcomes for residents. On being proposed, the recommendations were seconded by Cllr Peter Wharf.

Members recognised that there were still a range of practical arrangements that needed to be finalised and that a review would be undertaken in 18 months.

It was noted that the proposed new committees would comprise of 10 members and that independent members would no longer serve on the Audit and Governance Committee (in relation to former Standards Committee business). It was also recognised that although the Chairman of the Council would no longer chair the Committee responsible for standards, he would continue to act as the conscience of the council in dealing with member complaints in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer.

The Group was thanked for its efforts, and the Group Manager – Governance and Assurance and the Principal Democratic Services Officer were commended for their hard work and support.

**Resolved**

That the recommendations of the Standards and Governance Committee be approved for implementation from April 2016:

1. That the current arrangements are changed and Committee responsibilities for the 'Audit' and 'Scrutiny' functions are separated.
2. That the future committee structure should be based on the Corporate Plan with Overview and Scrutiny Committees for Economic Growth, People and Communities and Safeguarding, with each of them having responsibility for

- monitoring a number of specified objectives within it.
3. In addition to existing provisions in the Constitution that the Overview and Scrutiny Committees have the ability to refer matters to the Audit and Governance Committee if there are considered to be any grounds to invoke any of the formal scrutiny processes (e.g. Call in, Call to Account or Councillor Call for Action).
  4. That there should be a formal Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, comprising the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairmen and the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee.
  5. That the Audit function (of the current Audit and Scrutiny Committee) and the Standards and Governance Committees be amalgamated to form a single Audit and Governance Committee (including those responsibilities previously allocated to the Ad-hoc Accounts Committee), to reduce duplication, following the recommendation from the PwC Review.
  6. That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee should be from the second and third largest political parties respectively.
  7. That the new Audit and Governance Committee should have responsibility for Call In, Call to Account and the Councillor Call for Action procedure.
  8. That any elected member conduct issues be referred to the Chairman of the Council and the Monitoring Officer, with any unresolved issues being considered by a specialist Panel.
  9. That any change to the committee structure should be underpinned by training and development for Chairmen, members and supporting officers as this is seen as crucial to its success.
  10. That consideration be given to the need for involvement of external bodies in any changes to the committee structure.
  11. That officer support is actively considered and identified for each of the new Committees.
  12. That the role of designated statutory 'Scrutiny Officer' is confirmed and the Chief Executive is asked to allocate the designation, in addition to the wider duty of all staff in the council.
  13. That the number of elected member representatives on each of the new overview and scrutiny committees and the Audit and Governance Committee be set at 10.
  14. That the following appointments be made to the prospective committee chairmen to serve on the shadow Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in advance of formal appointments being made by County Council in April 2016:
 

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Chairman</u>	<u>Vice Chairman</u>
Audit and Governance	Trevor Jones	Mike Byatt
Economic Growth	Daryl Turner	Hilary Cox
People and Communities	William Trite	David Walsh
Safeguarding	Michael Bevan	Pauline Batstone
  15. That the committee structure be reviewed after a period of 18 months of operation.

#### Reason for Decisions

To align with the vision of the Corporate Plan of 'Working together for a strong and successful Dorset'.

(Note: A general interest was declared by Cllr Daryl Turner and Cllr Trevor Jones as chairmen of committees in receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance regarding the Scrutiny Review. As this was not a disclosable pecuniary interest Cllr Turner and Cllr Jones remained in the meeting and took part in the debate.)

Recommendation 14 - Amendment to the Dorset Health and Wellbeing Board Terms of Reference and Constitution

26 **Resolved**

That the revised terms of reference and constitution for the Health and Wellbeing board be approved.

Reason for Decision

To clarify the relationship between the Dorset Health and Wellbeing Board and Dorset Health Scrutiny Committee. The inclusion of a commitment to sign off the Local Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health strategies strengthens the Health and Wellbeing Board's role and reflects NHS England guidance.

Recommendation 12 - Pay Policy Statement 2016/17

27 **Resolved**

That the Pay Policy Statement for the 2016/17 financial year be approved.

Reason for Decision

The Staffing Committee oversee matters relating to staff terms and conditions.

**Appointment of Independent Persons**

28 The Council considered the appointment of Independent Persons.

**Resolved**

That the following Independent Persons be appointed:

- Elizabeth Whatley
- Nicholas Maton
- Barry Preedy

**Dorset Fire Authority**

29 The report of the meeting of the Dorset Fire Authority held on 4 December 2015 was received. It was noted that the Fire Authority would become the new Combined Authority with Wiltshire and Swindon Fire Authority in April 2016 and there would be one more meeting before the changeover. All members were thanked for their support by Rebecca Knox as the Chairman of the Authority.

**Resolved**

That the report of the Dorset Fire Authority be received.

**Appointments to Committees**

30 No changes to appointments to committees were received.

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 3.00 pm

## Public Questions

### Questions from Cllr Ray Nowak, Chair of Portland Town Council, to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People in relation to Youth Services

#### Questions

Given the recent more favourable adjustment to RSG for Dorset this year will Council now re-consider the position taken re Youth Service provision across the County to allow a bit more time for the transition of the Youth Service to be led by community groups?

Also can a special case be made for Portland, given that its one of the highest areas of social deprivation in the Country as well as the County but given the deadline to vacate the excellent building at Royal Manor IPACA this makes it even more difficult to muster a community led proposal to provide a local Youth Service ?

#### Answers

The RSG settlement does not mean that there is additional funding available to the county council – just that the immediate impact of the savings is reduced. There have been expressions of interest registered in all the youth centres which are available to be transferred to community use, and local groups are making good progress in developing business plans. DCC officers are providing information, advice and support to this process. The Council is aiming to deal sympathetically and flexibly with groups developing business cases, however we have an overall deadline of 1 September when the new targeted youth service will go live, and our current youth centres will be transferred to local communities.

The children's zone approach to data is identifying the level of need on Portland very clearly, and identifies individual young people who may be in need of early help. Resources in the new targeted youth service will be allocated to areas on the basis of this identified need.

There are a range of voluntary sector and faith organisations who are supporting young people on Portland, and a range of public buildings in use for this purpose. A meeting has been arranged for 3 March to bring all these groups together to look at a co-ordinated approach to providing places to go and things to do. IPACA is an important partner in this, and their commitment to community use of their facilities is an important contribution to this picture. The deadline to vacate the Royal Manor campus has been known for some time now, and we are confident that there will be a comprehensive offer to young people on the island comprising targeted youth work and a range of things to do and places to go.

## Public Statements

### Statement from John Granthamin relation to Options for the Future of Local Government in Dorset

14 months ago I asked this Council – through the Deputy Leader then - that DCC spend £50,000 through Ernst/Young, whose work for Leicestershire CC and South Oxfordshire had apparently shown possible 'Unitary' savings over £50m p.a. He declined, urging progress on Tripartite arrangements - this has indeed been happening.

Whatever the future holds, my 2015 experience in leading a petition to change WDDC to a 'Committees' system has brought me into conversation with perhaps 3,000 to 4,000 West Dorset residents from Lyme to Sherborne. I'd simply like to **share** this experience, at this most fluid time,...findings, not a recommendation.

## Questions Under Standing Order 20

Question from Paul Kimber to the Cabinet Member for Environment  
in relation to Fracking in Dorset

### Questions

I'm getting many questions and emails regarding Fracking from local people right across Dorset, raising concerns about Dorset Communities rights to object.

1. When will this subject be dealt with by Dorset County Council as a matter of urgency so I can reply to the many concerns I'm receiving?
2. Can we give assurances that there is a democratic process for Dorset Communities to make representation about Fracking?

### Answer

### Answer

#### **1. Consideration of fracking by Dorset CC**

Fracking as an issue receives considerable media attention both national and locally and as a result many members are contacted by their electorate seeking to make their views known. Often these entreat the County Council to make a public commitment either supporting or objecting to fracking as an activity. The County Council must be circumspect in how it responds to such requests. It is the Mineral Planning Authority (MPA) for Dorset and as such it is the responsible authority for dealing with any planning applications for onshore activities for fracking in this area.

Should any applications be submitted to the MPA it must follow due process in the determination of the application as set out by statute. Any public statement issued now by the Council, other than simply setting out matters of fact, could lead to suggestions that it is guilty of 'predetermination' at a later stage, should the Authority ever be asked to consider a proposal. This could potentially lead to legal action against the Council with the possibility of costs and a fine awarded against the Authority.

However, in view of the interest in this matter the MPA has in recent years placed a statement on the dorsetforyou website setting out key information about fracking and how any applications will be considered by the MPA. With the agreement of the Leader of the Council, this has recently been updated to reflect changes in the review of Petroleum Exploration and Development Licences issued by the Oil and Gas Authority, an executive agency of the Governments Department of Energy and Climate Change.

A copy of that statement is attached to this response.

#### **2. Democratic process for Dorset Communities**

As the situation currently stands Dorset Communities can make representations at two key stages of the planning process: the development plan and the consideration of planning applications.

The development plan comprises the Minerals Strategy. This was adopted in May 2014. The Strategy was the subject of considerable consultation during its preparation and at that time a number of responses were made about fracking. The Strategy does not contain a specific policy on fracking although there was considerable debate at the Public

Examination as to whether this should be the case. The Inspector who held the Examination supported the stance taken by the MPA that it did not need to specifically separate out unconventional from conventional gas resources and that any proposals could be dealt with by the generic suite of hydrocarbon policies together with any appropriate development management policies.

Should the MPA receive an application that involves fracking processes then this will be the subject of consultation with the public and stakeholders in the normal manner. The scale and likely interest in fracking is such that inevitably any decision is likely to be taken by the Regulatory Committee rather than by the Head of Service under the scheme of delegation.

In recent weeks there has been media attention of an alleged leaked government letter revealing that ministers have discussed plans to allow shale gas applications to be processed under the fast-track planning system for major infrastructure projects. This would effectively take decision making out of local control with any decision being made by the Secretary of State. There would still be a system to ensure that the County Council and any other local views could be made known.



Statement currently placed on dorsetforyou website

## **Fracking in Dorset**

### **Dorset County Council Position Statement on Fracking**

#### **What is fracking?**

Hydraulic fracturing, commonly referred to as 'fracking' is an operation in which a mixture of water, sand and chemicals are pumped at high pressure through boreholes into gas bearing rocks. The water opens up cracks in the rock, and the sand grains lodge into the spaces allowing gas to be released and travel back along the borehole. In the UK this is most commonly associated with shale gas. Shale gas extracted via fracking is an 'unconventional hydrocarbon' unlike the conventional hydrocarbons currently extracted in Dorset.

#### **Will fracking for shale gas ever happen in Dorset?**

To date applications to explore for possible oil or gas resources in Dorset have only concerned conventional hydrocarbons (oil and gas reserves contained within specific reservoirs, sometimes within rock, that are normally extracted through drilling). No applications have ever been submitted in Dorset for shale gas test wells or for production of shale gas via the method of fracking.

Given the public sensitivities over the fracking process, the most recent planning permission granted for a conventional exploratory test well (at California Quarry) included a condition which prevents any fracking from taking place (purely as a precautionary measure as a separate planning application for extraction would be required in any case).

It is likely that there are shale gas resources in Dorset, but as yet, the full extent and location of these resources is unclear. There is also considerable uncertainty as to whether the geology in Dorset would prove to be suitable for fracking or that it would be financially viable.

#### **Shale gas - Incentives for local communities**

In January 2014 the Government announced that it would allow local councils to keep 100 per cent of business rates they collect from shale gas well sites (previously 50 per cent), which could be worth up to £1.7 million for a typical site. Community benefits for local people have also been strengthened with local communities receiving up to £100,000 from the industry for any test well that is fracked, and a further 1 per cent if shale gas is discovered - estimated to be worth

between £5-10 million for the life of a typical well (refer to the [Government's website \(opens in a new window\)](#) for details).

It is important to note that such incentives would not affect the determination of planning applications. The Mineral Planning Authority will consider all applications in the light of its adopted planning policies and will make a judgement as to their acceptability or otherwise in planning terms.

## **Petroleum Exploration and Development Licences**

The Government, through the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA), is responsible for issuing onshore and offshore Petroleum Exploration and Development Licences (PEDL). Licences are usually awarded to bidders who can demonstrate they are able to optimise exploitation of the UK's petroleum resources.

On 17 December 2015 the OGA announced that licences for a total of 159 blocks across England and Wales were formally offered to successful applicants under the [14th Licensing Round \(opens in a new window\)](#) for onshore oil and gas licences. The award of licences was subject to a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). The HRA assesses whether there are any likely significant effects upon designated European sites protected under the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive. The HRA concluded that 132 of the 159 blocks would have 'likely significant effects' on European sites and thus would require a more detailed 'Appropriate Assessment', including all nine of the blocks that fall within Dorset. The Assessment concluded that all but one of the Dorset blocks (i.e. eight in total) would need to be the subject of specific conditions to restrict the type of activity that could take place at or near the boundaries of European designated habitats. In practice this would prevent exploration drilling, hydraulic fracturing (fracking), production development or associated maintenance within European protected sites. It is Dorset County Council's understanding that this would not necessarily prevent directional below-surface drilling from beyond a European site boundary.

The nine Dorset blocks awarded as part of the 14<sup>th</sup> Round include four blocks in Purbeck that are licensed for conventional hydrocarbons (which cover existing operational well sites at Wytch Farm as well as two blocks awarded to Infrastrata, the company with a planning permission to carry out exploratory drilling at California Quarry).

The remaining five blocks cover a geographical area which stretches from the Piddlehinton area in the west to the Poole/Bournemouth/Wimborne area in the east, as well as part of Purbeck to the west of Wareham and the licence round offer relates to shale for these blocks.

This licensing round received a lot of national media attention because it is being associated with the controversial extraction method of hydraulic fracturing or

'fracking' of shale gas. However, it is unlikely that companies will seek to pursue shale gas extraction in areas where it is unviable or where the geology is unsuitable. Dorset County Council has yet to be presented with any evidence that shale gas is viable in Dorset.

## **Once a company has a Licence, can it develop a well site?**

The issuing of a Licence has no bearing upon the need for planning permission or any necessary environmental permits to explore or extract oil and gas. If and when a company decides that it wishes to explore the potential for oil or gas extraction within its licence area, it needs to apply to the Mineral Planning Authority (Dorset County Council) for planning permission. This must show where the well site is intended to be located, together with details of the site layout. A separate planning permission is then needed for the production phase if the exploration/appraisal phase identifies potentially viable reserves.

Production of oil and gas is likely to have a bigger impact than a test well. For this reason there is no automatic right to consent for production even if permission has previously been granted for exploration. In all cases planning applications need to be considered having regard to the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (adopted in May 2014), which sets out policies on exploration, appraisal and production of hydrocarbons, and the National Planning Policy Framework and associated guidance.

## **Will the importance of Dorset's environment be a consideration?**

In parallel with the latest oil and gas licensing round the Government produced additional [planning practice guidance on unconventional hydrocarbons \(opens in a new window\)](#) (which covers fracking of shale gas). This emphasises that where applications for unconventional hydrocarbons represent major development, *'...planning permission should be refused in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty [AONB] except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest'*. It adds that *'World Heritage Sites are heritage assets of the highest significance. Where a proposed development for unconventional hydrocarbons would lead to substantial harm to or loss of a World Heritage Site, mineral planning authorities should refuse consent unless wholly exceptional circumstances apply'*. However, in December 2015, MPs voted to a change which would allow fracking 1,200 metres below the surface as long as the drilling takes place outside protected areas.

In Dorset, significant parts of the County are within AONBs, while much of the coast is a designated World Heritage Site, although these are not the only relevant considerations. The adopted Minerals Strategy sets out a comprehensive range of environmental and other matters that need to be taken into account.

## **How will planning permission be decided?**

Dorset County Council as the Minerals Planning Authority is responsible for determining any planning applications for hydrocarbon (oil and gas) development in the County. This would include fracking proposals should any ever be submitted for consideration. Planning applications will be judged on the basis of the adopted Minerals Strategy which contains a range of policies against which proposals will be considered. The Mineral Planning Authority will also need to consider the national planning policy position regarding conventional and unconventional hydrocarbons.

It has been reported in the national press that the Government is considering the possibility of bringing fracking of shale gas within the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime. If this occurs, planning applications would be determined by the Secretary of State rather than the local mineral planning authority. Under these circumstances, local authorities would respond to the consultation and could prepare a local impact report, but would not be responsible for the decision.

## **Dorset County Council's view on fracking**

As the Mineral Planning Authority, the County Council must consider proposals impartially against the current policy framework. In doing this, the council will take into account the potential impact of proposals on the local community, environment, natural resources and economy to ensure that the people and special qualities of the county are safeguarded.

**Robert Gould, Leader of Dorset County Council (February 2016)**

## Questions Under Standing Order 20

Question from Kate Wheller to the Cabinet Member for Environment  
in relation to the Wyke Regis Western Route

### Questions

Given the concerns by the Portland Town Council and local businesses plus local political Civic leaders regarding the Western Route around Wyke Regis bypass.

1. Can you give the estimated cost of a bypass around Wyke Regis and how it would be constructed and funded?
2. Would this pass an economic viability test to spend this large amount of money?
3. Could this ever meet an environmental impact given the sensitivity of this scheme?
4. Would the government give approval in light of the Navitus Bay decision on visual impact when this was 10 miles out at sea?
5. If it was given the go-ahead who would fund the scheme?

### Answer

1. As set out in the cabinet report Dorset's North-South highway infrastructure (A350 / C13 and A37 / A354) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015, the current estimated cost for the Western Relief Road (WRR) for Weymouth is £37.1 M in 2015 prices if the scheme can be built at surface level. The current estimated cost if a tunnel is required, depending on the length, could be as high as £941M. Any scheme would require significant external funding.
2. Benefit cost ratios have been calculated. This is a preliminary economic assessment to understand whether there is scope to develop a more detailed business case. A BCR of 2.0 or higher is considered necessary to pursue a business case. The BCR for a surface route for the WRR is currently 2.99 and the BCR for a fully tunnelled route is 0.12. The tunnelled scheme is therefore considered very poor value for money and would almost certainly not attract external funding.
3. The Council has requested a Planning Stage 1 initial view to better understand the planning and environmental impacts including what mitigation work would be required. The environmental and planning considerations are highly complex and need detailed work to be able to answer this question more fully.
4. Care is needed in drawing parallels with Navitus Bay because the height and scale of proposed turbines and their exposed position across open water would pose markedly different challenges to the WHS than a road scheme on land.  
  
Nevertheless, the Navitus Bay decision has shown that significant consideration would need to be given any impacts upon the way that the WHS is experienced or enjoyed, and it is likely that the exceptional qualities of the AONB would form an important context for this. This would need to be considered as part of a comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Until such a study is carried out it is not possible to speculate on whether or not visual impact in the context of the WHS is likely to be a determining consideration.
5. The scheme would require significant external funding. This is most likely to come via the Local Economic Partnership, for example in a future growth deal or devolution settlement, or from the Department for Transport.

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Thank you Mr Chairman.

The first thing I want to say is a big thank you to all our staff who continue to work so hard for the people of Dorset at a time of great change and uncertainty for their personal future.

We have faced some very significant challenges in Local Government since 2010 but the budget setting process for next year has proved to be uniquely challenging.

During this year, our Forward Together programme was refreshed and now looks forward to 2020. As part of this, detailed proposals for over £9 million of service budget savings were presented to Cabinet in December. At that stage we had reduced the budget gap to around £400,000.

Our plans were based upon sound logic and prudent planning. However, the very next day it became apparent that without notice or consultation, the rules of the game had been changed. The provisional settlement saw a reduction in our Revenue Support Grant of over 47%, the greatest loss of any County. At a stroke this added a further £7.3m to our budget gap for next year. We were one of only a handful of authorities who lost their entire grant by the end of 2017-18 and even more alarming was the fact the under the new rules, our "grant" would become negative in the third year of the draft settlement.

The finance team and the senior leadership team did a fantastic job, working tirelessly over the Christmas break and throughout January. They ensured that our message on the unfairness of this settlement was heard loudly by Government, our MPs, residents and the media. I also had two meetings with Greg Clark.

In the face of this evidence, the government did listen. And they did respond. The final settlement received last Monday has provided some transitional relief in the first three years. We will still need to deliver the same level of savings by 2019-20 but these can now be spread more evenly across the 4 year period. And there will be a full needs assessment before the introduction of 100% business rates retention. More lobbying will be needed!

Today we have a balanced budget to approve for 2016/17 but only on the basis of using some short term funding. We are still £3.3m worse off than in December. Work starts now on 2017-18 which will probably be our hardest budget challenge yet. Beyond that, the new social care precept and the improved Better Care Fund may offer us some relief. But there will be the new burdens of the National Living Wage and the Care Act being imposed upon us without additional funds.

Chairman, in respect of our plans for 2016-17 I'd like to turn first to the capital budget. Despite current funding constraints, we continue to invest in our future.

The Highways Maintenance allocations have been confirmed in line with the provisional figures issues with last year's budget. We will receive £12.75m in structural maintenance funding for 2016-17 and slightly reduced figures in future years.

The largest scheme underway is the long awaited £22m maintenance project on the A338 Bournemouth Spur Road. As I speak we have completed two of the four phases and the project remains on programme to be completed in early June, within budget. This, together with a further £16m of related schemes, will improve the road network and support employment growth at Bournemouth Airport and the East of the county.

Last year we agreed to invest an additional £2 million pounds into the maintenance of our highway network and this has resulted in highway defects reducing by 13% compared to the previous twelve month period. In turn, this led to a 20% reduction in highway related enquiries and our annual highway customer survey has seen an 11% increase in public satisfaction. We have continued our roll out of the Superfast broadband, now available to around 75,000 residential and business premises. We are working to secure additional funding for Ultrafast broadband to unlock growth in high-tech businesses across Dorset.

We have completed a number of other projects including the replacement Household Recycling Centre in Bridport and the new salt storage facilities at Charminster Depot  
We are still awaiting allocations for the schools programme; this is a concern considering the need for more school places over the next few years.

But the £37 million investment to deliver the Purbeck Review is now reaching a conclusion. Careful cost control on this programme has meant that we have also been able to commit to rebuilding Bere Regis primary school and this should get underway later this year. Chairman, to fund investment we are accelerating our property disposal programme to realise capital receipts, and seeking external funding wherever possible. This means that even in these difficult times, the Council is able to invest over £170 million in capital projects over the next three years. This progressive capital investment programme demonstrates our commitment to the communities of Dorset. We are investing now, to look after present and future generations. Chairman, I now move onto the revenue budget for 2016-17. The recommendation is for a Net Budget Requirement for 2016-17 of £264.9 million.

This year's Local Government Financial Settlement indicates a reduction in our Revenue Support Grant of over 47% from £36.9m to £19.4m. This reduction of £17.5m in government support has now been partly offset by transitional funding of £4.1m provided in the final settlement. The overall position by 2019-20 still sees a negative grant allocation of -£10.1m, a £47m reduction in government grant over 4 years. We will need to save a further £30m during that time.

We have again seen a further reduction in specific grants, particularly as a result of Academy conversions. Funding for implementation of the Care Act has also been rolled in to the main settlement which means it is now subject to the 47%.

In the autumn statement, it was announced that Local Authorities with upper tier functions would be able to levy an additional Social Care Precept. This was in recognition of the significant pressures on adult social care and the knock on effects of this on the health service.

This additional precept of 2% raises around £3.9m of additional funding which has to be used for adult social care. In 2016-17 we will use this to meet additional costs pressures from the introduction of the National Living Wage, the on-going costs arising from the Deprivation of Liberties Standards and to help address the on-going base budget pressures related to residential care placements.

We have also increased funding to address the base budget issues relating to Children in Care. Numbers have risen by around 50% over the past 2 years. Plans are in place to reduce numbers, but long term trends will be significantly more than the base budget.

Even with the 4% increase in council tax, we still need to deliver a further £13m of savings in 2016-17. This is on top of over £70 million already saved in the previous five. Projections for the next three years would suggest that the total will soon pass £100m in total and is likely to be around £120m by 2020. The drive for efficiency and transformation must therefore continue apace.

The proposed revenue savings have been considered by the overview and scrutiny committees. Further consultation will take place on individual measures, together with the appropriate impact assessments, as details are firmed up.

I can assure the tax payers of Dorset that this Council's finances remain sound, with earmarked reserves amounting to around £30 million to meet future commitments and general balances of just over £10m, despite the one-off allocations made for next years' budget.

To put it in context, the 4% increase for the County Council precept represents an increase of £48.51 per annum for a Band D council tax payer, or around 93 pence per week.

The proposals set out today are challenging but we are ambitious and optimistic for the future. Although we will have less to spend, we will continue to be the major force for change in the county.

Just look at some of the things we have already achieved.



The ground breaking Pan-Dorset Local Authority Trading Company, Tricuro is now up and running, in partnership with Bournemouth and Poole. Generating new opportunities for income from markets which cannot be accessed by the council.

With SEN travel we have turned a £700k over spend in 2014/15 into an under spend of £300k in 2015/16. With the introduction of personalised travel budgets almost 100 children are travelling with family or friends. Better for them. Better for us.

For adults, a review of packages of care has saved £1.2m and counting. A new approach to supporting people differently means better outcomes and less cost.

And we've established The Arts Development Company, a Community Interest Company providing a service to Dorset that would otherwise have had to cease.

We are putting people first and listening to our residents.

And in the future we can do much more. That's why we have been working with the Leader's Growth Board to push ahead with the Combined Authority. We believe we can run things better locally, so we are seeking a wide ranging devolution deal from government and a Combined Authority provides the necessary framework. The proposals will be submitted to government soon. And democratic accountability requires us to look again at our structures. That's why at our special council meeting in March we will be looking at ideas for a better way. Can we really afford to have nine separate councils when we could pass down so much more to our towns, boroughs and parishes? We must seize the moment to provide Dorset with the very best arrangements for the long term.

The budget resolutions set out on Full Council Agenda provide the foundations to do just that and I commend them to Council.

Thank you Chairman

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