Scrutiny and Policy Overview Committee

Agenda

Tuesday, 15 November 2016, 6.00 pm

Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Christchurch

Committee Membership:

Chairman:
Cllr C P Jamieson

Vice Chairman:
Cllr Mrs L Dedman

Cllr J Abbott
Hon Freeman Cllr C R Bungey
Cllr D A Flagg
Cllr T Fox

Cllr N C Geary
Cllr W Grace
Cllr P R A Hall
Cllr D C Jones

Cllr Mrs D Jones
Hon Freeman Cllr J Lofts

The business to be transacted is set out overleaf

DAVID MCINTOSH
CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK

7 November 2016

For further information please contact Nicky Hooley 01202 795265 or email democraticservices@christchurchandeastdorset.gov.uk

CHRISTCHURCH BOROUGH COUNCIL, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 1AZ
Corporate Plan Key Themes – 2016 to 2020

Leader of the Council: Councillor Ray Nottage
Deputy Leader of the Council: Councillor Claire Bath

Our priority areas…

GROWTH AND ECONOMY
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Vicki Hallam
During the plan period we will:
GE1 Maintain an adequately resourced Growth Plan to positively influence the local economy in our area
GE2 Work with our leading businesses to lobby effectively on strategic matters
GE3 Enhance our reputation as being a place which is “open for business”

ACCESS TO HOUSING
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Susan Spittle
During the plan period we will:
AH1 Deliver new homes in line with our 5 year land supply targets
AH2 Increased provision of temporary accommodation
AH3 Respond positively to Government Housing Policy

SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Bernie Davis
During the plan period we will:
SC1 Help our communities to be stronger and more resilient
SC2 Promote healthy and active lifestyles
SC3 Keep crime levels low

MANAGING OUR ENVIRONMENT
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Margaret Phipps
During the plan period we will:
ME1 Work with partners to maintain clean and green public spaces
ME2 Balance growth and development with the conservation of our built and natural heritage
ME3 Work with partners to ensure the most effective and efficient approach to the management of waste

To view the Corporate Plan in full please go to https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/362527

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Agenda

1. **Apologies for Absence**
   To receive apologies for absence.

2. **Declarations of Interests**
   Members are reminded that any disclosable pecuniary interests must be declared including any issues which may arise through pre-determination or bias.
   Pro forma for this purpose are available from the Members' Room.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**
   To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings held on 13 September 2016 and 11 October 2016.

4. **Medium Term Financial Strategy & Budget Process**
   To seek approval for the budget timetable and process for 2017/18.

   Members are requested to consider the Annual Report on the use of covert surveillance by the Council.

6. **New Ways Of Working Project Update**
   To receive an update on the New Ways of Working Project

7. **Scrutiny - Traffic Regulations Order Task and Finish Group**
   To seek approval of the recommendation of the Scrutiny Traffic Regulation Orders Task and Finish Group.

8. **Verbal Update on the Progress of the Highcliffe Beach Huts Task and Finish Group**
   To receive a verbal update on the progress of the Highcliffe Beach Huts Task and Finish Group from the Chairman, Councillor Mrs L Dedman

9. **Minutes of the Stour Valley and Poole Partnership Joint Scrutiny Meeting 12 October 2016**
   To note the Minutes of the Stour Valley and Poole Partnership Joint Scrutiny Meeting, held on 12 October 2016
10. **Single Member Item**

To consider the Single Member Item submitted by Councillor D Jones:

‘Consultation Process on Proposals for Reform of Local Government in Dorset.’

To review the consultation process on Proposals for Reform of Local Government in Dorset, to ensure that an accurate picture of popular opinion in Christchurch has been captured.

11. **Appointment of Representative on DWP Joint Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee be asked to appoint the second nomination to the DWP Joint Scrutiny Committee.

12. **Work Programme**

To advise Members on the Work Programme for the Scrutiny and Policy Overview Committee.

13. **Press Releases**

To consider any issues that may be included in a press release.

No other items of business can be considered unless the Chairman decides the matter is urgent for reasons that must be specified and recorded in the Minutes.
CHRISTCHURCH BOROUGH COUNCIL
SCRUTINY AND POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 September 2016 at 6.00 pm

Present:-
Cllr C P Jamieson – Chairman
Cllr Mrs L Dedman – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr J Abbott, Hon Freeman Cllr C R Bungey, Cllr D A Flagg,
Cllr T Fox, Cllr W Grace, Cllr P R A Hall, Cllr D C Jones,
Cllr Mrs D Jones and Hon Freeman Cllr J Lofts

Also in attendance: Cllr A Barfield, Cllr C Bath, Cllr B Davis, Cllr V Hallam, Cllr R Nottage,
Cllr Mrs S Spittle and Cllr T R Watts

Apologies: Cllr N C Geary

145. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations made on this occasion.

146. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2016 were confirmed and
signed as a correct record subject to noting that Cllr Fox gave his apologies
for the meeting.

Members also took the opportunity to congratulate staff on their exceptional
work in the one-stop shop during the building works.

147. Scrutiny Review - Highcliffe Beach Huts

The Chairman provided Members with a verbal update on the review
stating that following discussions with Members of staff and the Chief
Executive, there was now a date set for an examination in public on
Tuesday, 11th October in the Council Chamber. He stated that they were
still finalising the list of people attending, and proposed that following the
meeting, a Task and Finish Group be created to distil the information
gained and present a report at the November Meeting of this Committee.

The Ward Member of Highcliffe clarified and requested that it be noted that
as an elected member he did not have to make a declaration of interest on
things happening in his ward that he has been involved with.

Following a query, it was clarified that the meeting was not a public
meeting, but a meeting in public. There would be no opportunity for
members of the public to participate, but they are able to attend.

RESOLVED that a meeting on the Highcliffe Beach Huts take place in
public on Tuesday, 11th October and subsequently a Task and Finish
Group be created to distil the information gained with a report to be presented to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee in November.

Voting: Nem Con (1 Abstention)

148. **The Process Leading Up To The Erection Of The Mudeford Sandbank Pontoon Gate Task and Finish Group**

A report was submitted, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix ‘A’ to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group presented the report which concluded that the process leading to the installation of the gate on the Mudeford Sandbank Pontoon was open transparent, and correct in its process. As a result of this conclusion, there were no recommendations; however, the Task and Finish Group endorsed the need for Policy and Resources Committee Task and Finish Group which was reviewing future facility provision for the users of the Mudeford Sandbank.

Following some concerns raised, it was stated that any issues with the written protocol set out for officers was a separate matter that Members would need to look into if they want to amend the Constitution. It was therefore requested that this be added to the Work Programme.

**RESOLVED that the conclusion of The Task and Finish Group as set out in the report be agreed.**

Nem Con (3 Abstentions)

149. **Annual Report of the Scrutiny and Policy Review Committee**

The Scrutiny Officer submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix ‘B’ to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members congratulated the previous Chairman of the Scrutiny and Policy Review Committee and the Scrutiny Officer for all their hard work.

**RESOLVED that the 2015/16 Annual Report be noted.**

Voting: Nem Con

150. **Minutes of the Stour Valley and Poole Partnership Joint Committee**

Members noted the Minutes of the Stour Valley and Poole Partnership Joint Committee held on 27 June 2016.

151. **Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Officer submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix ‘C’ to these Minutes in the Minute Book.
Members requested that the new Police Chief Inspector be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to introduce him or herself.

The Chairman stated that the item titled “Redevelopment of the Civic Offices and Surrounding Areas” would be removed. He proposed to replace this with an item to scrutinise the policy/procedure in place that brings forward any large projects to Committee.

Following a query from a Member, it was stated that a Special Meeting will be arranged for the second week in January to discuss the reshaping of Councils in Dorset.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be updated accordingly.

Voting: Unanimous

The Chairman then proposed that following the earlier resolution, changes be made to the Terms & Conditions agreed at the last meeting for the Highcliffe Beach Huts Review.

RESOLVED that:

- Resolution (d) be changed to read:- Authorises the appointment by the Special meeting of a task and finish group to prepare the report to be bought to the next meeting of Scrutiny and Policy Overview Committee
- Resolution (e) be removed.

Voting: Unanimous

152. Single Member Items

There were no items received on this occasion.

153. Press Releases

A Member requested that the meeting schedule for 11th October to discuss the Highcliffe Beach Huts be put into the public domain so everyone is aware of what is happening.

It was also requested that both officers and members of the public be commended for their continued cooperation during these building works.

The meeting ended at 6.55 pm

CHAIRMAN
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167. Declarations of Interests

No declarations were received on this occasion.

168. Chairman’s Introduction

The Chairman welcomed members of the public to the meeting and clarified the process for evening. Members were reminded that questions should not be personal and should be to ascertain facts.

Councillor Hallam, one of the two Ward Members was not present. Members also asked that the Portfolio Holder for the Environment be asked to contribute. It was agreed that both Members would be asked to contribute either through the Highcliffe Beach Huts Task and Finish Group, or at the next meeting of the Scrutiny and Policy Overview Committee.

169. Discussions with Members, Officers and Others

Process leading to the project commencement

Louise Miller, Strategic Director; Judith Plumley, Head of Community & Leisure; Matt Reeks, Community and Open Spaces Manager.

The Chairman asked the Officers to give their views and share their experiences in relation to the proposed project timeline, starting with how the project plans were commenced to the present:

Strategic Director: The Beach Huts project proposal paper had been presented to the Community Services Committee in November 2015, following discussions with Members. At the meeting of the Resources Committee held in December 2015, the project was outlined and at the meeting of Full Council the budget was allocated, following which, officers initiated work on the project.
How were the project plans initiated prior to November 2015?

Head of Community & Leisure: Discussions regarding the future commercialisation of beaches as a whole, commenced from 2008 onwards. Documents outlined the policy which detailed where it may be appropriate to locate beach huts in general. During the summer 2015, the Council was approached, in a cold call approach, by Plum Pictures who were looking for a place to film an episode of George Clarke’s Amazing Spaces television programme. The project was to include a floating beach hut to go from the harbour and up the sea to a fixed location. A site would be needed to launch it from and Christchurch Quay was agreed as the place to do this from. Further discussions took place with Plum Pictures, who asked what other projects the Council had in mind. The policies were mentioned and on the back of that Plum Pictures suggested the idea of a competition for unique beach huts to be designed and located within the area. A briefing was then presented by the Community & Leisure Team to the Portfolio Holder for Environment, the Leader, where they put forward the proposal, with a suggested location of Highcliffe and then it was reported to Community Services Committee in November 2015.

Before the Council got to the principal of beach huts in 2008, how were papers produced?

Head of Community & Leisure: The Beaches and Hinterland Management Plan went to Community Services Committee there was a consultation process and it was then adopted.

Minutes from the Committees were accepted at Full Council but there was not as a recommendation on the beach hut project to vote on. When the project was presented at Full Council, what was the process?

Strategic Director: when the minutes from Resources and Community Services Committee’s went to Full Council on 15 December 2015, there was an opportunity for Members to discuss the Resources minutes but they were not debated.

Democratic Services & Elections Manager: it was a recommendation from Resources, with supporting papers, for Members to vote on. All Members were present but Councillors Hall and the Chairman did leave before this item. It was voted on unanimously, in support.

What exactly was presented to Full Council – was it an outline of the proposal or the full scheme?

Head of Community & Leisure: at the Resources Committee, the report was as full as it could be made at that time. The exact location was not agreed, as discussions were still being held with various parties at that time. The ecological survey was included and a presentation was given. The full report subsequently went to Full Council.

What is definition of the beach and foreshore?

Head of Community & Leisure: this is defined in the Beaches and Hinterland Plan, including Chewton Bunney, the cliffs and the beach.

Officers were thanked for the contribution to the meeting.
Technical / Expert advice

Professor Vincent May, Steve Woolard, Council Engineer; Lynda King, Development Management Team Leader; and Dave Gayle, Building Control Partnership Manager

Please set scene in relation to the foreshore.

Professor May: he was invited, at the end of January 2016, to be involved with the Local Government Challenge and was asked to provide information to the contestants, explaining the geology of the site. He learnt later that the contestants had thoughts of locating beach huts, but was not personally involved in these discussions. He was asked to treat as confidential information, any plans relating to the proposals.

He only became aware of the project at Easter when out of the country and he was slightly taken aback by the proposals. He then saw the framework for the competition project, on 9 April, which had been sent to the competition competitors. He was asked by the Community & Open Spaces Manager, on 11 April, to help the Council with work regarding the geology of the cliff. Due to the controversial nature of the scheme, he did not feel that he could take on a formal contract with the Council. He needed to be seen, publically, as independent of the Council or any other organisation. However, on a pro bono basis, he produced an impact statement. On 26 April he had a meeting with the Council and Natural England, to look at the site and possible locations. He was asked to keep information confidential at this stage. The purpose of the meeting was to finalise the location of the beach huts and additional day huts but he was not really involved in the process. He attended the public meeting held at Highcliffe School, at which he advised that completing any work on a stabilised landslide was not a good idea. This was considered seriously by the Council’s coastal engineer. If applying to the Environment Agency for funding, under the Coast Protection Act, the likelihood would be that if building works were to be carried out on the landslide site, it would not be seen as suitable.

Copies of his report were sent to Natural England and the Head of Community & Leisure, whom he also sent a copy of a House of Commons paper on Permitted Development rights - March 2016, which included SSSI information.

When was the summary of conclusions written?

Professor May: 26 June 2016.

How important is the stretch of coast from Highcliffe to Milford?

Professor May: this piece of coastline is remarkably important for the geology and particularly for the fossils. They are historically significant due to the studies and drawings of the fossils from this area, which were given to the British Museum. This lead to the classification of fossils, which was started from the studies in Christchurch. Along this coastline, it has been increasingly used by schools, to educate young people on how to manage the coast well. It was classed as a World example. As the cliff has stabilised, a very careful design to include planting and inclusion of a specific type of grass has assisted the stabilising effect. This was a unique
piece of bio-engineering. This piece of coast is just as important as the rest of the Jurassic Coast, as it forms part of the same story.

What would be the best use of the coast?

Professor May: to leave it alone and keep it good. There are some really important stories which could be shared and attract visitors. There needs to be careful maintenance and ensure biodiversity increases.

Was the Planning Department asked if the project would need planning permission?

Development Management Team Leader: yes, a request was received from the Countryside Management Team, the answer given advised that no, it was permitted development. Members received an explanation of how the Planning Act sets out how this decision was reached.

Would the view of something being permitted development depend on the interpretation of a few phrases?

Development Management Team Leader: Planning permission had been sought in other areas for the erection of beach huts but they exceeded the permitted development limitations, due to the size of the buildings.

Regarding beach huts being built on concrete slabs, what was the impact of this on stabilised landslide land?

Development Management Team Leader: if the whole structure exceeded four meters in height, it may require planning permission.

Council Engineer: the Engineers role - they were approached by the Community & Open Spaces Team for an unbiased representation of what was acceptable, concerning stability, for the placing of beach huts. Worked with a map which had a lot of potential sites identified on it. However, in the Engineer’s Stability Report, they had ruled out many potential sites, as they were not suitable for the erection a beach hut. There would have had to the use a foundation for the structures, as they would need a stable level base, with minimum depth of 6-9 inches through the top soil. This would not have meant going through the solid geology, which was sensitive.

Once a beach hut was in situ, as there were few dwellings where overnight stays were allowed, how would the Council approach the need for toilets, etc?

Development Management Team Leader: this was not a planning issue.

Building Control Partnership Manager: no plans were submitted but it would be presumed that they would have to use the public toilets.

Community and Open Spaces Manager: the project had been centered on a design competition, so until the submissions came back, the Council would not know what facilities would be included. There were existing facilities nearby. Some options did include internal washing and toilet facilities with water tanks. An immovable point was that there would be no grey water discharge from the huts and water run off would be closely managed.

In respect of openness, was planning permission or a Certificate of Lawfulness ever considered?
Development Management Team Leader: no, but Officers did seek legal opinion, to ensure due process. The Officer read out an email clarifying the position: Do permitted development rights apply? It is clear that the individual participants are not expected to apply for planning permission, instead the Council maintains it is relying on permitted development rights, as contained in Part 12 Development by Local Authorities, set out in Schedule 2, to the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order, (GPDO) England Order 2015. Article 3 (i) grants planning permission for classes of development as prescribed as permitted development in the Schedule, subject to the review of the GPDO and the regulation 73 – 76 of the Conservation and habitats species regulations 2010. (That would be the part that would affect if it were classed as a SPA or a higher level conservation site). The reference to class A to any small ancillary building works or equipment is a reference to any small ancillary building works or equipment not exceeding four metres in height or 200 cubic metres in capacity. That’s providing the dimensions of each individual beach hut does not exceed these limits then they fall within the permitted development rights under Part 12. Some but not all residents maintain that the Council has in effect granted itself planning permission, however such a view is wrong. Permitted development rights under the GPDO are pre-existing planning permissions granted by the Secretary of State, through Parliament, and the provisions of Section 59, 60, 61 and 73 and 333(7) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. In essence they apply as much to a Local Planning Authority under Part 12 as they do to a private property, under Part 1. It is a permitted, the scope of which determined by the precise wording of the relevant part of the GPDO. In this case the only relevant limitations, in relation to Part 12, are the size limitations and the needs for the building to be required for the purposes of any functions exercised by them on that land and subject of course to any of the habitats regulations.

That was the advice the officers took. That was the guidance under which officer acted.

Community engagement
Malcolm Mawbey and Cllr Lofts (Ward Member)

Malcolm Mawbey: Between March 2014 and April 2016 he was a part of Highcliffe Partnership, which looked at potential improvements for the area. It was at the Community Services Committee in November 2015 that he first heard about the proposals for 12 overnight beach huts, on Highcliffe beach. He knew about the policy but did not know about the beach huts before then. A real indication was gleamed from a Press Release, where it was explained that the project would not need planning permission. He saw further information but nothing had been included about the possible siting locations. Also, the height of the huts was not specified. He had looked at the Eastbourne Iconic Hut Competition’s specifications. He had contacted the Planning Department, and suggested that they should consider applying for planning and building Control permission. He had attended the Local Government Challenge and afterwards had asked for a copy of the report but did not get a copy. There had been a lack of clarity...
regarding the potential siting of the huts. Permitted development seemed to rule out any public consultation; people seemed to be split on opinion but felt it needed proper consultation. The potential designs of the beach huts were a concern. There had been no consultation on the amendment for the policy.

He did not feel that the public were told the whole truth. Engineering report did not come out until June 2016 and it should have been sooner. There seemed to be a lot of last minute thinking.

Regarding the pop-up-shop, was it a case that there had not been any consultation or was it that Highcliffe did not want beach huts?

Malcolm Mawbey: there was only one active response, that Highcliffe did not want beach huts. A Pier; improved access, sign posts had been suggested ideas for the area. On the questionnaire that had been circulated, there had been a few for in favour of beach huts, then there had been five different suggestions. Facebook had been used to rank items: beach huts had come bottom, improving the path to the beach came top.

On the questionnaire, would those completing it assume it was anything other than little typical beach huts?

Malcolm Mawbey: there had been just a brief mention of beach huts, not overnight dwellings.

Cllr Lofts: the project had first been discussed in December 2015, as a confidential item. He had never had any indication that it was not confidential. When it was first discussed as Ward Members, they had been asked if they would accept beach huts being located. He had said he would agree to the process being started of the Council’s decision making mechanism. He had understood it was being dealt with confidentially.

Due to the confidentiality of the project, did this mean you were unable to do any consultation with residents?

Cllr Lofts: yes I did not do any. Policy & Resources Minutes in March 2016 started to clear the position.

If applying for the Coastal Revival fund, wouldn’t further community consultation be needed?

Malcolm Mawbey: he was aware of the Christchurch Coastal Plan. It had been published on the Council’s website in January 2016 and to his knowledge, there had been no consultation.

Community and Open Spaces Manager: it was confirmed that the Dorset Coast forum had been involved with this publication. It had resulted in an over-arching strategy for the area. The latest round of funding had opened in late 2015 and the Council had been invited to put forward bids for coastal revival works. The Council submitted a bid, which had primarily been around the feasibility work, access and community engagement. This would lead to access for bids up to £5m worth of enabling work.

Concerning the first two points of the revival project, did the small installation of beach huts fit in with the policy of Plum Pictures?

Head of Community & Leisure: Beach huts were part of the wider project of revival for Highcliffe, which was what the money was granted for.
Head of Community & Leisure: regarding the Plum Pictures proposal, the policy decisions had been made in 2008. Once the Council had been approached by Plum Pictures, an urgent item had been reported to Community Services Committee, with one week’s notice. Therefore there had been no time for public consultation but officers had relied on Members views. Once the report had been through the full decision making process, there had been no opportunity to go into public consultation, due to the sensitivity of the issue and it would have contravened the terms of the contract with Plum Pictures and also gone against competition rules, as local residents would have had prior information.

At the pop-up-shop, had there been a view that beach huts would be welcomed?

Strategic Director: from the notes of the Beach Huts Panel, the Chief Executive had asked if Cllr Hallam could clarify what was happening in Highcliffe, as she had attended the meeting and spoken with members of the public, who were supportive of beach huts.

Cllr Lofts: he had not been present at the meeting or seen the notes from it.

At what point in the process did the consultations stop following traditional beach huts and morph into the different sort, including overnight stays?

Cllr Lofts: this shows the difference in what was being discussed more than a year ago and since the more specific details.

Plum Pictures Ltd Agreement

Cllr Nottage, Council Leader; and Sophia Nartey, Monitoring Officer

How did Plum Pictures get involved in the scheme and what was the interaction?

Monitoring Officer: Legal Services had been asked to produce a Competition Access Agreement, which had been completed in April 2016. The instruction had been made in February 2016.

Did the contract include terms for early termination?

Monitoring Officer: All contracts include the basics terms of what both parties were entering into, including offer and acceptance and there are then terms to that offer and acceptance. If issues further on, there would be terms included, including disputes.

Were you one of the signatories?

Monitoring Officer: No I did not sign the agreement.

Is the agreement, now that the matter has been closed, still confidential?

Monitoring Officer: Yes.

Can the details be sent to Members on pink papers?

Monitoring Officer: No.

The project was kept confidential, is it usual for information to be part of a contract and confidential?
Monitoring Officer: the project had a secret reveal, so it is normal, in these circumstances, as those in the local area could know information in advance, but would be expected to keep quiet.

The contract would have been signed on behalf of the Council. Is it usual, that Members could not see what the Council was committing to?

Monitoring Officer: due to the commercial sensitivity of the agreement, it was agreed to maintain confidentiality, including correspondence. The Council would have to ask the company for disclosure.

How frequently does the Council sign contracts where Members can not see what has been signed on their behalf?

Monitoring Officer: it is quite common that only certain officers and Members can see all details.

Who did sign the contract?

Monitoring Officer: The Chief Executive, as far as I am aware.

At the inception of this agreement with Plum Pictures and earlier on it was said that they were looking at a floating beach hut, and Plum Pictures asked did the Council have anything else in the pipeline and what they could work with us on. They then suggested a competition to design unique beach huts. To the Leader, is that order correct?

Council Leader: I have no knowledge to be able to answer that question.

It has been repeatedly said, that it was Plum Pictures who came to this Council and said “we have this idea of beach huts and open spaces programme, would you be interested?” And this Council said yes. Is the Leader at least able to confirm that?

Response: I have no knowledge to be able to answer that.

How did Plum Pictures come to have an agreement with the Council in the first place? What was that process?

David McIntosh advised that the question had been covered by officers and suggested that the following question be put to the Leader: when did he become involved with discussions on the project?

Council Leader: at the same time as other Members.

The first indication that this matter was under discussion, was when the minute came to Council, late in December 2015. Did the Leader have no indication of what was happening before December 2015?

Council Leader: no that is not the case. He had attended, along with a number of other Members, a briefing that was handled by officers in respect of the early conception of this idea, when the process was considered by the Ward Councillors and as a result, moved to committee.

One of the Ward Councillors said that they had very limited Knowledge at this time?

Council Leader: The Ward Councillors were at that briefing, as were a number of other councillors and the explanation as to how the project would be prepared and directed was given in brief detail. That meeting was
sometime in November/December 2015 and the process continued from then.

Could the Leader confirm, was he not aware of this plan until there was this meeting with the Ward Councillors and other Councillors?

Council Leader: the briefing was called for all councillors and if councillors attended they were given the briefing and I was one of the Councillors that attended that Briefing.

Did the Leader have a pre-briefing?

Council Leader: No.

Could Leader give his opinion, given what else we’ve heard tonight, of an email sent from Channel Four to a local resident, which says as follows:

“Thank you for contacting Channel Four, it was the decision of Christchurch and East Dorset Council,” alright that’s heresy but we’ll let it pass, “to redevelop the site and build the beach huts. They approached Plum Pictures.”

Council Leader: It was the first time he had heard of this.

What was the total cost of the project?

Head of Community & Leisure: £130K had not been used, which had been committed by the Council; Legal advice £4k; no extra officer costs, as formed part of their work; the only other cost of £1400 was for an ecology report, which was most useful regardless of the beach hut project and would be used for cliff management work. £5400 in total.

170. 

Summing Up

It was advised that the final report would be drawn together by the Highcliffe Beach Huts Task and Finish Group, which Councillor Dedman would be leading. The membership would also include Councillors Abbott, Hall and Jones. The meeting was being planned to be held during the next week.

The meeting ended at 8.28 pm

CHAIRMAN
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Medium Term Financial Strategy & Budget Process

1. PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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<td>To seek approval for the budget timetable and process for 2017/18.</td>
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<td>Recommendations:</td>
<td>It is RECOMMENDED that:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(a) Members approve the budget timetable and process as set out in this report, and;</td>
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<td>(b) Members note the content of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</td>
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<td>Councillor Andy Barfield</td>
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2. BACKGROUND

2.1. This report summarises the 2017/18 budget process, including revenue, capital and reserve budgets. The budget timetable forms part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy Report that was approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on 28th September 2016. The full Medium Term Financial Strategy Report is included in Appendix (ii).

2.2. Article 6 of the Constitution states that one function of the Scrutiny and Policy Overview Committee is to “support the Council’s Corporate Plan and policy committees in the development of its budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues”. As such a review of the budget timetable and consideration of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy has been included in the Committee’s Work Programme.

2.3. This report asks Members to approve the budget process for 2017/18 and note the content of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

3. BUDGET PROCESS 2017/18

3.1. A detailed budget timetable is included in Appendix (i). The table below summarises the key dates for Member consideration of different aspects of the budget. The timetable is designed to involve Members throughout the entire budget process through scrutiny of key budget assumptions and calculations.
by the Scrutiny & Policy Overview Committee, as well as reports containing the budget recommendations being submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee between now and the setting of Council Tax by Full Council on 21\textsuperscript{st} February 2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item For Consideration</th>
<th>Committee / Member Involvement</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medium Term Financial Strategy Report</td>
<td>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</td>
<td>28\textsuperscript{th} September 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Process and Medium Term Financial Strategy Report</td>
<td>Scrutiny &amp; Policy Overview Committee</td>
<td>15\textsuperscript{th} November 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Term Financial Strategy Update Report and Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring Report</td>
<td>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</td>
<td>30\textsuperscript{th} November 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital &amp; Reserve Bids Report and Settlement &amp; Taxbase Report</td>
<td>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</td>
<td>11\textsuperscript{th} January 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue, Reserves, Capital Budget Reports and Treasury Management Report.</td>
<td>Scrutiny &amp; Policy Overview Committee</td>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} February 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue, Reserves, Capital Budget Reports, Treasury Management Report and Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring Report</td>
<td>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</td>
<td>8\textsuperscript{th} February 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Tax Setting</td>
<td>Full Council</td>
<td>21\textsuperscript{st} February 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

4.1. The Policy & Resources Committee considered the Medium Term Financial Strategy on 28\textsuperscript{th} September 2016. A copy of the report is included in Appendix (ii) of this report. Members of this Committee are asked to note the content of this report, and to consider the budget timetable in light of the key issues highlighted by the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

4.2. The key issues highlighted within the Medium Term Financial Strategy Report are summarised as follows:

(a) The Council continues to operate in a challenging and uncertain economic environment. New challenges include the potential impact of Brexit on local authorities and the Government intention for 100% business rate retention by local authorities by 2019.

(b) Based on the assumptions contained in the report, the Medium Term Financial Strategy forecast is for a balanced position until 2019/20 when a budget gap of £167k is identified. From 2020/21 a budget gap of £37k
per annum is identified. This is a relatively modest budget gap compared to the financial situation that some councils face.

(c) The Council has published an Efficiency Plan that shows what has been achieved through Partnership working and what further potential efficiencies have been identified. Since 2010/11 the Council has saved a total of £5,864k from the revenue budget, with almost £1m removed from the base budget on a recurring basis. Much of the additional potential efficiencies identified relate to accommodation savings through working with East Dorset. Now that the programme of service reviews with East Dorset is complete, new ways of delivering further efficiencies are being considered through the Transformation Programme.

(d) The Council has taken up the offer of a four-year financial settlement from the Government. This will bring increased financial certainty in terms of Government resource allocations and aid financial management and planning.

(e) The Council maintains a healthy level of financial reserves and a fully funded Capital Programme. The level and allocation of reserves, plus the aspirations and funding of the Capital Programme will be reviewed as part of the budget process.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Plan & Council Objectives

5.1. The matter under consideration impacts upon the Corporate Plan in the following areas:

- EC1 - Focus on collaboration and partnership in the delivery of services
- EC2 - Deliver services more efficiently
- EC3 - Maintain strong and sustainable financial performance

Legal

5.2. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Environmental

5.3. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Financial and Risk

5.4. Thorough budget reviews involving officers and Members are an important part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. They are an opportunity to scrutinise costs and income, identify efficiencies and ensure resources are matched to corporate priorities. The financial climate in which the Council operates is challenging and uncertain. If the assumptions on which the budget are based change then there may be an impact upon the cost of delivering services, in which case working balances may need to be used.

Equalities

5.5. There are no equalities implications arising from this report.
**Consultation and Engagement**

5.6. No consultation was necessary for this report.

6. **CONCLUSION**

6.1. This report sets out the key dates of the budget timetable and the ways in which Members will be engaged during the process. The assumptions within the Medium Term Financial Strategy underpin the 2017/18 budget setting process.

**Appendices:**
Appendix (i) – Budget Timetable 2017/18
Appendix (ii) – Medium Term Financial Strategy Report - Policy & Resources Committee 28 September 2016

**Background Papers:**
Medium Term Financial Strategy Report - Policy & Resources Committee 28 September 2016 – Published Works
## Budget Timetable 2017/18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MTFS Draft Reports</td>
<td>CBC deadline 9th September 2016</td>
<td>Ian Milner, Dan Povey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDDC deadline 16th September 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTFS Committee</td>
<td>CBC Policy &amp; Resources 28th September 2016</td>
<td>Ian Milner, Dan Povey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDDC Cabinet 5th October 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Discussions With S151 Officer</td>
<td>W/C 10th October 2016 (DP to arrange)</td>
<td>Accountants, Dan Povey, TBC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTFS Draft Reports - Scrutiny</td>
<td>CBC deadline 27th October 2016</td>
<td>Ian Milner, Dan Povey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDDC deadline 3 November 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Of Service/Strategic Director Budget Meetings</td>
<td>W/C 7th November 2016</td>
<td>Accountants, Ian Milner, HoS Strategic Directors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W/C 14th November 2016 (Secretariat To Arrange)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Q2 Budget Monitoring &amp; MTFS Update Reports Complete</td>
<td>CBC 11th November 2016</td>
<td>Dan Povey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDDC 18th November 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTFS &amp; Budget Process Reports – Scrutiny Committee</td>
<td>CBC 15th November 2016</td>
<td>Ian Milner, Dan Povey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDDC 22nd November 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 Budget Monitoring &amp; MTFS Reports Committee</td>
<td>CBC Policy &amp; Resources 30th November 2016</td>
<td>Dan Povey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDDC Cabinet 7th December 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Programme &amp; Reserve Bids To Corporate Team</td>
<td>5th December 2016</td>
<td>Ian Milner, Dan Povey, Liz Walker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Budgets Completed</td>
<td>7th December 2016</td>
<td>Accountants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Programme Officer Review Completed</td>
<td>12th December 2016</td>
<td>Dan Povey, Liz Walker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxbase, Settlement, NNDR1, Capital &amp; Reserve Bid Reports Complete</td>
<td>CBC 20th December 2016</td>
<td>Dan Povey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDDC 29th December 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxbase, Settlement, NNDR1, Capital &amp; Reserve Bid Reports</td>
<td>CBC Policy &amp; Resources 11th January 2017</td>
<td>Ian Milner, Dan Povey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDDC Cabinet 18th January 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Deadline</td>
<td>Officers</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Team 2017/18 Budget Update</td>
<td>16th January 2017</td>
<td>Ian Milner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2017/18 Budget Reports Complete (Inc review TM), Q3 Budget Monitoring | EDDC 19th January 2017  
CBC 20th January 2017  
**Send to Scrutiny Members** | Dan Povey |          |
| Scrutiny Committees – 2017/18 budget reports   | EDDC Scrutiny 24th January 2017  
CBC Scrutiny 1st February 2017 | Ian Milner    |          |
| Council Tax Setting Reports                    | EDDC 1st February 2017  
CBC 1st February 2017 | Dan Povey |          |
| Committee – 2017/18 Revenue & Capital Budgets, Reserves, TM Policy, Q3 Budgets | EDDC Cabinet 7th February 2017  
CBC Policy & Resources 8th February 2017 | Ian Milner    |          |
| Staff Budget Briefings                         | W/C 13th February 2017                       | Ian Milner    |          |
| Full Council – CT Setting                      | EDDC 20th February 2017  
CBC 21st February 2017 | Ian Milner    |          |
Medium Term Financial Strategy

1. PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Type:</th>
<th>Public Report for Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Purpose of Report:   | To update Members regarding the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which includes;  
|                      | • The Council’s Efficiency Plan;  
|                      | • Quarter One Budget Position;   
|                      | • The 2017/18 Budget Timetable.   |
| Recommendations:     | It is RECOMMENDED that:          |
|                      | (a) The content of the report be noted;  
|                      | (b) The Council applies for the four-year settlement offer from the Government.  
|                      | (c) Portfolio Holders work with officers in updating the Medium Term Financial Strategy and in developing the 2017/18 budget.  
| Portfolio holder:    | Councillor Andy Barfield          |
| Wards:               | Borough-wide                      |
| Contact Officer:     | Ian Milner, Strategic Director    
|                      | Dan Povey, Group Accountant       |

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. This report updates Members regarding the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The MTFS uses various financial assumptions to model the Council’s financial position over the next five years. As the budget process for 2017/18 progresses and as assumptions change over time, the MTFS will be updated and brought back for Member consideration.

2.2. The report also contains an Efficiency Plan. This plan details the savings that have been achieved within the base revenue budget from Partnership Working since 2010/11. It also forecasts future planned efficiencies to 2021/22, which also form part of the MTFS.

2.3. Part of the Local Government Settlement 2016/17 was an offer of a four-year settlement up to 2019/20. The advantage of signing up is that the Council will have more certainty in relation to Government resource allocations – particularly revenue support grant, transitional grant and business rate tariffs. The Government has stated that these items will not be altered for reasons related to the relative needs of local authorities. This certainty will aid financial
management and planning. Greg Clark, the former Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, stated that “I cannot guarantee future levels of funding to those who prefer not to have a four year settlement”. No subsequent comments have been made by the new Secretary of State. In order to accept the offer the Council needs to publish its Efficiency Plan on the Council’s website.

2.4. The MTFS presented in this report uses the four-year settlement figures as presented in the 2016/17 Settlement in order to model the Council’s finances.

2.5. Appendix 7 contains a Glossary for terms and abbreviations that appear in this report.

3. THE FINANCIAL BACKGROUND

3.1. The Council continues to operate in a challenging and uncertain economic environment. Recent changes to Local Government funding streams mean that councils are subject to significant financial risks relating to business rate income and the cost of local Council Tax schemes. In addition there are wider economic challenges facing Local Government relating to the increasing costs of providing some services, reductions in investment income and reductions in Revenue Support Grant due to the Government’s deficit reduction programme.

3.2. There are further significant changes to Local Government financing in the pipeline, namely the intention for councils to keep 100% of the business rates collected by 2019/20. With this will come additional burdens and responsibilities to ensure that the reforms are fiscally neutral. While Local Government as a whole will keep 100% of business rates collected nationally, there will still be a system of tariffs and top-ups to ensure councils receive the resources they need to provide services. Precisely how the scheme will operate and what new responsibilities will be transferred is not currently known.

3.3. In his Autumn Statement in November 2015, the former Chancellor announced that the long-term economic plan was working but that there was much work to do in further reducing the national deficit. The estimate then was that the Government would reach a modest surplus by 2019/20. There would years of austerity ahead and levels of Government support for local authorities would continue their downward trend. The indications are that the new Chancellor may revise the deficit target.

3.4. Since the 2015 Autumn Statement Britain has voted to leave the European Union. The long term financial impact of this decision on the country is unknown and will depend upon the outcome of negotiations between the UK Government, EU Members, and other global economies. Although initial falls in the UK stock markets have largely rebounded, the pound’s fall in value against the dollar remains, and there is likely to be further turbulence in stock markets and currency values as uncertainty continues around the deal that Britain can negotiate with other economies and markets.

3.5. The long term implications of Brexit for local authorities are similarly uncertain. A weaker pound may increase inflation and therefore increase the prices that the Council has to pay for goods and services. Some commentators are predicting lower UK economic growth over the medium term than in previous forecasts which would affect the Government’s deficit reduction programme.
and aspiration to achieve a national surplus by 2019/20. How this would affect local authorities in terms of Government funding is uncertain. The Bank of England has already reduced the base rate to 0.25% in order to try and stimulate the economy, and this will reduce the investment income that the Council can achieve on its cash balances.

3.6. Members will receive an update as to the implications of the Autumn 2016 Chancellor’s Statement as part of the budget process.

3.7. To date this Council has responded well to the financial challenges it has faced. Service delivery has been maintained and the Council’s financial position strengthened through a flexible and prudent approach that combines a strategy on Council Tax, savings from Partnership working, and thorough budget reviews that scrutinise both costs and income.

3.8. A product of this strategy is that a revenue surplus has been achieved over the last few years due to the effect of front-loaded revenue savings creating headroom in the budget. These surpluses have enabled the Council to increase its level of reserves to invest in corporate priorities or address financial risks. This headroom is forecast to reduce to zero by 2019/20 as Revenue Support Grant reduces to zero by 2018/19 and the Council will face a £375k additional tariff payable to the Government in 2019/20. Therefore it is important to maintain the momentum of other aspects of the MTFS, such as maximising income from Council Tax and business rates, achieving savings through Partnerships and new ways of working, and utilising the Council’s assets to their full potential.

4. THE MTFS FORECAST

4.1. This section of the report highlights the key issues affecting the most significant aspects of the MTFS as it stands at this moment in time. This position is under continual review and will change but is the best current estimate.

4.2. FUNDING – the key funding streams for the Council, excluding fees and charges, are Revenue Support Grant, retained business rates and Council Tax. Appendix 1 contains graphs depicting these income streams as modelled in this section of the report.

4.3. REVENUE SUPPORT GRANT – the Council will receive £313k in Revenue Support Grant (RSG) in 2016/17. As per the figures released in the 2016/17 Settlement this will reduce to £8k in 2017/18 and from that point this Council will receive no Revenue Support Grant. From 2019/20 the Council will pay a “Tariff Adjustment” directly to the Government. This cash payment to the Government is a new feature of the Local Government Settlement and was part of the four-year forecast provided with the 2016/17 Settlement. It is in effect negative Revenue Support Grant. The following table demonstrates the RSG that the Council can expect to receive and the Tariff Adjustments it can expect to pay over the next five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RSG (£000)</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(375)</td>
<td>(383)</td>
<td>(391)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4. **RETAINED BUSINESS RATES** – the following table sets out the officer’s forecast regarding the potential profile for business rate income over the next five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NDR (£000)</td>
<td>1,502</td>
<td>1,531</td>
<td>1,561</td>
<td>1,592</td>
<td>1,624</td>
<td>1,657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5. The MTFS assumption is for a 2% increase in business rate income per annum, reflecting an inflationary increase only. Each year, as part of the budget process, the actual business rate income for the coming year will be calculated with reference to the rateable value of businesses within the Borough. For 2016/17 the budget for retained business rate income was increased by 18% due to forecast increases in renewable energy income and increased rateable value for other businesses. However, in closing the Collection Fund for 2015/16 a significant deficit was incurred as the provision for appeals was increased, and the Council will have to pay its share in 2017/18 as part of the budget calculations. This demonstrates the volatility of this income stream and why the MTFS models only inflationary increases.

4.6. The MTFS projection runs to 2021/22, but the Government’s intention is for 100% business rates retention by 2019/20. Details of the scheme are currently not confirmed, but the aim is for the reform to be fiscally neutral, with potential increases in income being accompanied by new burdens and responsibilities. While Local Government as a whole will keep 100% of business rates collected nationally, there will still be a system of tariffs and top-ups to ensure councils who do not collect enough business rates locally to provide services are not disadvantaged. Therefore for the purposes of the MTFS, an annual inflationary increase to business rate income is deemed the most appropriate model.

4.7. **COUNCIL TAX** – the following table sets out the officer’s forecast for the level of Council Tax receipts over the next five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2016/17 £000</th>
<th>2017/18 £000</th>
<th>2018/19 £000</th>
<th>2019/20 £000</th>
<th>2020/21 £000</th>
<th>2021/22 £000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£5 Increase</td>
<td></td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxbase Growth</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,710</td>
<td>3,827</td>
<td>3,945</td>
<td>4,064</td>
<td>4,184</td>
<td>4,305</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.8. The Council Tax assumption in the MTFS is that a £5 increase will be applied to a Band D property each year until otherwise advised. For 2016/17 District and Borough councils were not subject to a Council Tax Referendum as long as Band D Council Tax did not increase by 2% and £5. The MTFS assumes the Government will not change this Referendum principle.

4.9. The MTFS also allows for a modest increase in the taxbase each year of 0.5%, which equates to approximately 100 properties per annum.

4.10. **FUNDING SUMMARY** – combining the income streams referred to in the tables above, the Council’s forecast income from RSG, tariff adjustments, Council Tax and retained business rates is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016/17 £000</th>
<th>2017/18 £000</th>
<th>2018/19 £000</th>
<th>2019/20 £000</th>
<th>2020/21 £000</th>
<th>2021/22 £000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,525</td>
<td>5,366</td>
<td>5,506</td>
<td>5,281</td>
<td>5,425</td>
<td>5,571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>(3)%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>(4)%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.11. The table shows that if the assumptions regarding major income streams occur as modelled in this report, then the total income will fluctuate over the next five years with two troughs – one in 2017/18 as RSG all but ceases and the other in 2019/20 as the Council pays its first Tariff Adjustment to the Government. Overall by 2021/22 the Council would receive a similar amount of income from these streams as it does in the current financial year.

4.12. **NEW HOMES BONUS** – This is an additional funding stream that rewards councils for new homes built, with a premium paid for affordable homes. The Council will receive £839k in 2016/17 for New Homes Bonus. The scheme originally comprised of six tranches of funding, but it is likely that this will change due to concerns over the sustainability of the payments made by the Government. It is currently predicted that after transitional arrangements in 2017/18 the grant may reduce to 4/6ths of its current level.

4.13. The Council is not reliant on this grant to fund any recurring revenue expenditure, but does use New Homes Bonus to help fund the Capital Programme. The current Capital Programme models the changes to New Homes Bonus referred to above, and is not dependent on this source at all by 2019/20. If the actual changes to New Homes Bonus are different to those predicted, then the current Capital Programme may need to be revised if other sources of funds cannot be realised.

4.14. **BASE BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS** – the following table sets out the assumptions currently included in the MTFS, and which are subject to review as the budget process progresses. The implications of these assumptions can be seen in the MTFS Summary sheet in Appendix 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Assumption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pay</td>
<td>2% per annum growth allowed for – of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation Costs</td>
<td>Will only be allowed where contractual during the budget process. For MTFS 1% cost inflation allowed 2017/18 and 2% thereafter, which is the Government target for CPI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation Fees &amp; Charges</td>
<td>2% per annum modelled in the MTFS including car parks and Development Management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorset Waste Partnership</td>
<td>1% per annum inflation modelled in the MTFS. This is considered realistic considering the latest projections of an underspend in 2016/17 for the DWP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Benefit Inflation and Subsidy</td>
<td>Neutral – 2% increase in payments and subsidy modelled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Efficiencies &amp; Income Generation</td>
<td>As detailed in Section 5 of this report. Efficiencies relate to sharing accommodation with East Dorset District Council and the sale of Grange Road Depot. Additional income streams have also been identified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Of Land Charges Function</td>
<td>The precise timing and impact of the transfer of at least some of the Land Charges function to the Government is not confirmed, but the MTFS models a £46k adverse effect on the base budget for 2017/18. This will be revised during the budget process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support To Revenue Reserves</td>
<td>£463k over two years to 2018/19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Pension Scheme</td>
<td>No increase in contribution rate has been modelled. The Council has within its base budget £300k per annum relating to lump sum payments to address the overall pension fund deficit. More information will be available once the results of the full valuation of the fund as at 31 March 2016 are known.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Income</td>
<td>The current income budget of £55k is modelled to reduce to £18k from 2017/18 as a result of the reduction in the base rate. It is modelled to remain at this level until 2021/22.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Local Council Tax Support Scheme | No change to the scheme has been modelled.

4.15. **MTFS SUMMARY** – the table below summarises the current MTFS forecast for the Council based on the assumptions and estimates set out in this section of the report. The position shows a balanced forecast until 2019/20 when a funding gap of £167k is identified. There-after modest funding gaps of £37k per annum are identified, bringing the total budget gap to £241k up to 2021/22.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016/17 £000</th>
<th>2017/18 £000</th>
<th>2018/19 £000</th>
<th>2019/20 £000</th>
<th>2020/21 £000</th>
<th>2021/22 £000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>(5,525)</td>
<td>(5,366)</td>
<td>(5,506)</td>
<td>(5,281)</td>
<td>(5,425)</td>
<td>(5,571)</td>
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4.16. Work is on-going to refine the MTFS as new information is received and issues identified. The budget gap identified in the MTFS is relatively modest compared to the financial situation that some councils face, and this is due in large part to the savings achieved and forecast to be achieved from Partnership Working as detailed in the Efficiency Plan in Appendix 3. To date the Council has removed £1m of recurring revenue costs from the budget. Further work will be done to bridge the remaining budget gap. It should be noted that the budget gap materialises in 2019/20, which is the year when potentially there will be major Local Government reorganisation in Dorset.

5. **EFFICIENCY PLAN**

5.1. As we plan for the next 4 years of the Christchurch and East Dorset Partnership we can reflect on the progress we have made since we began working together in 2010, and since we developed our first joint plan in 2012. Much has changed over that period but one thing that remains is the pressure to evolve and to transform the way in which we work. Uncertainty still exists and that is why we will continue to explore ways in which we can safeguard services at the same time as delivering the financial savings necessary to thrive in the unprecedented age of austerity in which we now live. We are nevertheless confident that we have the ambition and drive to find solutions to the challenges we face, and to continue the journey we have started so successfully. This corporate plan builds on the achievements of the past 4 years but importantly identifies the things that are now of most significance to our communities. They are our priorities and as we progress we can be confident that we are doing the things that will most effectively contribute to
realising our corporate vision of being a part of strong, successful and sustainable communities.

5.2. At the heart of the Council’s Joint Corporate Plan (https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/362527) is being an effective council. This sets out the following areas of focus;

(a) Focus on collaboration and partnership in the delivery of services
(b) Deliver services more efficiently
(c) Maintain strong and sustainable financial performance
(d) Maintain a strong reputation and recognition for the Partnership’s achievements

5.3. The Efficiency Plan underpins the Council’s Joint Corporate Plan with East Dorset District Council in particular the effective council theme. The financial detail of the Council’s Efficiency Plan is set out in Appendix 3.

5.4. Since 2010/11 the Council has been working closely with East Dorset District Council to the point now where services are fully integrated with a single officer corps supporting service delivery for both councils. The plan demonstrates the savings that have been achieved to date from Partnership Working with East Dorset District Council and other local authority partners within Dorset.

5.5. The Efficiency Plan shows that between 2010/11 and 2016/17 the Council has saved a total of £5,864k from the revenue budget, with almost £1m removed from the base budget on a recurring basis. Further efficiencies have been identified from 2017/18 to bring total recurring revenue savings to £1,123k per annum by 2018/19.

5.6. A Transformation Programme has been a constant feature of the council’s plans and the current plan focusses on four pillars;

(a) Technology
(b) People
(c) Assets
(d) Resources

5.7. Beneath each pillar are a number of workstreams that range from mobile working to commercialisation.

5.8. A key focus of plan is the rationalisation of the asset base to reduce accommodation costs. At present a major programme is underway to have a single administrative base for both councils. This will see the majority of staff supporting service delivery for both councils from a single site. This will enable the sale of the civic office site for East Dorset District Council.

5.9. Further opportunities identified relate to:

- Accommodation savings achieved by working together with East Dorset District Council and disposing of the Furzehill site;
- Premises cost savings through disposing of Grange Road Depot;
- Additional potential income streams.
5.10. The efficiencies detailed in The Efficiency Plan in Appendix 3 are included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy in Appendix 2. Efficiencies made up to 2016/17 are included in the base budget, and the further efficiencies are profiled to be achieved in future years. As a product of the efficiencies already made in previous years and front-loaded savings that have created some headroom in the revenue budget, plus the efficiencies identified for future years, the MTFS is balanced up to 2019/20, when a budget gap of £167k is identified. The acceptance of a four year settlement reduces the uncertainty surrounding some major elements of funding within the MTFS and allows work to be focused on how to bridge the relatively modest budget gap in 2019/20.

5.11. Partnership working has allowed Christchurch Borough Council to achieve a balanced budget in the past and a balanced MTFS for the next two years without cutting services. Now that the programme of service reviews with East Dorset District Council is complete, new ways of delivering further efficiencies are being considered through the Transformation Programme.

5.12. Probably the most significant area of transformation that is emerging is the potential reorganisation of local government in Dorset. Discussions with other Dorset Local Authorities about a potential move from 9 councils to 2 are underway and a public consultation exercise is being undertaken. A decision will be made by all councils in January 2017 regarding the future of local government in Dorset and depending on this decision could see a major transformation of how services are delivered to the people of Dorset.

6. QUARTER ONE BUDGET MONITORING

6.1. For Quarter 1, budget monitoring has taken the form of a high level review of major income and expenditure items. It is too early in the financial year to give a comprehensive assessment of the predicted outturn for the year-end, but based on the work done there are no major areas for concern within the revenue budget.

6.2. Early indications are that salary costs in total should be on target. Within this overall picture Development Management salary costs will be higher than originally budgeted for due to increased use of agency staff to deal with some of the large applications sites. More work will be done to look at the profile of agency staff expenditure, establishment salary costs, and particularly whether additional income will be generated to offset the pressure so that Members can receive a more comprehensive picture at Quarter 2.

6.3. Appendix 4 details the variances that have been identified. Overall these variances total a service pressure of £39k, which can easily be accommodated within the revenue headroom of £488k for 2016/17. More detailed budget monitoring will be undertaken for Quarter 2 and the position reported to Members in November.

7. THE BUDGET TIMETABLE

7.1. During the budget process the assumptions referred to in this report will be further examined and their impact on the 2017/18 budget calculated. New information and issues will also be identified that will impact upon the MTFS.
7.2. There is a detailed budget timetable in Appendix 5, but the timings of key elements of the process are set out below.

- Detailed budget review – September to November 2016
- Medium Term Financial Strategy update taken to Policy & Resources Committee – 30th November 2016
- Local Government Finance Settlement December 2016
- Taxbase, Settlement, Reserve and Capital Bids taken to Policy & Resources Committee – 30th November 2016
- Local Government Finance Settlement December 2016
- Taxbase, Settlement, Reserve and Capital Bids taken to Policy & Resources Committee – 30th November 2016
- Revenue, Capital and Reserve budget reports, including Settlement, Taxbase and Bids to Scrutiny & Policy Overview Committee – 31st January 2017
- Revenue, Capital and Reserve budget reports to Policy & Resources Committee – 8th February 2017
- Council Tax set – Full Council 21st February 2017

8. RESERVES

8.1. The position of the Council’s reserves as at 1 April 2016 is shown in the table below, but adjusted for the Planning Enforcement reserve approved by the Policy & Resources Committee on 22nd June 2016. As part of the budget and service planning process the allocation of reserves is examined and realigned where appropriate to ensure their use fits with corporate priorities. As the MTFS is updated and the budget process for 2017/18 progresses, the level and use of unallocated reserves will be presented for Members to consider.

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9. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

9.1. The current Capital Programme of £5,293k is fully resourced and leaves an anticipated £459k in unallocated capital funds over the next five years, although this is dependent upon future receipts of New Homes Bonus grant.

9.2. There has been one addition to the total Capital Programme of £5,230k as approved by Members at the 22 June 2016 Policy & Resources Committee. This relates to £63k required for emergency repairs to Highcliffe Top Car Park. This emergency work carried out on the carpark surface was required to prevent the closure of the carpark on health & safety grounds and a subsequent loss in income.

9.3. The Capital Programme relies on £2,139k of New Homes Bonus funding between 2016/17 and 2018/19. As previously discussed this funding source is expected to reduce after 2017/18, possibly reducing to 4/6ths of its present level. The current Capital Programme reflects this reduction in 2018/19, and does not rely on any further New Homes Bonus funding from 2019/20. If changes to this funding stream are different to those modelled in the Capital Programme then the existing Programme may need to be reviewed or new capital resources realised.

9.4. The current Capital Programme and financing can be found in Appendix 6. As part of the budget process the current Capital Programme will be reviewed.

10. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Plan & Council Objectives

10.1. The matter under consideration impacts upon the Corporate Plan in the following areas:-
- EC1 - Focus on collaboration and partnership in the delivery of services
- EC2 - Deliver services more efficiently
- EC3 - Maintain strong and sustainable financial performance

Legal

10.2. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Environmental

10.3. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Financial and Risk

10.4. The MTFS is based on assumptions made using the best information available at the time. The assumptions are made in a challenging financial environment and attempt to forecast the financial position of the Council over a period of five years. If the assumptions prove to be incorrect or new issues emerge then there could be a detrimental effect on the financial position of the Council.

Equalities

10.5. There are no equalities implications arising from this report.
Consultation and Engagement

10.6. No consultation was necessary for this report.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1. The position shows a balanced forecast until 2019/20 when a funding gap of £167k is identified. Thereafter modest funding gaps of £37k per annum are identified, bringing the total budget gap to £241k up to 2021/22.

Appendices:
Appendix 1 – Christchurch Key Funding Summary Graph
Appendix 2 – Christchurch Medium Term Financial Strategy Summary Table
Appendix 3 – Christchurch Efficiency Plan
Appendix 4 – Christchurch Quarter One Budget Position
Appendix 5 – Budget Timetable 2017/18
Appendix 6 – Christchurch Capital Programme
Appendix 7 – Glossary & Abbreviations

Background Papers:
None.
Appendix 1

Christchurch Key Funding Summary Graph

(Please note figures depicted in £000’s)
## Christchurch Medium Term Financial Strategy Summary Table

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### Changes To Base:

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# Christchurch Efficiency Plan

## Appendix 3

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Christchurch Quarter One Budget Position

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<td>Insurance costs will exceed the budget due to an increase in IPT Tax and additional premiums due to the works being carried out at Highcliffe Castle and Civic Offices.</td>
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<td>Although Q1 investment income is on track, it is anticipated that over the year total investment income will reduce by 50% due to the effects of a reduced base rate.</td>
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## Budget Timetable 2017/18

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| 2017/18 Budget Reports Complete (Inc review TM), Q3 Budget Monitoring | EDDC 19\(^{th}\) January 2017  
CBC 20\(^{th}\) January 2017  
**Send to Scrutiny Members** | Dan Povey                                 |          |
| Scrutiny Committees – 2017/18 budget reports                       | EDDC Scrutiny 24\(^{th}\) January 2017  
CBC Scrutiny 31\(^{st}\) January 2017 | Ian Milner Dan Povey            |          |
| Council Tax Setting Reports                                         | EDDC 1\(^{st}\) February 2017  
CBC 1\(^{st}\) February 2017 | Dan Povey                                 |          |
| Committee – 2017/18 Revenue & Capital Budgets, Reserves, TM Policy, Q3 Budgets | EDDC Cabinet 7\(^{th}\) February 2017  
CBC Policy & Resources 8\(^{th}\) February 2017 | Ian Milner Dan Povey            |          |
| Staff Budget Briefings                                              | W/C 13\(^{th}\) February 2017               | Ian Milner Dan Povey       |          |
| Full Council – CT Setting                                          | EDDC 20\(^{th}\) February 2017  
CBC 21\(^{st}\) February 2017 | Ian Milner Dan Povey            |          |
## Christchurch Capital Programme

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<td>Mudeford Quay Training Bank</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Capital Programme</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,616.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>770.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>500.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>394.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,292.9</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Resources 1 April</td>
<td>3,536.9</td>
<td>796.1</td>
<td>866.0</td>
<td>866.0</td>
<td>471.6</td>
<td>459.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Resources In Year</td>
<td>875.6</td>
<td>840.0</td>
<td>500.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capital Resources 31 March</strong></td>
<td><strong>796.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>866.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>866.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>471.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>459.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>459.6</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Glossary & Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Exit From The European Union</td>
<td>Brexit</td>
<td>The United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union in June 2016.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chancellor’s Autumn Statement</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>The Statement by the Chancellor to Parliament of how the economy is performing and how Government money will be allocated over the coming period. Includes measures to stimulate the economy, collect taxes and address the national deficit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection Fund</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>The statutory account that the Council must maintain where it records the transactions relating to Council Tax and Non Domestic Rate income that it collects on an agency basis on behalf of other public bodies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Tax</td>
<td>CT</td>
<td>The tax collected from properties in the Council’s area. The Council must hold a referendum for the electorate to approve Council Tax increases higher than caps prescribed by the Government each year (2% and £5 for 2016/17).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency Plan</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>In order for the Council to sign up to the Government’s offer of a four-year Local Government Finance Settlement it must publish an Efficiency Plan by 14th October 2016.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Political-economic union of 28 European Member States with a single internal market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Finance Settlement</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Annual process where Central Government informs Local Government of the grants that they will receive for the coming year and also the baseline funding position for business rates, tariff payments and safety nets. Based on detailed calculations of the relative needs of authorities and their capacity to raise income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Council Tax Support Scheme</td>
<td>LCTS</td>
<td>From April 2013 Council Tax Benefit was replaced by Council Tax Support, where eligible applicants receive a reduced Council Tax bill. There is local discretion as to the levels of reduction that are applied. The cost of the reduced Council Tax bill is met by the Councils, Police Authority and Fire Authority in the local area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Term Financial Strategy</td>
<td>MTFS</td>
<td>The Council’s projection of revenue costs and income over the next five years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Domestic Rates</td>
<td>NDR</td>
<td>A tax paid by businesses and collected by the Council on behalf of the Government, Fire Authority and County Council. The Council keeps 40% of rates collected, subject to adjustments required by Legislation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Support Grant</td>
<td>RSG</td>
<td>The annual grant received from the Government to support the provision of services. Awarded as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxbase</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>The number of residential properties in the Council’s area, converted into a Band D equivalent. There are 8 main Council Tax Bands A to H, with an H being the equivalent of 2 Band D properties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Type: Public Report for Recommendation
Purpose of Report: Members are requested to consider the Annual Report on the use of covert surveillance by the Council.
Recommendations: It is RECOMMENDED that:

- Members note the details of this report regarding usage of covert surveillance pursuant to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

Portfolio holder: Portfolio Holder Performance – Cllr Andy Barfield
Wards: District-wide
Contact Officer: Strategic Director – Louise Miller

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Members will be aware that the Council as a Local Authority possess the ability to undertake covert surveillance to assist in the discharge of its functions. Provisions authorising covert surveillance are controlled through the operation of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and statutory guidance.

2.2. Members and officers receive updates during the year as new guidance is issued.

2.3. The Council receives an inspection every three years to ensure compliance with the statutory provisions. The most recent inspection took place on 9th September 2015.

2.4. The Council received the Report from the Inspector after his visit which indicated that the Council were continuing to head in the right direction and made no recommendations for future action which was very unusual. The Inspector also added into his report that, in his opinion, the “structure of RIPA must rank as one of the best in the country.”

3. ANNUAL UPDATE

3.1. Neil Farmer (Strategic Director) the RIPA Senior Responsible Officer left the organisation in Feb 2016. Initially the responsibility moved to Ian Milner (Strategic Director) and subsequently, as ratified at Council September 2016, Louise Miller (Strategic Director) has taken the role.

3.2. The Strategic Director will be carrying out random inspection of service files to ensure compliance with the statutory regime. Previous inspections carried out,
found no evidence to suggest that officers are using covert surveillance contrary to the provisions of the legislation.

3.3. 14 officers attended a day and a half training session on the 11th and 12th April 2016. Member sessions also took place. The CHIS (Covert Human Intelligence Source) training covered the following topics:
   (a) CHIS and the Law;
   (b) the roles and responsibilities of the controller handler and authorising officers; and
   (c) types of CHIS and associated motivations and risk.

3.4. Members are advised that for this Annual update, the Council has not had to resort to the use of covert surveillance under the relevant legislation over the past twelve months.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Plan & Council Objectives

4.1. In implementing any action requiring compliance with statutory provision, the Council seeks to show in its policies and procedures the transparency with which decision are to be taken and monitored. It ensures that the reputation of the Council is upheld.

Legal

4.2. The Council needs to ensure its processes and procedures are compliant with the requirements of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 200 and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

Environmental

4.3. None.

Financial and Risk

4.4. There are currently no financial implications associated with this report. The oversight afforded through the approved Council processes and procedures seeks to minimise any risk of breaching the statutory regime.

Equalities

4.5. There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

Consultation and Engagement

4.6. None.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. It is important that Members exercise their oversight role, in seeking to ensure that their employees adhere to the provisions governing the use of covert surveillance and receive regular updates on how the Council has sought to use such surveillance. Members will therefore continue to receive the Annual update and regular reports throughout the year.
Appendices:
None

Background Papers:
None.
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CHRISTCHURCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

HIGHCLIFFE BEACH HUTS TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 17 October 2016 at 10.00 am

Present:-
Councillor Cllr Mrs L Dedman – Chairman

Present: Councillors Cllr P R A Hall and Cllr D C Jones

Also in attendance: Councillor Mrs D Jones

1. **Election of Chairman**

   Councillor Mrs Dedman was elected as Chairman of the Highcliffe Beach Huts Task and Finish Group.

2. **Declarations of Interests**

   There were no declarations received on this occasion.

3. **Draft Scoping Document**

   The Scrutiny Officer presented the draft scoping document and asked Members to consider how they would gather information from Councillor Hallam, Ward Member, who was not able to attend the Special meeting of the Scrutiny and Policy Overview Committee (SPOC) and Councillor Phipps, as the Portfolio Holder for the Environment.

   Members agreed that having just one meeting of this Group would not provide enough time to complete all they wanted to do. It was agreed that there would be two more meetings, at the first of which Councillors Hallam and Phipps would be invited. Councillor Nottage would also be asked if he would like to attend.

   Due to the extra meetings of this Group, the final report would have been presented to the January 2017 meeting of the SPOC, rather than the one in November, as originally planned. Councillor Dedman would advise Councillor Jamieson of the new timetable for the Final report.

   Members asked for a transcript of the Special meeting of SPOC. It was agreed that a copy of the audio recording would be sent to Members, as a transcript would cost money for an external firm to provide.

   Members were advised that the Chief Executive was attending the meeting, as he was also conducting a review into the process of the Beach Hut process for the Policy and Resources Committee.
It was agreed that the Group needed to provide a conclusion to their final report, to inform any future projects.

4. Special Meeting of the Scrutiny and Policy Overview Committee - 11 October 2016

Members thought that a few areas discussed on the night, needing further examination and answers:

- Councillor Abbott’s question regarding when the beach huts changed from a traditional sort, into permanent use dwellings;
- Consultation had been conducted for traditional beach huts, but not carried out when the plans for the structures changed;
- Further investigation into how the size of the project changed;
- To give an indication of the true cost of the project, a breakdown should include officer time/costs. It was argued that if they had not been working on this project, they would have been doing other work. Therefore, there must be a cost to the Council;
- Councillor Grace’s question regarding any clause in the contract for failure to deliver the project;
- Further information regarding non-disclosure of the contract details to Members, as this may inform future projects;

Members agreed that a recommendation for the final report should be, that if there is a request for a confidentiality clause in future contracts, it should be understood why it was needed, as this may cause problems as the project progressed.

It was felt that in future, the Council should first look to its own officers for factual guidance. The sometimes conflicting information, from invited speakers, gave those opposing the project something to argue about.

It was agreed that Professor May’s report should have been shared with Members earlier, as some had only seen it for the first time, on the night of the SPOC.

There had been changes to the project, which had led to confusion. The plans should have been clear and presented along with the first reports to Members at the Policy and Resources Committee.

There should also have been clarity about the intended outcome of the project: was it for the benefit of the community or financial gain.

Although it had been confirmed that the huts could be built under permitted development, Members still had questions about this. It was explained that the Development Management Officer had advised in an officer meeting, that it was not known for planning permission to be sought, when permitted development applied.

Members questioned whether a Certificate of Lawfulness could have been applied for. This would have ensured that the matter was dealt with in public, adding transparency to the project.
It was questioned whether a Certificate of Lawfulness could be applied for a structure that did not exist. It was agreed that Councillor Jones would ask the Development Management Officer for further advice.

Members asked that they have a copy of the project timeline for the next meeting.

It was agreed that Councillor Mrs Dedman would present a verbal update to the next meeting of SPOC, where the minutes of the Special meeting of SPOC and the notes from this meeting would also be presented.

**Actions for the next meeting:**

- Councillors Hallam, Phipps and Nottage be invited to attend the next meeting;
- Councillor Mrs Dedman would advise Councillor Jamieson about the new timetable for the Group;
- Councillor Jones would ask the Development Management Officer for further advice on permitted development and whether a Certificate of Lawfulness could have been applied for; and
- A copy of the project timeline would be available for the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 11.20 am

CHAIRMAN
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REPORT OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF
THE STOUR VALLEY AND POOLE PARTNERSHIP - JOINT SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12 OCTOBER, 6.00 PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
NORTHMEAD HOUSE, CREEKMOOR, POOLE

Present:

Christchurch District Council
Councillors Janet Abbott, Lesley Dedman, Frederick Neale

East Dorset District Council
Councillors Shane Bartlett, Peter Oggelsby, George Russell

North Dorset District Council
Councillors David Milsted, Esme Butler, Jane Somper

Poole Borough Council
Councillor David Newell

Apologies: None

Officers: Paul Hudson, Partnership Manager (SVPP)
Ian Milner, Strategic Director (EDDC)
Julie-Ann Wyatt, Business & Change Manager (SVPP)
Lisa Cotton, Customer Access Manager (BOP)
Sandra Deary, Committee Services Officer (NDDC)

14. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Resolved

That Councillor Milsted be appointed Chairman of the Stour Valley & Poole
Partnership Scrutiny Panel for 2016/17.

15. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Resolved

That Councillor Russell be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Stour Valley & Poole
Partnership Scrutiny Panel for 2016/17.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

17. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Urgent Business.

18. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE STOUR VALLEY AND POOLE PARTNERSHIP

The Chairman advised that any changes to the Terms of Reference would need to be
agreed by full Council of each authority. It was agreed that the Terms of References
should remain the same as the change in venue should ensure that a Member from
each authority was able to attend future meetings.
19. **Budget 2016/17**

The Partnership Manager tabled a summary of the budget. He advised that the table, as at August, showed that there would be an underspent of 3% by the year end. He advised that this was unlikely to be the case and the Partnership remained on target to meet the budget for the financial year.

As requested by the Scrutiny Panel this report was presented to Members for review and comment. There had not been a variance of more than 5%, therefore no trigger point had been reached to bring a report to the Scrutiny Panel.

In relation to additional funding for Fraud and Error, Cllr Somper asked how many high risk cases had been looked at. The Partnership Manager advised that this was in the region of 1800 for the year.

**Resolved**

To note the contents of the report.

20. **PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

The Business & Change Manager gave an update on performance as follows:

As at the end of Q2, new claims processing days averaged at 20 days and change of circumstances averaged at 9 days. She reminded members that the target for processing new claims was 19 days and for processing change of circumstances was 10 days.

The Chairman said that this was good news which had been achieved through the hard work of officers.

The Business & Change Manager added that the performance for the Council Tax and Business Rates were on target to achieve a 98% collection rate.

She explained that the enforcement team was now an in-house service. This was unusual in Local Government.

Cllr Bartlett asked why the enforcement team was in-house. The Partnership Manager advised that the Government had changed regulations and introduced set fees. In order to establish an Enforcement Service in time for the new regulations, and to mitigate potential redundancy costs, it had been agreed to bring the enforcement service in house. The service had been set up to cover its own costs, with any surplus being returned to the sovereign Councils. He added that it had always been the aim of the Partnership to have an in-house enforcement service.

Cllr Russell enquired who made the decision to write off debt. The Partnership Manager advised that Officers process Write Offs in accordance with the Collaboration Agreement and Scheme of Delegation for each Sovereign Council.

The Business & Change Manager highlighted that the Customer Contact Team had achieved all targets except for the percentage of calls answered within 1 minute.

The Chairman felt that this was an encouraging report.
Cllr Bartlett felt that it was important to retain a face-to-face service as not all customers were able to access the internet. The Customer Access Manager advised that a face-to-face service would be available. Customers would be assisted to go online by officers if necessary. She added that the EDDC & Christchurch service would remain the same. However, discussions were taking place with NDDC in respect of future face-to-face delivery.

The Business & Change Manager advised that performance had now been removed of the risk register as it had stabilised. However, a new risk had been added at No. 9. The risk register would be brought to committee quarterly with the performance update.

Resolved
To note the report.

21. FORWARD PLAN

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Panel should take place on 7 December.

12. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the business specified in Item 23 because it is likely that, if members of the press and public were present, there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.

23. BUSINESS CASE REVIEW AND FEASIBILITY STUDY UPDATE

The Partnership Manager presented the Feasibility Study for joint working in Revenues and benefits.

Following discussions it was agreed that the Feasibility Study should be taken forward to a business case for both options set out in the report with the following points to be noted by the Joint Committee:

- From carrying out a full review of the Feasibility Study it demonstrated that there were merits in producing a Business Case for SVPP & Bournemouth and Dorset wide.
- That local “face-to-face” non-appointment access for residents, especially in rural areas, was seen to be very important for customers and should be considered alongside any channel shift strategies.
- That performance should be maintained.
- That the ICT systems should be aligned to minimize risk to service delivery.
- That the potential size of the new partnership should allow for contracts to be re-negotiated.
- That the Business Case take account of any changes to Local Government in Dorset
- That it be noted that the Revenues and Benefits Service can operate successfully in Partnership as is demonstrated successfully by the SVPP.
24. **DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

   Wednesday 7 December 2016, Northmead House, Creekmoor, Poole.

   The meeting ended at 7:55 pm

   **CHAIRMAN**
Work Programme

1. PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Type:</th>
<th>Public Report for Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of Report:</td>
<td>To advise Members on the Work Programme for the Scrutiny and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policy Overview Committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations:</td>
<td>It is RECOMMENDED that the Work Programme be amended, where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>necessary and agreed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio holder:</td>
<td>Councillor Andy Barfield – Effective Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wards:</td>
<td>Borough-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Officer:</td>
<td>Lee Ellis – Scrutiny Officer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. In order to forecast and monitor the work of the Committee in a structured way, a work programme has been created and will appear at each meeting of the Scrutiny and Policy Overview Committee.

2.2. Officers and Member populate the items which appear on the work programme and amend them accordingly.

3. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Plan & Council Objectives

3.1. The matter under consideration impacts upon the Corporate Plan in the follows areas:-

GE1 - Maintain an adequately resourced Growth Plan to positively influence the local economy in our area

GE2 - Work with our leading businesses to lobby effectively on strategic matters

GE3 - Enhance our reputation as being a place which is “open for business”

AH1 - Deliver new homes in line with our 5 year land supply targets

AH2 - Increased provision of temporary accommodation

AH3 - Respond positively to Government Housing Policy

EC1 - Focus on collaboration and partnership in the delivery of services

EC2 - Deliver services more efficiently

EC3 - Maintain strong and sustainable financial performance
EC4 - Maintain a strong reputation and recognition for the Partnership’s achievements

SC1 - Help our communities to be stronger and more resilient

SC2 - Promote healthy and active lifestyles

SC3 - Keep crime levels low

ME1 - Work with partners to maintain clean and green public spaces

ME2 - Balance growth and development with the conservation of our built and natural heritage

ME3 - Work with partners to ensure the most effective and efficient approach to the management of waste

Legal
3.2. There are no legal implications associated with this report

Environmental
3.3. There are no environmental implications associated with this report

Financial and Risk
3.4. There are no financial or risk implications associated with this report

Equalities
3.5. There are no equalities implications associated with this report

Consultation and Engagement
3.6. Members, Officers and the public are able to request that items be considered for adding to the work programme or that Task and Finish Groups be established.

4. CONCLUSION
4.1. Members are requested to amend and update the work programme accordingly.

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Scrutiny and Policy Overview Committee Work Programme

Background Papers: Published Works
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Meeting Of the Scrutiny and Policy Review Committee</th>
<th>Matter for Decision/Consideration</th>
<th>Consultees</th>
<th>Means of Consultation</th>
<th>Documents Relied Upon in Making The Decision</th>
<th>Lead Officer/Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 November 2016</td>
<td>Single Member Item - Consultation Process on Proposals for Reform of Local Government in Dorset.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cllr David Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Process</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dan Povey (Group Accountant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual Report on Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act</td>
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<td>Sophia Narney (Legal Services Manager)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final Report of the Scrutiny – Traffic Regulation Orders Task and Finish Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cllr Fred Neale (Chairman of the Task and Finish Group)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal Update on the Progress of the Highcliffe Beach Huts Task and Finish Group</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Cllr Lesley Dedman (Chairman of the Task and Finish Group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Ways of Working Project Update</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lynda Thomson (Organisational Development Manager)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work Programme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lee Ellis (Scrutiny Officer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 January 2017 – Special Meeting</td>
<td>Exploring Options for the Future of Local Government in Dorset</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>David McIntosh (Chief Executive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 February 2017</td>
<td>Members Allowances - TBC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sarah Culwick (Senior Democratic Services Officer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Meeting Of the Scrutiny and Policy Review Committee</td>
<td>Matter for Decision/Consideration</td>
<td>Consultees</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final Report of the Highcliffe Beach Huts Task and Finish Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cllr Lesley Dedman (Chairman)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revenue Budget 2017/18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dan Povey (Group Accountant)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capital Strategy 2017/18 to 2021/22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dan Povey (Group Accountant)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reserves</td>
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<td>Dan Povey (Group Accountant)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>New Ways of Working Project Update</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Work Programme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lee Ellis (Scrutiny Officer)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14 March 2017</td>
<td>New Ways of Working Project Update</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lynda Thomson (Organisational Development Manager)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Work Programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lee Ellis (Scrutiny Officer)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>23 May 2017</td>
<td>New Ways of Working Project Update</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lynda Thomson (Organisational Development Manager)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work Programme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lee Ellis (Scrutiny Officer)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Member Training and Workshop

| April 2017 | Scrutiny Member Workshop – Work Programme 2017/18 | Cllr Colin Jamieson (Chairman)  
|           |                                                 | Lee Ellis (Scrutiny Officer) |

### Task and Finish Groups

| October 2016 to January 2017 | Highcliffe Beach Huts Task and Finish Group | Cllr Lesley Dedman (Chairman)  
|                              |                                              | Cllr Janet Abbott  
|                              |                                              | Cllr Peter Hall  
|                              |                                              | Cllr David Jones |