13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

14. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 27 May 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
15 CHAIRMAN’S NOTICES

Civic Events: The Chairman had attended a number of events and meetings representing the Council during May to July as follows:


Starters and Leavers:
The Chairman offered the Council’s best wishes to the following officers who had left the Council:
Emma Edgeley-Long - Business Change co-ordinator
Sean Brown – Business Support Officer (Housing)
Paul McIntosh – Sustainability Officer

16. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.


Councillor Croney introduced the report proposing the adoption of the Corporate Plan for 2016 – 19. It was intended that the Plan would be adopted by all 3 sovereign councils and had been aligned so that there were similar objectives and similar wording for all 3 councils. A significant amount of this work had been achieved through the 111 events. A number of minor changes had been proposed by WDDC Overview and Scrutiny committee and the NDDC Council’s Scrutiny committee had supported those changes earlier in the week. Members were provided with the schedule of changes.

It was proposed by Councillor Croney seconded by Councillor Jespersen

Resolved

That the Council approves the Corporate Plan for 2016 – 19 to include the amendments as circulated.

Reason for decision

The draft Corporate Plan is a high level plan which sets out key priorities that the Council will be aiming to deliver over the next three years. The Plan commits the Council to delivering positive outcomes to its customers within a balanced budget and forms part of a single planning and performance
framework that joins the strategic plans of the Council and its partners to operational plans.

18 OUTSIDE BODIES QUARTERLY REPORT

Councillor Stayt advised that his CAB report had been tabled as he had attended a recent meeting which prevented him from submitting his report in time for the Council agenda dispatch.

Councillor Kerby, as Chairman of the Dorset Community Safety Partnership, gave a brief explanation of its function and how it had evolved. He confirmed that the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service was represented on the Pan Dorset Crime and Justice Board and Councillor Knox of the County Council was a member of that Board. Councillor Batstone chaired the Safeguarding Board at the County Council and regularly received Community Safety Partnership reports. Links between the Pan Dorset and Local Boards were strong.

Councillor Cattaway advised that there had been no CPEND meetings to report on.

Members discussed the withdrawal of a grant funding application by the Toby’s Young Person’s Project to Shaftesbury Town Council. There were concerns that the Project might cease to exist. The Chairman requested that officers investigate the background and establish what might be rescued to save the Project.

Resolved

To note the report from members representing the Council on outside bodies

19 CABINET REPORT

In addition to the reports as circulated, the following comments were made:

LEADER

Councillor Croney reported on the progress of the Local Government reform, which was moving apace on 2 distinct levels; strategically, with a higher level focus and consultation and also working towards the “best fit”, taking forward the various work streams. Many councillors across all Dorset authorities had been engaged in the process. Consultation was important in order that the Parish Councils and local residents came from a position of knowledge.

With regard to the LEP, work on this matter had been a battle. £87m of bids to Growth Deal 3 had been made; 30% of which were of benefit away from
the conurbation. Councillor Croney would no longer serve on the LEP Board but hoped that more funding would come to the west of the County. Post-Brexit had raised many questions and it was hoped that answers would be provided by the CLG in due course. Councillor Croney had recently met with government representatives in Downing Street who were keen to hear about housing issues and how to alleviate the pressures in Dorset.

Following a question regarding appointments to the LEP, Councillor Croney explained that she was not entirely familiar with the appointments process and would seek to establish how vacancies were filled.

Councillor Milsted thanked the Leader for her considerable efforts on behalf of the Council on her LEP work and the many benefits that she had managed to secure.

ACCESS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING
Councillor Carr-Jones highlighted a very useful leaflet that had been produced relating to aids and adaptations and which allowed people to live independently in their own homes. Disabled Facility Grants had been considered at the Scrutiny Committee earlier that week in relation to the Private Sector Housing Assistance policy.

COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION
Councillor Cattaway reported that the sale of the Blandford Forum Market to the Town Council would be finalised by the end of September.

In accordance with the Council’s constitution, Councillor Tanner asked the following question to Councillor Cattaway:

“Regarding the long awaited review of car parking in North Dorset and in particular to provide dedicated spaces for motor homes. Such spaces are provided in West Dorset and very well used as I can attest following a visit to West Dorset. They attract tourists and revenue to the high streets of that District at minimal cost. May I ask this Council not to delay further and help our shopping areas whilst helping its own finances ?”.

Councillor Cattaway responded that the car parking staff were currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the car parking policies throughout the tri council partnership. A consultation exercise would soon be underway during which this particular matter could be raised. Councillor Milsted also highlighted the need to relieve pressure of commuters parking in the residential areas near the railway station in Gillingham. Section 106 funds were available for improvements and he requested an update on progress. Councillor Cattaway undertook to look into the matter.

PLANNING
Councillor Walsh reported on the many changes that were taking place within his portfolio. The CIL consultation ended that day at 4pm so
members were urged to submit any comments they might have by that time. Members commented on the discrepancy between the CIL charges in North Dorset and West Dorset, which were double. Members heard that Peter Brett associates felt that the West Dorset Charges were too high.

ENVIRONMENT
Councillor Roake reminded members of the forthcoming steam fayre in Tarrant Hinton.

Councillor Milsted reported that the proposed representatives on the Dorset Waste Partnership are Councillor Somper and Councillor Ridout as substitute. The Corporate Manager for Democratic Services advised that these appointments would be confirmed with others at the special meeting of Council on 9 September.

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND HEALTH
Councillor Kerby reported that the Stour Valley and Poole Partnership were doing a feasibility study on a potential partnership with Bournemouth Borough Council for the Revenues and Benefits service, which currently included the tri council partnership and Purbeck council. The matter would come before the SVPP joint committee in September.

Councillor Milsted added that the backlog for council tax and benefit claims was now clearing, largely due to new software from the Dept of Work and Pensions. Targets were either being met or were very close. Whilst many things were being dealt with online, some issues were extremely complex and could not be dealt with through a quick telephone call. Councillor Kerby had sat in with the customer access team in Poole and was aware of how complex many customer issues were and how expediently staff worked on them.

Members noted the contents of the Cabinet report.

20 APPOINTMENT OF LEADER 2016/19

Councillor Croney proposed that Councillor Carr-Jones be elected Leader of the Council to 2019. In making the proposal and standing down as the Leader, Councillor Croney paid tribute to the Cabinet members who had been hard working, supportive and a pleasure to work with. She also thanked the Chief Executive and the Directors, all members of the Council and paid particular tribute to the Corporate Manager for Democratic Services and her team.

Councillor Milsted seconded the proposal for Leader and paid tribute to the considerable work of the outgoing leader.

Councillor Carr Jones made a speech, the text of which is set out in the appendix to these minutes.
Councillor Walsh also gave a speech of thanks and paid tribute to the out-going leader.

The Chief Executive expressed his gratitude to Councillor Croney for her hard work on behalf of the Council and all staff and presented her with a bouquet.

21 DEPUTY LEADER AND MEMBERS OF CABINET

The Leader announced that his deputy would be Councillor Walsh and the remaining members of the Cabinet would be appointed and announced later in the day.

The meeting ended at 11.20am

CHAIRMAN
I want to say a few words to or about Deborah
I well remember, way back in 2007. Or nine years ago in old money! Thinking to myself what a thoroughly good egg Deborah was.
Deborah was a relatively new member of development control committee…..I had a particularly sensitive planning application before committee, for a farm workers dwelling, it was an application to build a modest house on a farm for an elderly farmer and his wife so the next generation could take over the farm.
The way, as a new councillor, she was thorough, professional and vigorously interrogated me as ward member by asking all the right questions and then confidently moving the debate to a successful conclusion she showed her sensible and pragmatic side. The farm is still going and now houses 4 generations.
It was no coincidence back in 2009 when Peter Webb, as leader, asked his then cabinet, on which Michael and I were serving, whether we would support him in appointing Deborah to a Cabinet post. We were so right to have endorsed that move. She was then, as now, a committed and dedicated servant to the council. It was quite clear where she was heading….. and, as the bonus, by her joining us, I got rid of the Car Parking portfolio!!
As most of you will know Deborah’s stewardship has taken us, on an amazing journey in the last four years, morphing from a small, rural district council to an innovator in the murky world of national politics. Governments’ curtain twitchers have watched us with a mixture of curiosity and perhaps disbelief.
A Tri Council Partnership?? .................How very dare they!
But on a serious note, and, as I mentioned to my Group members on Tuesday evening, the Government, DCLG & the LGA really are watching us and in such a good and supportive way.
What has been achieved, under Deborah’s leadership has put North Dorset so far out there that even Tim Peake messaged me on twitter from the space station last month to wish us luck!
In 2012 when Deborah appointed me as her deputy leader, I knew I’d never have to do her job! I’d never prise my size 9’s into her suede boots!
Well I got that a bit wrong didn’t I.?
However, as is her wont; Deborah made sure her succession plan was sound, and by being inclusive and laying the right foundations, by making sure she had done the background work to pass on the baton, and having allowed me the time to find the confidence and gain experience. Well, here we are saying our adieus.
Deborah, we all wish you every success in your role as Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills at the County Council, safe in the knowledge you’ll always have North Dorset’s best interests at heart.
And finally, Deborah, please, when you take your seat on the back benches Mandy asks you don’t scribble on the desk.