



County Council

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester,
DT1 1XJ on Thursday, 16 February 2017.

Present:

Hilary Cox (Vice-Chairman)

Pauline Batstone, Richard Biggs, Steve Butler, Mike Byatt, Ronald Coatsworth, Robin Cook, Toni Coombs, Deborah Croney, Janet Dover, Fred Drane, Beryl Ezzard, Peter Finney, Spencer Flower, Ian Gardner, Robert Gould, Matt Hall, Peter Hall, David Harris, Jill Haynes, Colin Jamieson, Susan Jefferies, David Jones, Trevor Jones, Ros Kayes, Paul Kimber, Rebecca Knox, Mike Lovell, David Mannings, Andrew Parry, Margaret Phipps, Peter Richardson, Clare Sutton, William Trite, Daryl Turner, David Walsh, Peter Wharf and Kate Wheller.

Officers Attending: Debbie Ward (Chief Executive), Helen Coombes (Interim Director for Adult and Community Services), Mike Harries (Director for Environment and the Economy), Sara Tough (Director for Children's Services), Jonathan Mair (Head of Organisational Development - Monitoring Officer), Lee Gallagher (Democratic Services Manager) and Fiona King (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, 18 May 2017.**)

Apologies for Absence

1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Andrew Cattaway, Andy Canning, Lesley Dedman, Steven Lugg and Mark Tewkesbury. Belated apologies were also received from Cllrs Barrie Cooper and Mervyn Jeffery.

At this point the Chief Executive reported that she had received formal notification from Cllr Mike Byatt that he had joined the Conservative Group of the County Council and that this would take effect from the beginning of the meeting.

Code of Conduct

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

Minutes

3 The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2016 and 26 January 2017 were confirmed and signed.

Public Participation

4 Public Speaking

There were no public questions received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(1).

There were no public questions received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(2).

Petitions

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

Leader's Announcements

- 5 Cllr Robert Gould, as the Leader of the Council, reported on the following issues facing the Council and invited questions from all members:

Local Government Reorganisation

Cllr Gould updated members following the special Council meeting held on 26 January 2017 to consider the future of Local Government in Dorset, and confirmed that a submission had been made to the Secretary of State to replace the existing nine councils with two new councils. It was noted that all documents, together with the submission, were available on www.futuredorset.co.uk. An indication of a decision would hopefully be made known prior to the Council's pre-election period in late March 2017 following initial positive feedback on the quality of the submission. Cllr Gould clarified that whatever decision was made, the Council would want to continue to work in a positive and constructive way with all councils in Dorset towards wider public sector reform.

Democratic Communication and Engagement

Following a request by Cllr Paul Kimber in relation to the future webcasting of Council meetings, Cllr Gould undertook to examine ways of making meetings more accessible to enable residents of Dorset to see and participate in meetings.

Noted

Questions from County Councillors

- 6 The following questions were asked under Standing Order 20:

1. Cllr Paul Kimber asked the Cabinet Member for Adult Health, Care and Independence a question in relation to Tricuro.
2. Cllr Susan Jefferies asked the Cabinet Member for Learning, Skills and Children's Safeguarding questions in relation to Youth Clubs. Cllr Jefferies welcomed the response and participation in the forthcoming Executive Advisory Panel on Forward Together for Children's Services on 27 February 2017.
3. Cllr Richard Biggs asked the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Highways a question in relation to Emergency Planning.

The questions and answers are attached to these minutes as Annexure 1.

Reports of the Cabinet

The reports of the Cabinet meetings held on 16 November, 14 December 2016, 18 January and 1 February 2017 were presented for adoption, together with recommendations from the meeting held on 21 February 2017 for approval.

Meeting held on 16 November 2016

Resolved

That the report of the Cabinet meeting held on 16 November 2016 be adopted.

Meeting held on 14 December 2016

Asset Management Capital Priorities

Attention was drawn to the costs and timescales for delivery of the new school at Marsh Lane in Christchurch which was originally due to be completed in September 2017, but had been delayed. Cllr Robert Gould confirmed that local members were fully briefed on the situation and the Modernising Schools Programme Board was aware of the risks and was considering mitigation as a result of the delay. A further briefing would be provided for members outside of the meeting.

Resolved

That the report of the Cabinet meeting held on 14 December 2016 be adopted.

Meeting held on 18 January 2017**9 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**

In response to questions on minute 10, as to whether help and support would continue for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in Dorset, it was confirmed that the Cabinet had clearly stated that the Council was prepared to accept and secure places for asylum seeking children where it was possible to do so, and to provide the best possible care. However, there was a need for children to be funded appropriately by Government, and currently they were significantly underfunded by £70k per child, despite recent national developments regarding the number of children accepted into the Country. It was acknowledged that representations would be made through MPs and the South West Leaders' Group to draw a comparison with the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme.

Call to Account – Ironman Event

In relation to minute 7, an update was sought in relation to the adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding to be used in partnership with organisers for a range of largescale events across Dorset to avoid issues experienced at the Ironman event on 11 September 2016. Members were informed that the process of using a Memorandum of Understanding was in place and would enable cooperation with organisers, and that all would be done to run future events as a success.

Recommendation 9 – Final Report of the Policy Development Panel on Registration

In relation to minute 8, the willingness of the Cabinet to enable Christchurch Borough Council to explore options for a suitable alternative service model for the local area was commended, and assurance was provided that discussions were ongoing to agree the service model.

Resolved

That the report of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 January 2017 be adopted.

Meeting held on 1 February 2017

- 10 (Notes: 1. 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, and subsequent by-elections.
2. The Chairman highlighted that the Council was required to take a recorded vote following discussion of the budget.)

In advance of the budget debate, the following issues were raised in relation to the minutes of the Cabinet on 1 February 2017:

Changes to Dorset's Concessionary Travel Scheme

Members discussed the impact of the Concessionary Travel Scheme at minute 28, which highlighted that there were 60 community transport schemes, and 20 in planning, which included examples of partnership with Dorset Community Transport. Concerns were also expressed about the impact on rural isolation as a result of the withdrawal of subsidised bus services, to which it was explained that there was a plan to revitalise bus services to make them more inclusive, which would include opening school buses to the public and enabling travel before 9:30am. It was noted that there were some commercial and contract implications as the procurement process for the future contracts was currently underway.

Further concern was expressed regarding the threat of withdrawal of subsidised services from areas of deprivation including Portland, and a request was made for further support as communities in deprived areas were less able to manage community transport schemes. Members were informed that effort would be made to find solutions to best meet the needs of communities, including Portland.

Recommendation 23 – Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Budget 2017/18 to 2019/20

Cllr Gould, the Leader of the Council, presented the budget for 2017/18 to 2019/20 (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. The proposals were seconded by Peter Finney as 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 essential 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 the change of terms and conditions for Tricuro staff just 12 months after transferring from the Council; the condition of Dorset's roads, specifically in relation to potholes; rural bus subsidies which could leave people isolated; and the need for increased funding for adult social care to enable people to leave hospital and live in their homes, or in a care home. Cllr Dover also described a petition which was currently open and attracting in excess of 1200 signatures in only a few days, which showed that cuts to bus services were not welcomed by Dorset residents.

Cllr Paul Kimber, Leader of Labour and Cooperative Group, addressed the meeting to thank the finance team for their hard work, and to staff for continued hard work bearing in mind the financial challenges facing the Council. He expressed concern regarding any plans for privatisation of any services; that more should be done to focus on homelessness and housing for those in need; the need to provide affordable housing; reinvigoration of towns in relation to vacant shops through the Economy Team; the need to retain and improve hospital provision on Portland; support for buses on Portland being championed by Cllr Kate Wheller; and that committee and council meetings should be webcast to show residents of Dorset what was being debated and to understand the challenges facing the Council.

In addition, Cllr Kimber drew attention to previous motions brought to the Council throughout 2016/17 including the development of a national park scheme in Dorset and the consideration of a cooperative approach for the Council for the future. As a final point, he encouraged the finance team to explore becoming a pilot Business Rate Retention Scheme authority.

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 collapse in finance from Government which meant that the Council was woefully underfunded; the model of bidding from Government and the UK wide funding regime; the level of borrowing across the authority; the level of council reserves and balances; the Council Tax levels across Dorset; risk in the budget including the Sustainability and Transformation Plan; the Accord review and restructuring of services; provision of the Youth Service; rationalisation of the Council's property estate and timing of changes, including a 43% increase of staff working at County Hall; the level of homelessness across Dorset; reduction in support and funding directly to the most vulnerable; the impact of rural isolation and loneliness as a result of reducing bus subsidies; community transport schemes; bed blocking in hospitals and the level of support for people wishing to live at home; lobbying and stating that the budgetary situation was not acceptable to Government; the need for the Council to modernise and change to meet the needs of the public; absence of an alternative budget proposed; costs for rubbish to be taken to a household recycling centre; education across the County, and in particular at IPACA; and recognition of the role of carers across the County.

In accordance with Standing Order 44, the votes for and against Recommendation 23.1(a) were recorded as follows:-

For (25): Pauline Batstone, Steve Butler, Mike Byatt, Ronald Coatsworth, Robin Cook, Toni Coombs, Hilary Cox, Deborah Croney, Peter Finney, Spencer Flower, Ian Gardner, Robert Gould, Peter Hall, Jill Haynes, Colin Jamieson, David Jones, Rebecca Knox, Mike Lovell, Andrew Parry, Margaret Phipps, Peter Richardson, William Trite, Daryl Turner, David Walsh and Peter Wharf.

Against (13): Richard Biggs, Janet Dover, Fred Drane, Beryl Ezzard, Matt Hall, David Harris, Susan Jefferies, Trevor Jones, Ros Kayes, Paul Kimber, David Mannings, Clare Sutton and Kate Wheller.

Abstain (0)

In accordance with Standing Order 44, the votes for and against Recommendation 23.1(b) were recorded as follows:-

For (25): Pauline Batstone, Steve Butler, Mike Byatt, Ronald Coatsworth, Robin Cook, Toni Coombs, Hilary Cox, Deborah Croney, Peter Finney, Spencer Flower, Ian Gardner, Robert Gould, Peter Hall, Jill Haynes, Colin Jamieson, David Jones, Rebecca Knox, Mike Lovell, Andrew Parry, Margaret Phipps, Peter Richardson, William Trite, Daryl Turner, David Walsh and Peter Wharf.

Against (11): Richard Biggs, Janet Dover, Fred Drane, Beryl Ezzard, Matt Hall, Trevor Jones, Ros Kayes, Paul Kimber, David Mannings, Clare Sutton and Kate Wheller.

Abstain (2): David Harris and Susan Jefferies.

In accordance with Standing Order 44, the votes for and against Recommendation 23.1(c) were recorded as follows:-

For (33): Pauline Batstone, Richard Biggs, Steve Butler, Mike Byatt, Ronald Coatsworth, Robin Cook, Toni Coombs, Hilary Cox, Deborah Croney, Peter Finney, Spencer Flower, Ian Gardner, Robert Gould, Matt Hall, Peter Hall, David Harris, Jill Haynes, Colin Jamieson, David Jones, Trevor Jones, Paul Kimber, Rebecca Knox, Mike Lovell, David Mannings, Andrew Parry, Margaret Phipps, Peter Richardson, Clare Sutton, William Trite, Daryl Turner, David Walsh, Peter Wharf and Kate Wheller.

Against (5): Janet Dover, Fred Drane, Beryl Ezzard, Susan Jefferies and Ros Kayes.

Abstain (0)

In accordance with Standing Order 44, the votes for and against Recommendations 23.2, 3 and 4 were recorded as follows:-

For (37): Pauline Batstone, Richard Biggs, Steve Butler, Mike Byatt, Ronald Coatsworth, Robin Cook, Toni Coombs, Hilary Cox, Deborah Croney, Janet Dover, Fred Drane, Beryl Ezzard, Peter Finney, Spencer Flower, Ian Gardner, Robert Gould, Matt Hall, Peter Hall, David Harris, Jill Haynes, Colin Jamieson, Susan Jefferies, David Jones, Trevor Jones, Ros Kayes, Paul Kimber, Rebecca Knox, Mike Lovell, David Mannings, Andrew Parry, Margaret Phipps, Peter Richardson, William Trite, Daryl Turner, David Walsh, Peter Wharf and Kate Wheller.

Against (0)

Abstain (1): Clare Sutton

Recommendation 24 – Asset Management Capital Priorities

Following a question regarding the recognition of housing as a strategic asset for the Council, it was confirmed that there was a workstream of the Way we Work Programme, chaired by Cllr Steve Butler, which was looking at housing with district and borough councils. It was also highlighted that through partnership working, the wider public sector in Dorset was developing an action plan on housing to concentrate on areas such as key worker housing, which linked with the key priorities of the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Leaders' Growth Board.

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

For (26): Pauline Batstone, Steve Butler, Mike Byatt, Ronald Coatsworth, Robin Cook, Toni

Coombs, Hilary Cox, Deborah Croney, Peter Finney, Spencer Flower, Robert Gould, Peter Hall, Jill Haynes, Colin Jamieson, David Jones, Paul Kimber, Rebecca Knox, Mike Lovell, Andrew Parry, Margaret Phipps, Peter Richardson, William Trite, Daryl Turner, David Walsh, Peter Wharf and Kate Wheller.

Against (11): Richard Biggs, Janet Dover, Fred Drane, Beryl Ezzard, Matt Hall, David Harris, Susan Jefferies, Trevor Jones, Ros Kayes, David Mannings and Clare Sutton.

Abstain (0)

Recommendation 25 – Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Prudential Indicators for 2017-18

In accordance with Standing Order 44, the votes for and against Recommendation 25 (Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Prudential Indicators for 2017-18) were recorded as follows:-

For (37): Pauline Batstone, Richard Biggs, Steve Butler, Mike Byatt, Ronald Coatsworth, Robin Cook, Toni Coombs, Hilary Cox, Deborah Croney, Janet Dover, Fred Drane, Beryl Ezzard, Peter Finney, Spencer Flower, Robert Gould, Matt Hall, Peter Hall, David Harris, Jill Haynes, Colin Jamieson, Susan Jefferies, David Jones, Trevor Jones, Ros Kayes, Paul Kimber, Rebecca Knox, Mike Lovell, David Mannings, Andrew Parry, Margaret Phipps, Peter Richardson, Clare Sutton, William Trite, Daryl Turner, David Walsh, Peter Wharf and Kate Wheller.

Against (0)

Abstain (0)

Resolved

That the report of the Cabinet meetings held on 16 November, 14 December 2016, 18 January and 1 February 2017 be adopted and Recommendations 23, 24 and 25 (below) from the meeting held on 1 February 2017 be approved.

Recommendation 23 – Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Budget 2017/18 to 2019/20

1. That the County Council be recommended to approve:
 - a) the revenue budget strategy for 2017/18 to 2019/20
 - b) the budget requirement and precept for 2017/18
 - c) the position on general balances and reserves
2. That the Chief Financial Officer 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 2017/18.
3. That the Budget Strategy Task and Finish Group continue in order to develop savings proposals to address budget gaps over the remainder of the MTFP period.
4. That the role of the Forward Together Programme is clarified to ensure managers are held to account for their budgets and ensure that specific, measurable actions are put in place to ensure budgets at risk are managed within the funding parameters agreed by Elected Members.

Reason for Recommendations

To approve the Council Tax increase for 2017/18 and to enable work to continue on refining and managing the County Council's budget strategy for the remaining MTFP period.

Recommendation 24 – Asset Management Capital Priorities

That the County Council be recommended to approve the bids to be included in the capital programme 2017/18 to 2019/20.

Reason for Recommendation

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.

Recommendation 25 – Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Prudential Indicators for 2017-18

That the County Council be recommended to approve:

1. The Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2017/18 to 2019/20.
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 2017/18 to 2019/20. The successful implementation of the code would assist in the Council's objective of developing 'public services fit for the future'.

People and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 11 January 2017

- 11 The report of the People and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 January 2017 was presented.

Cllr David Walsh, as the Chairman of the Committee, updated members on the work that had been undertaken by the Committee. He made reference to a recent Inquiry day that had been held on care costs which had been very successful and would lead to further lines of scrutiny.

Resolved

That the report be adopted.

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 19 January 2017

- 12 The report of the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 January 2017 was presented.

Cllr Pauline Batstone, as the Chairman of the Committee, updated members on the work that had been undertaken by the Committee and advised that an Inquiry Day on Domestic Abuse would be scheduled shortly.

Resolved

That the report be adopted.

Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 25 January 2017

- 13 The report of the Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 January 2017 was presented.

Cllr Daryl Turner, as the Chairman of the Committee, updated members on the work that had been undertaken by the Committee. He highlighted some of the improvements that had been made and the aim to strive for improvements in the future. On behalf of the Committee he thanked the Committee Clerk for his hard work as a facilitator for the Committee.

Resolved

That the report be adopted.

Dorset Health Scrutiny Committee - 14 November 2016

- 14 The report of the Dorset Health Scrutiny Committee held on 14 November 2017 was presented.

Cllr Ronald Coatsworth, as the Chairman of the Committee, updated members on the work that had been undertaken by the Committee.

Resolved

That the report be adopted.

Dorset Health Scrutiny Committee - 21 December 2016

- 15 The report of the Dorset Health Scrutiny Committee held on 21 December 2017 was presented.

Cllr Ronald Coatsworth, as the Chairman of the Committee, updated members on the work that had been undertaken by the Committee.

Minute 60 – Draft Primary Care Commissioning Strategy and Plan

Following a question regarding consultation with members of the public by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) on GP commissioning Cllr Jill Haynes, as the Cabinet Member for Adult Health, Care and Independence, who also sat as the Health and Wellbeing Board member on the Primary Care Board, advised that she had raised this issue with the Board. She continued that it was not the CCG's intention to close GP surgeries but to amalgamate some to improve their services. It would be important for a discussion to be had with patients of those GPs that no longer wished to carry on with the service. In respect of any practices that amalgamated it was advised that the CCG were well aware that practices needed to operate in rural areas and the focus was on keeping practices in the rural communities.

In response to a comment about members of the Health Scrutiny Committee not receiving any detailed NHS proposals, the Chairman advised that although wide consultation had been undertaken through a commissioning paper no plans had as yet been produced, only ideas of how things might work. The next scheduled meeting of the Committee on 20 February 2017 would include NHS representatives attending to discuss this further.

Resolved

That the report be adopted.

Recommendation - Statutory Officer Panel Terms of Reference (Disciplinary Investigation Process for the Chief Executive and Statutory Officers)

- 16 (Note: The Chief Executive, Chief Financial Officer and the Head of Organisational Development (as the Monitoring Officer) left the meeting during consideration of this item.)

Cllr Trevor Jones, as the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, presented the recommendation to which all members agreed.

Resolved

That the terms of reference for the Statutory Officer Panel so that the Panel comprises Independent Persons only, be approved.

Reason for Decision

The Staffing Committee dealt with issues relating to disciplinary action or capability in respect of the Chief Executive, Directors, Statutory Officers and Heads of Service. If this recommendation was accepted then Independent Persons would play an advisory role, but any decision to dismiss would still be one for the full County Council.

Recommendation - Appointing the External Auditor

- 17 Cllr Trevor Jones, as the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, presented the recommendations to which all members agreed.

Resolved

That the County Council agree to:-

1. Opt into the sector-led auditor procurement process being led by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA); and,
2. Delegate responsibility to the Chief Financial Officer to ensure that the County Council is active in supporting delivery of best value for money arrangements across all Dorset Councils in light of LGR arrangements yet to be confirmed.

Reasons for Decisions

1. To enable officers of the County Council to progress arrangements for the appointment of the Authority's external auditor.
2. To ensure the Chief Financial Officer and his staff could work effectively with other Dorset Councils to ensure best value for money and deliver effective and efficient audit arrangements in the transition to potential new governance structures across the county.

Recommendation - Constitutional Changes

- 18 Cllr Trevor Jones, as the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, presented the recommendation to change arrangements for County Council meetings and summarised the changes. He advised members that he welcomed further discussion in respect of taking the minutes of the overview and scrutiny meetings off of Council agendas.

Cllr Janet Dover, as the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, expressed concern that the removal of the minutes would give less accessibility for members to the business of the Council and she proposed an amendment 'that all overview and scrutiny committee minutes would continue to be presented at meetings of the County Council'.

Following a discussion, the Chairman felt there would be no harm to keep them included on Council agendas, to which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee chairmen agreed. Cllr Daryl Turner, as the Chairman of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, added that whilst the minutes were available for all on the Dorset For you website, members could ask questions at any time.

Cllr Pauline Batstone, as the Chairman of the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee, seconded the amendment proposed by Cllr Janet Dover, and on being put to the vote the amendment was agreed. Following the vote on the amendment, the substantive motion was voted upon and was agreed.

Resolved

That constitutional changes in relation to the arrangements for County Council meetings be approved as detailed below:

1. Reporting of deaths of former members – To be referred to in Chairman's Announcements only and not to hold tributes to former members unless they were serving on the Council when they died. Democratic Services would coordinate tributes to historic members outside of the meeting, as detailed within the report.
2. Notices of Motion – To retain the current arrangements, with the addition of flexibility in the arrangements to be able to debate matters of strategic importance if deemed appropriate (to be determined by the Chairman and the Chief Executive).
3. Minutes of Meetings – That all overview and scrutiny committee minutes would continue to be presented at meetings of the County Council. A verbal report from Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees would also be received at each

meeting.

4. Minutes of Outside Organisations – Removal of minutes from the agenda and expand this section of the agenda to provide a ‘Partnership Brief’ from strategic partners on a rotational basis.

5. Lunches for Council meetings – To continue to use Oh Crumbs as the lunch provider for Council lunches.

Reason for Decisions

To contribute to the corporate aim to “provide innovative and value for money services”.

Recommendation - Pay Policy Statement 2017/18

19 Cllr Robert Gould, as the Chairman of the Staffing Committee, presented the recommendation to members.

Cllr Trevor Jones, as a County Councillor for Dorchester, drew members’ attention to a table within the statement which recorded the pay between the top and bottom of the organisation which had been narrowing over the years which he felt was very encouraging.

Resolved

That the Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18 be approved.

Reason for Decision

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

LGPS Investment Reform and Pooling - Approval of the Full Business Case for the Brunel Pension Partnership

20 Cllr Peter Wharf, as a member of the Pension Fund Committee, explained that the Committee had considered and supported the Full Business Case for the Brunel Pension Partnership.

Noted

Appointments to Committees

21 Following the announcement at the beginning of the meeting that Cllr Mike Byatt would leave the Labour Group and join the Conservative Group with immediate effect, the following changes to committee appointments were reported to the meeting:

- Cllr Byatt to replace Cllr Hilary Cox on the Audit and Governance Committee; and,
- Cllr Byatt to replace Cllr Ronald Coatsworth on the Pension Fund Committee.

The Head of Organisational Development, as the Monitoring Officer, advised that there would be some impact on political proportionality and would alter entitlements to places on committees and undertook to inform members outside of the meeting.

To be able to deal with the resultant changes to political proportionality and appointments to Committees, it was agreed that delegated authority be granted to Group Leaders to make any necessary changes following the meeting.

Resolved

1. That the changes to committee appointments and groups outlined in the minute above be agreed.
2. That delegated authority be granted to Group Leaders to make any necessary changes to appointments to committees following the meeting.

County Council – 16 February 2017

Questions from County Councillors

Questions from Cllr Paul Kimber to the Cabinet Member for Adult Health, Care and Independence in relation to Tricuro

Question

What were statements made by and the undertakings given by Dorset Council to Dorset staff about their terms and conditions as part of the consultation with staff on the transfer to Tricuro and will the Cabinet member circulate a copy of those statements and undertakings to members of this Council?

Answer

For our DCC staff, consultation was on the following basis:

- staff were informed that their terms and conditions would not change and would be protected at the point of transfer under the terms of TUPE
- staff were informed that all new staff would also be employed on the same terms and conditions i.e. no two-tier workforce
- staff were informed that the council, through their membership of the ESG, would have to approve any future changes to terms and conditions as this was agreed as a reserved item for councils to determine
- no commitment was given to staff that terms and conditions would not change in the future

In addition, the five year business plan included in reports to Cabinet did not include any savings to be achieved through changes to terms and conditions of employment

All the communication since 2014 and throughout the consultation was on the basis that terms and conditions would not change on transfer and there were no plans to change terms and conditions after this date, this was clearly said in good faith by management and HR on the basis of information at that time. Whilst terms and conditions are protected under TUPE on transfer, they can be changed if there is an economic, technological or organisational reason, unconnected to the transfer, which entails changes in the workforce. The pan – Dorset Business Case approved by the Cabinet on 17 December 2014 stated that although staff terms and conditions would not change on TUPE there would be a process of harmonising terms and conditions over the first 3 years of LATC operation. The business case confirmed that changes to staff terms and conditions would be a “reserved matter” for consideration by the ESG which has DCC elected member representation.

Question from Cllr Susan Jefferies to the Cabinet Member for Learning Skills and Children's Safeguarding in relation to Youth Clubs

Questions

Nearly a year ago our Youth Clubs were dealt a devastating blow by DCC when it was announced that funding was to be withdrawn. The suggestion was to transfer their management to local communities. I would like to request an update for each affected Club: their current status, the level of activities which are currently being provided, and an assessment of the changes which have taken place.

£200,000 was set aside to assist the communities and the Youth Clubs. How has the money been spent, and how much remains unspent? How much use and for what purposes has CrowdFunder UK, been used? Initially enthusiastic about Crowdfunding many Clubs were disappointed to learn that these funds were not available for running costs and salaries, just the expenses that needed immediate support in the initial set up phase.

Clubs were also promised assistance from DCC, however the Forward Together for Children team has been dispersed and it is not clear that this support is being provided. There has been one Council Officer on the premises team who has been exceptionally helpful on property issues but there has been little support for other matters.

In my own area of Corfe Mullen, the Youth Centre is within the premises of a school, although is not part of the school, as is also the case with several other Youth Clubs. Corfe Mullen brokered an individual deal with the Cabinet to share the building with the school; the building would be transferred to the school, once divided into two, and the Youth Centre would occupy half of the building under a long-term lease or similar. Building work will not start before July 2017 and as we are fully funded by the Parish Council, we have tried to arrange to rent the building in the evenings until July, for the Young People, but we are still, to date, unsuccessful and our Youth Workers are only able to do outreach work or meet young people at a local café. The Police report a significant increase in anti-social behaviour since the Youth Centre closed last July, yet the County Council does not seem to share our sense of urgency to get the Youth Centre up and running again. We feel this is not in the spirit of the Cabinet's decision, which was to enable the Youth Club to continue as seamlessly as possible.

Would the County Council agree that it is in its best interests and those of our young people to ensure that this initiative is a success and that a full report on the transition to communities should be presented?

Answers

Dorset carried out a bold transformation of the offer to young people in 2016. One year on:

- We have a targeted youth service which is working effectively with vulnerable young people at risk of social exclusion
- Community groups are running or about to take over 18 of our former youth centres – a transfer of some £2 million worth of assets into community hands
- Community groups are offering, or planning to offer, things to do, and places to go for young people in over 39 locations across Dorset
- We have held three workshops for local groups outlining how Crowdfunder works. Criteria have been simplified and made more flexible in response to feedback from these workshops. Over 30 groups have runs successful campaigns or are about to launch campaigns
- We are on target to realise £1 million worth of savings

Substantial support has been offered to these community groups by officers and the Forward Together for Children team has expanded. Matters in Corfe Mullen are dependent upon discussions between the youth trust and the school governors. Officer time is available to support this. A full report on the transformation of the youth service will be presented to an Executive Advisory Panel on 27 February 2017. Cllr. Jefferies is a member of this panel and should have received notice of the meeting.

Question from Cllr Richard Biggs to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Highways in relation to Emergency Planning

Question

A week ago there was an explosion in the generating hall at the EDF run nuclear generating facility at Flamanville France under 80 miles due south of Portland. Thankfully no radiation was released.

Can the leader clarify if DCC as the nearest U.K. mainland County was informed within hours of the event either by the UK or French Authorities and does he agree with me that with 56 ageing nuclear facilities just across the Chanel our emergency planning for such an event needs to be urgently reviewed and practiced?

Answer

We were not informed of the incident as there was no release of any radiation products, if there had been we would have been notified by the Radioactive Incident Monitoring Net (RIMNET), the nuclear radiation monitoring and nuclear emergency response system; this was installed in 1988 to monitor the consequences for the UK of nuclear incidents abroad. This warning system is tested on a regular basis and DCC Emergency Planning Service receive notification of all tests and real incidents. (no real incidents have occurred since 88)

Radiation dose rate readings (gamma plus cosmic) from 96 sites around the UK are collected every hour and checked for any indication of abnormal increase. Any evidence of a nuclear incident of radiological significance for the UK would result in a national alert being raised.

The Dorset Local Resilience Forum (DLRF) also fulfils its duties under the Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information Regulations 2001 (REPPPIR) which requires us to establish a framework of emergency preparedness measures to ensure that members of the public are:

- Properly informed and prepared, in advance, about what to do in the unlikely event of a radiation emergency occurring, and provided with information if a radiation emergency actually occurs.
- A "radiation emergency" is an event that is likely to result in a member of the public receiving an effective dose of 5 mSv during the year immediately following the emergency.
- Nuclear Incidents are part of the DLRF Risk Register and as such we have a REPPPIR Plan (written in 2015); this plan is due to be reviewed in the 3rd Quarter of 2017 and on completion either a multi-agency exercise or study day will take place to validate it.

DCC in conjunction with the MOD is also the lead agency for preparing, writing and implementing the 'Off Site Plan' for the Nuclear Submarines that occasionally visit Portland Port; this is called the Portland Port Off-Site Reactor Emergency Plan and is tested every three years (due 2019).

Leader's Budget Speech 2017/18

Thank you, Madam Chairman,

The world of local government and public service provision continues to change at an unprecedented speed. We must provide the leadership to face the challenges head on. Today's budget provides the foundations to deliver our vision and ambitions for Dorset and to transform the way we operate.

Before looking ahead, it is useful to reflect on what we have delivered over the last four eventful years: -

- We've delivered the much-needed improvements to the A338 Bournemouth Spur Road, on time and under budget;
- We've maintained our Adult Social Care provision to prevent some of the delayed transfers from health services seen elsewhere in the country—Dorset was specifically praised for this by the Secretary of State for Health recently;
- We've transformed the delivery of our Youth Services;
- We've continued to invest in our children's future. Building new schools in Puddletown, Pimperne, West Lulworth, Bere Regis and facilities for Yewstock in Sturminster Newton. We completed the Purbeck Review—a hugely complex project—delivering new school premises in Sandford, two new schools in Swanage and significant improvements to all other schools in the Purbeck Review area.
- We've developed the Dorset Waste Partnership into a flagship organisation driving recycling rates up and costs down;
- We've moved ahead with our roll-out of Superfast broadband—now available to around 75,000 homes and businesses. We secured additional funding for Ultrafast broadband to boost growth of high-tech businesses. And we're working on better mobile coverage.
- Our ground-breaking Local Authority Trading Company, Tricuro has been successfully established with our partners in Bournemouth and Poole. A great example of joined up working and innovative thinking.
- These are just some of our achievements. And we have done this against a background of a reduction in revenue support grant from £65m in 2012/13 to £19m in the current year.
- But more than all of this, we have dramatically changed the culture of this council

When I stood here this time last year, we had just received the worst ever financial settlement from government. Christmas had been somewhat overshadowed by our intense lobbying operation. Despite our success with that, significant additional savings were required, very late in the day. The advantages of a four-year settlement were countered by the scale of the funding cuts ahead and extra pressures such as the National Living Wage, the new Apprenticeship Levy and increased contributions to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

During the year, we have continued to deliver our Forward Together programme, with over £10m of savings achieved. We have however also had to deal with continuing pressures in both Children's Services and Adult Social Care. Numbers of Looked After Children have remained high but the transformational work in that area means numbers have stabilised and plans are in place to turn the curve. In Adult Social Care, we are seeing increasingly complex packages of care being delivered and the boundary between our role and that of the health service becomes ever more blurred. This has meant an overspend in the current year but actions are in place to mitigate this.

Next year, we need to deal with both the funding reductions and on-going cost pressures in these areas.

In my last budget speech, I proposed the creation of the Budget Strategy Task and Finish Group. I wanted an inclusive approach to shape next years' budget plans. I would like to thank elected members from across the Council for their participation in this.

Madam Chairman, in respect of our plans for 2017-18 I'd like to turn first to the capital budget. We must continue to invest in our future. This means maintaining and improving buildings and infrastructure that we need, whilst rationalising and reducing property holdings that we don't need, right across the County.

The Roads Funding allocations have been confirmed for 2017-18 at £12.4m for structural maintenance funding and £1.1m of Pothole funding. In addition, we have also been allocated £2.5m of the new National Productivity Investment Fund which will allow us to invest in promoting enterprise, jobs and economic growth. We are on track to be one of only a small number of councils to achieve band 3 on DfT's self-assessment which will improve our prospects of more road maintenance funding in the future.

As we meet, allocations for the schools' programme have still not been received; a real concern when we consider our need for more school places over the next few years. We will always prioritise the need for investment in our schools, and today's proposals will see an extra £4.0m per annum invested, on top of any government funding.

Plans for the Enterprise Zone—Dorset Innovation Park—continue to advance and purchase of the site, together with Purbeck District Council, and support from Dorset LEP, will be completed soon. A fantastic boost for the Dorset economy.

Madam Chairman, to fund this we continue at pace with our property disposal programme. It realises capital receipts, cuts maintenance costs and allows us to transform the way we work.

We seek external funding wherever possible. We have recently been successful in bidding for funding from the One Public Estate Programme. This will help us take forward the Living and Learning centres and join up across the public sector.

In challenging times, this Council is still able to invest around £140 million in capital projects over the next three years.

Our progressive capital investment programme demonstrates our on-going commitment to the communities of Dorset.

Madam Chairman, I now move onto the revenue budget for 2017-18. The recommendation is for a Net Budget Requirement of £264.1 million.

Having signed up for the "Four Year Deal", we knew what to expect from our main allocations. Most notably, a further reduction in our Revenue Support Grant by over 68% from £19.4m to £6.1m. This reduction of £13.3m in government support is offset to a small degree by transitional funding of £2.9m but that still leaves us over £10m worse off.

2018-19 will see our grant further reduce to zero and the overall position by 2019-20 still sees a negative grant allocation of -£10.1m, so government grant reduces by £47m over the four-year period.

This year saw the introduction of a new one-off grant for Adult Social Care. This was funded from a reduction in the New Homes Bonus for all local authorities. For Dorset, this means an extra £1.5m, allowing for the loss of NHB.

The settlement also allowed Local Authorities with upper tier functions to change the timing of the Social Care Precept. Rather than charging an additional 2% a year, the phasing could be changed with a maximum of 3% in any one year, still totalling 6% over the next 3 years. This additional precept of 3% raises £6m which has to be used for adult social care.

These measures recognised pressures on adult social care and the effects of this on the health service. But they only go a very small way to help meet the massive current pressures. We continue to lobby for a long term, sustainable model.

In all, this leaves us a total budget pressure for next year of £22.1m. We are planning to use the flexibility granted by government in the use of capital receipts to fund around £1m per annum of our costs of Transformation. And we will use the Collection Fund Surplus to smooth some of the funding reductions.

Even with a 4.99% increase in council tax, we still need to deliver £18m of savings in 2017-18. This is on top of nearly £90m already saved in the previous six years. By 2017/18, our total savings will pass the £100m mark and are likely to be over £120m by 2020.

The drive for efficiency and transformation must therefore be relentless. With enterprise, ambition and leadership we can deliver better outcomes for our residents. Nowhere is our new attitude more clearly demonstrated than our work on transport. Savings must be made but we no longer just look to cut subsidies for often under-used routes. We work holistically. Using all our resources. We are supporting the creation of original solutions, tailored to our communities. There are currently 61 established Community Transport schemes operating in Dorset, the majority of which are self-funding and do not rely on county council support.

Since April 2016, a further 20 trial community transport schemes have been introduced. The answer to a problem is not always simply more money

And I must also make mention of Local Government Reform. Let's be clear. It is not a panacea for our budgetary problems, but it would make big savings. Much more than that, it is a one-off opportunity to reshape the governance of the county for the benefit of all. Simpler, more local, more accountable and cheaper. But whether or not the Secretary of State is minded to approve our proposals for Future Dorset we will continue to deliver our agenda for change.

I would like to pay tribute to the finance team for their work preparing the budget—total professionals as always. Throughout this organisation, staff are rising to the challenges, working in new ways and delivering quality services day by day.

Today, I can assure the tax payers of Dorset that this Council's finances remain sufficient, with earmarked reserves amounting to around £30 million to meet future commitments and general balances of just over £10m. Importantly, this years' budget does not call further on reserves and balances, so these will be available to deal with the financial risks which are set out within the papers.

The additional 3% for the Social Care precept means we are proposing an increase in Council Tax of 4.99%. For the county council precept, this represents an increase of £63.09 per annum for a Band D council tax payer, or around £1.21 per week.

I commend the budget resolutions set out on Full Council Agenda item 11 and in particular Recommendations 23, 24 and 25 as they contain the necessary resolutions on the Medium Term Financial Plan, including the Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2017-18.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

This page is intentionally left blank