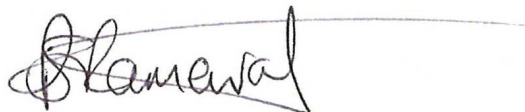


Despatched: 27.10.14

I hereby summon you to attend the meeting of the Sevenoaks District Council to be held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks commencing at 7.00 pm on 04 November 2014 to transact the under-mentioned business.



Chief Executive

### **AGENDA**

#### **Apologies for absence**

1. **To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22 July 2014** (Pages 1 - 6)
2. **To receive any declarations of interest not included in the register of interest from Members in respect of items of business included on the agenda for this meeting**
3. **Chairman's Announcements**
4. **To receive any questions from members of the public under paragraph 17 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.**
5. **To receive any petitions submitted by members of the public under paragraph 18 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.**
6. **Matters considered by Governance Committee**
  - a) **Governance Review** (Pages 7 - 12)
  - b) **Recording and The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014** (Pages 13 - 58)
7. **To consider the following reports from the Chief Executive or other Chief Officers on matters requiring the attention of Council:**
  - a) **Membership of Committees 2014/15** (Appendix to follow) (Pages 59 - 60)

b) **Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2015/16**

(Pages 61 - 68)

8. **To consider any questions by Members under paragraph 19.3 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution, notice of which has been duly given.**
9. **To consider any motions by Members under paragraph 20 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution, notice of which has been duly given.**

1. The following motion has been received from Cllr. Fittock:

‘This council has agreed to conduct a housing needs survey just for Swanley parishes that is linked to proposals to build on the Sevenoaks District Green Belt.

Sevenoaks District Council has recently agreed to conduct a District Wide Older Persons housing needs survey as part of new Strategic Housing Market Assessment required by Central Government. Therefore this council condemns, as a misuse of public money, the inappropriate use of section 106 funds being spent on a separate survey for Swanley.’

10. **To receive presentations from the Chief Commissioner Ann Barnes and the Deputy Chief Constable Mr Paul Brandon**
11. **To receive the report of the Leader of the Council on the work of the Cabinet since the last Council meeting.** (Pages 69 - 70)

**EXEMPT ITEMS**

(At the time of preparing this agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public.)

To assist in the speedy and efficient despatch of business, Members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to enquire of the appropriate Contact Officer named on a report prior to the day of the meeting.

Should you require a copy of this agenda or any of the reports listed on it in another format please do not hesitate to contact the Democratic Services Team as set out below.

For any other queries concerning this agenda or the meeting please contact:

**The Democratic Services Team (01732 227241)**

**DISTRICT COUNCIL OF SEVENOAKS**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Sevenoaks District Council  
held on 22 July 2014 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Mrs. Davison (Chairman)

McGarvey (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Mrs. Ayres, Ayres, Mrs. Bayley, Ball, Bosley, Brookbank, Butler, Ms. Chetram, Mrs. Cook, Cooke, Davison, Dickins, Edwards-Winsor, Eyre, Fittock, Fleming, Gaywood, Mrs. George, Grint, Hogarth, Horwood, Mrs. Hunter, Lindsay, Ms. Lowe, Maskell, Mrs. Morris, Neal, Orridge, Mrs. Parkin, Pett, Piper, Mrs. Purves, Ramsay, Mrs. Sargeant, Scholey, Miss. Stack, Miss. Thornton, Towell and Underwood

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Mrs. Bosley, Mrs. Bracken, Brown, Clark, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Dawson, Firth, Raikes, Searles, Walshe and Williamson

12. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 13 May 2014.

Some confusion was caused by the wording in the third paragraph of page 4 of the minutes and it was agreed that this needed to be made clearer.

It was noted that one too many members had been appointed to the Sevenoaks District Strategic Board, Councillor Abraham advised that he had agreed to be removed subject to Council's approval.

Resolved: That

- a) the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22 July 2014 be approved and signed as a correct record, subject to the last sentence of the third paragraph on page 4 being amended to read 'He also stated that the 24 dual hatted members should not vote, but if they did and voted against passing on the money, they should resign';
- b) Councillor Abraham be removed from the membership of the Sevenoaks District Strategic Board.

13. To receive any declarations of interest not included in the register of interest from Members in respect of items of business included on the agenda for this meeting

No further declarations of interest were received.

In order to be as clear and transparent as possible, Cllr. McGarvey advised that in relation to Minute 18 (a) 'Community Governance Review – Badgers Mount Order' he had been a co-opted member of a committee of Shoreham Parish Council discussing this issue and had previously been a clerk to Shoreham Parish Council.

14. Chairman's announcements

The Chairman announced that Ian Bigwood was retiring from Electoral Services on 15 August 2014 after 33 years service. He would be greatly missed and was very well thought of throughout his profession and by Members.

She reported that she had attended and represented the Council at 64 events in the last two months, which had included visiting 12 local schools. It was proving to be very enjoyable.

*"The lamps are going out all over Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime."*

The Chairman advised that Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary, had said these words on the eve of Britain officially entered the First World War. 100 years on everyone was being invited along with millions of individuals, households and companies to join together in a national moment of reflection. Everyone in the UK was being asked to turn off or dim their lights between 10pm and 11pm on 4 August 2014 – leaving only a single light or candle for this symbolic act of reflection and hope.

15. To receive any questions from members of the public under paragraph 17 of part 2 (the council and district council members) of the constitution.

No questions had been received.

16. To receive any petitions submitted by members of the public under paragraph 18 of part 2 (the Council and District Council members) of the constitution.

No petitions were received.

17. Matters considered by the Cabinet

a) Safeguarding Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Ms. Lowe seconded the recommendations from Cabinet. The report sought approval for the adoption of the updated Safeguarding Policy to enable the Council to more effectively meet its statutory responsibilities under s. 11 of the Children's Act 2004 and follow guidance published by the Department of Health and Kent County Council in relation to vulnerable adults. The Policy was intended to apply to all staff, Members of the Council, contractors and volunteers, and also clarified the District Council's responsibility for ensuring that any organisation that received funding from the District Council had appropriate policies in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

Resolved: That the updated Safeguarding Policy for the protection of children and vulnerable adults be adopted.

b) Sevenoaks District Community Safety Strategy & Action Plan 2014/15 Adults

**Council - Tuesday, 22 July 2014**

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Ms. Lowe seconded the recommendations from Cabinet. The report which sought approval for the adoption of the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Strategy & Action Plan 2014/15.

A Member expressed support for the policy but requested that in line with the now adopted Safeguarding Policy, that vulnerable older people living at home be added to the list of priorities when it was next reviewed. It was noted that although not directly mentioned, the Community Safety Team took the issue seriously and particularly worked on issues such as cold calling.

Resolved: That the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Action Plan be adopted.

18. Matters considered by other Standing Committees

a) Community Governance Review – Badgers Mount Order

The Chairman advised that since the publication of the agenda Officers had been made aware of some typographical errors in the Establishment Order which had since been corrected. Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Pett seconded the recommendations from the Governance Committee.

Councillor Grint speaking as a resident and Ward Councillor and on behalf of his fellow ward councillor, was very pleased to be able to support the historic creation of an independent parish council and thanked Shoreham Parish Council for its care, cooperation and help with becoming independent.

Resolved: That subject to typographical amendments in the Establishment Order, a Parish Council for the parish of Badgers Mount be established on and from 1 April 2015 in the terms of the Establishment Order as appended to the report submitted.

b) Community Governance Review

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Pett seconded the recommendations from the Governance Committee.

Resolved: That

- a) Romney Street Ward be created in the Parish of Shoreham;
- b) the number of parish councillors for the Romney Street Ward, the Shoreham Ward and The Well Hill Hundreds Ward of the Parish of Shoreham be 1, 6 and 1 respectively; and
- c) the boundary between the parishes of Chevening and Sevenoaks Weald be amended in the vicinity of Bowzell Green.

c) Changes to the Council's Constitution

## Agenda Item 1

**Council - Tuesday, 22 July 2014**

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Pett seconded the recommendations from the Governance Committee.

Resolved: That the following amended wording replace Part 13 paragraph 15 (2) of the Constitution 'Officer Responsibilities and Delegations – Delegation to Chief Planning Officer'

- (i) 'Where the Council is a consultee (e.g. when the planning application has been submitted to Kent County Council as the Mineral Planning or Education Authority, or to an adjoining planning authority) and the application is considered to be significant, controversial, or sensitive in nature then the Chief Planning Officer shall if requested by a Member or Members report the matter to the next Development Control Committee.
- (ii) Where the Council is a consultee (e.g. when the planning application submitted by Kent County Council as the Mineral Planning or Education Authority, or to an adjoining planning authority) and when timeframes do not allow and the application is considered to be significant, controversial, or sensitive in nature then the Chief Planning Officer shall if requested by a Member or Members seek the views of the Local Ward Member, the Leader and other relevant Portfolio holders and Deputies.'

19. To consider the following reports from the Chief Executive or other Chief Officers on matters requiring the attention of Council

- a) Appointments to Outside Organisations – The Local Democracy and Accountability Network for Councillors

The report sought to retrospectively approve the appointment of Cllr. Raikes with Cllr. Miss Stack as official substitute, to South East Employers (SEE) The Local Democracy and Accountability Network for Councillors.

Resolved: That

- a) Councillors Raikes be appointed to serve on the Local Democracy and Accountability Network for Councillors, with Cllr. Miss. Stack as the official substitute retrospectively from 4 July 2014; and
- b) the Chief Officer Corporate Support be appointed as the Officer representative with delegated authority given to the Chief Executive to change as necessary.

20. To consider any questions by Members under paragraph 19.3 of part 2 (the Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution, notice of which have been duly given.

No questions had been received.

**Council - Tuesday, 22 July 2014**

21. To consider any motions by Members under paragraph 20 of part 2 (the Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution, notice of which have been duly given.

No motions had been received.

22. To receive the report of the Leader of the Council on the work of the Cabinet since the last council meeting.

The Leader of the Council reported on the work that he and the Cabinet had undertaken in the period 2 April to 9 July 2014.

He further advised in relation to the South East England Local Enterprise Partnership, that despite being the largest area and it being indicated that funding would be treated more favourably to reflect this. This had not happened. Due to a number of changes made there was also a reduced pot which was aimed more at shorter projects with a 12-18 month window. A proposed project in Swanley had not been successful. However a small pot for West Kent of £4.2m had been identified which he hoped could be passed to the West Kent partnership and he would update Council in due course.

In response to a question he reported that at the recent meeting he and the Chief Executive had attended a meeting with the principle of the Hadlow Group had been buoyant about the prospects of K College coming under their control subject to government confirming that any debts would be written off before they took full control. A further meeting was to take place later that week.

23. Matters considered by the Cabinet

- a) Investment Strategy

Members noted that parts of the report had now been reclassified as open to the public, and were careful during the debate not to mention information contained within the exempted papers (by virtue of section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from this meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that likely disclosure of exempt information is involved as defined by paragraph 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as identified in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972). The debate was therefore held in public and there was no need to pass a resolution to exclude the press and public.

Cllr. Fleming moved and Cllr. Ramsay seconded that money be set aside for the purposes of the proposals set outlined for the Investment Strategy. In moving the recommendations Cllr. Fleming advised that this was one of the steps being taken in the overall strategy and goal of self sufficiency. He advised that a trading company was still being investigated but further legal advice was being sought. He understood that both the Scrutiny Committee and the Audit Committee were interested in setting up working groups to examine the strategy but that he had been reassured that there would not be a duplication of work.

The Chairman of the Audit Committee advised that it would be looking into the risk management, not the merits, as this was a new area of exposure and as such would abstain from voting as the Chairman of that Committee.

A Member had concerns including whether there was enough in house expertise; that it may be too restrictive to limit investment just to the district; the cost of consultants; Officer's time and resources; and whether the Council could be flexible and quick enough to respond when delays could be costly. In response to those and other questions Cllr. Fleming advised that though the report mentioned it Council was not yet being asked to set up a trading company; whilst it was not the best time for interest rates or investing in the property market, the return would still be more favourable than what the Council was in receipt of at the moment. Self sufficiency was crucial in order to be able to support the community and provide what was needed locally and talks were already underway as to what exactly self sufficiency would be as arguably if government was sufficiency local authorities should have free rein to spend their own money.

Resolved: That up to £5m be set aside from a review of reserves for the purposes of the proposals outlined in the Investment Strategy (as outlined within the exempted parts of the report).

(Cllr. Grint abstained from voting as Chairman of the Audit Committee)

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.49 pm

Chairman



**Item 6 (a) – Community Governance Review**

The attached report was considered by the Governance Committee, relevant minute extract below:

Governance Committee – 18 September 2014 (Minute 11 )

Members considered the report which advised that the District Council's draft recommendations for changes to the warding of Shoreham Parish and a change to the boundary between the parishes of Chevening and Sevenoaks Weald had been published on 30 July 2014, and the consultation period had closed on 29 August 2014. The Electoral Services Manager reported that no representations had been received, and that there had been no opposition to the proposals submitted by Shoreham Parish – to create a new ward of Romney Street.

The report also outlined the proposal to amend the boundary between Chevening and Sevenoaks Weald Parishes in the vicinity of Bowzell Green, and advised that the consequential change to the Brasted, Chevening & Sundridge and Seal & Weald Wards of the District Council would be dealt with by The Boundary Commission and along with everything else, come into effect at the joint District Council and Parish Councils elections on 7 May 2015. The next stage of the review was for the District Council to publish its final recommendations by the end of November 2014.

One of the recommendations of the report was that the number of parish councillors for the Romney Street Ward, the Shoreham Ward and The Well Hill Hundreds Ward of the Parish of Shoreham be 1, 6 and 1 respectively. Some Members had been lobbied outside of the consultation period that it would be more appropriate to be 1, 5, 2 respectively, which would more fairly represent constituents. The current recommendation was that one Councillor would represent 159 in the Romney Street Ward; 6 would represent the 713 people of Shoreham (119 constituents per representative); and 211 constituents of Well Hill Hundreds Ward would have one Councillor. The alternative suggestion would be 1 representative for 159 constituents; 5 representing 143 each; and 2 representing 106 each.

The Chairman pointed out that this information had missed the consultation period in which no objections had been raised, and pointed out that if Members were minded to change the recommendation it would need to go back out to consultation and would therefore not be in place ready for the publication of the register on 28 November 2014 ready for the election on 7 May 2015.

Members queried how the publication of the register affected the decision, and how long any further consultation would take.

*Action 1: The Electoral Services Manager to find out how long any further consultation would take if Members were minded to go with the suggestion of 1, 5, 2.*

## Agenda Item 6a

### Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that

- a) following consultation on the District Council's draft recommendation, a Romney Street Ward be created in the Parish of Shoreham;
- b) following consultation on the District Council's draft recommendation, the number of parish councillors for the Romney Street Ward, the Shoreham Ward and The Well Hill Hundreds Ward of the Parish of Shoreham be 1, 6 and 1 respectively; and
- c) following consultation on the District Council's draft recommendation, the boundary between the parishes of Chevening and Sevenoaks Weald be amended in the vicinity of Bowzell Green.

### Footnote

Electoral Services Manager response to Action 1:

'With regard to how long any further consultation would take, there is no statutory time frame. However, a reasonable minimum period would be twelve weeks.

The combined consultation period throughout this Community Governance Review was twelve weeks.'

**COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

**Council – 4 November**

Report of Chief Officer for Legal and Governance

Status: For Decision

Also considered by: Governance Committee – 18 September 2014

Key Decision: No

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**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Fleming

**Contact Officer(s)** Christian Everett – ext. 7243

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**Recommendation to Governance committee:** That

- (a) following consultation on the District Council's draft recommendation, a Romney Street Ward be created in the Parish of Shoreham;
- (b) following consultation on the District Council's draft recommendation, the number of parish councillors for the Romney Street Ward, the Shoreham Ward and The Well Hill Hundreds Ward of the Parish of Shoreham be 1, 6 and 1 respectively; and
- (c) following consultation on the District Council's draft recommendation, the boundary between the parishes of Chevening and Sevenoaks Weald be amended in the vicinity of Bowzell Green.

**Recommendation to Council:** That

- (a) following consultation on the District Council's draft recommendation, Council confirms the creation of a new Romney Street Ward in the Parish of Shoreham;
- (b) following consultation on the District Council's draft recommendation, Council confirms the number of parish councillors for the Romney Street Ward, the Shoreham Ward and The Well Hill Hundreds Ward of the Parish of Shoreham to be 1, 6 and 1 respectively; and
- (c) following consultation on the District Council's draft recommendation, Council confirms amendment to the boundary between the parishes of Chevening and Sevenoaks Weald in the vicinity of Bowzell Green.

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**Reason for recommendation: representations have been received from Shoreham Parish Council to create a new Ward of the Parish and from Chevening Parish Council to amend its boundary.**

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## Agenda Item 6a

### **Introduction**

- 1 The District Council's draft recommendations for changes to the warding of Shoreham Parish and a change to the boundary between the parishes of Chevening and Sevenoaks Weald were published on 30 July 2014.
- 2 The consultation period closed on 29 August 2014. No representations have been received.

### **The Representations**

- 3 None

### **Recommendation – Parish of Shoreham**

- 4 There has been no opposition to the proposals submitted by Shoreham Parish Council (previously reported to Governance Committee) to create a new ward of Romney Street (in accordance with the map supplied to Governance Committee previously) and it is recommended that this change takes effect at the 7 May 2015 election.

### **Recommendation – Parishes of Chevening and Sevenoaks Weald**

- 5 This is a minor proposal from a handful of residents which has the support of the two parish councils involved. It is recommended therefore that the boundary between Chevening and Sevenoaks Weald Parishes be amended in the vicinity of Bowzell Green (in accordance with the map supplied to Governance Committee previously) with effect at the 7 May 2015 election.

As previously reported to Governance Committee, the consequential change to the Brasted, Chevening & Sundridge and Seal & Weald Wards of the District Council will be dealt with by The Boundary Commission to come into effect at the joint District Council and Parish Councils elections on 7 May 2015.

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

There are no cost implications for the District Council in conducting a community governance review apart from staff resources.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

District Councils are required to keep parish council governance under review. Opportunity has been taken to review these two matters before the next scheduled parish council elections.

#### Equality Impacts

Part of the purpose of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health (LGPIH) Act 2007 is to ensure that from time to time a review of boundaries is undertaken to bring about better local democracy and fair representation within communities. The review therefore has a positive contribution of promoting equality.

**Conclusions**

The proposals emanating from Shoreham Parish Council and from residents of Bowzell Green have merit and support. The next stage of this review is for the District Council to publish its final recommendations by the end of November 2014 (in accordance with the Terms of Reference agreed previously). The effective date of the changes to parish boundaries and electoral arrangements will be 7 May 2015.

**Appendices**

None

**Background Papers:**

[Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007](#)

[Guidance on community governance reviews \(published jointly by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Electoral Commission\) – April 2008](#)

**Christine Nuttall**  
**Chief Officer for Legal and Governance**

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**Item 6 (b) – Recording and The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014**

The attached report was considered by the Governance Committee, relevant minute extract below:

Governance Committee – 18 September 2014 (Minute 13)

The Chief Officer Legal & Governance presented a report advising on the successful recording of Full Council on a trial basis and asking the Committee to consider and recommend to Council the roll out of recording all meetings of Full Council, Development Control and Licensing Hearings along with the draft protocol agreed at Council on 1 April 2014.

The report also advised that following the implementation of The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 the public were now allowed to report all meetings via social media of any kind such as tweeting, blogging or via Facebook including the filming of meetings. The Regulations also required the Council to make publicly available a ‘decision record’ of certain decisions which officers had taken on behalf of the council.

It was noted that the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 also applied to Town and Parish Council’s and Members were concerned as to their awareness of this.

*Action 2: The Chief Officer Legal & Governance to circulate a link to the report bringing the Town and Parish Council’s attention to the new regulations.*

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that

- a) following Full Council being successfully recorded on a trial basis all meetings of Full Council, Development Control Committee and Licensing Hearings be recorded from now on;
- b) Officers be given discretion to record such other public meetings of the Council, the Cabinet and their committees, sub-committees or joint committees as they see fit; and
- c) following the implementation of The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, the amendments to the Constitution together with a Protocol on Reporting on Meetings as set out at Appendix B to the report, be approved.

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**RECORDING AND THE OPENNESS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES REGULATIONS 2014**

**Council – 4 November 2014**

Report of Chief Officer Legal and Governance

Status: For consideration and decision

Also considered by: Governance Committee – 18 September 2014

Key Decision: No

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**Executive Summary:** Following Full Council being successfully recorded on a trial basis the Governance Committee is asked to consider and recommend to Council the roll out of recording all meetings of Full Council, Development Control and Licensing Hearings. Following the implementation of The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 the public are now allowed to report all meetings via social media of any kind such as tweeting, blogging or via Facebook including the filming of meetings. The Regulations also require the Council to make publicly available a ‘decision record’ of certain decisions which officers have taken on behalf of their council.

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**This report supports the Key Aim of** Effective Use of Council Resources

**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Fleming

**Contact Officer(s)** Mrs Christine Nuttall – Chief Officer Legal and Governance

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**Recommendation to Governance Committee:** That it be recommended to Council that

- (a) following Full Council being successfully recorded on a trial basis the recording of all meetings of Full Council, Development Control Committee and Licensing Hearings now takes place;
- (b) that Officers have discretion to record such other public meetings of the Council, the Cabinet and their committees, sub-committees or joint committees as they see fit; and
- (c) following the implementation of The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 amendments to the Constitution together with a Protocol on Reporting Meetings as set out at Appendix B be approved.

**Recommendation to Full Council:**

- (a) that following Full Council being successfully recorded on a trial basis the recording of all meetings of Full Council, Development Control Committee and
-

## Agenda Item 6b

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Licensing Hearings now takes place;

- (b) that Officers have discretion to record such other public meetings of the Council, the Cabinet and their committees, sub-committees or joint committees as they see fit; and
- (c) following the implementation of The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 amendments to the Constitution together with a Protocol on Reporting Meetings as set out at Appendix B be approved.

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**Reason for recommendation:** With present technology and the new Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 people's rights to report council meetings in digital and social media are enhanced resulting in the need for the Council to have a true record of what was said in the event of an edited version being produced. There is a need for a Protocol to make sure that recording especially filming takes place safely and without obstruction to the meeting.

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### **Introduction and Background**

- 1 On 13 March 2014 the Governance Committee considered a report recommending to Full Council that their meetings be recorded on a trial basis and if successful Full Council ratify the roll out of recording all meetings of Full Council, Development Control Committee and Licensing Hearings.
- 2 This recommendation came following the Department for Communities and Local Government encouraging the public to report on meetings, allowing the filming of councillors and officers at meetings that are open to the public including the social media reporting of meetings.
- 3 As a result of this information the Governance Committee Working Group looked into the benefits of recording Council meetings which were concluded to be as follows:
  - with present technology anyone can record any meeting undetected which opens the possibility of challenge as to what was said at the meeting; and
  - the Council will have a true record of what was said in the event of an edited version being produced.
- 4 Following successful recording of Full Council on 1 July 2014 the Governance Committee is now asked to recommend to Council the recording of all meetings of Full Council, Development Control Committee and Licensing Hearings.

### **The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014**

- 5 The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 (the Regulations) came into force on 6 August 2014. Under the Regulations any member of the press or public has the right to film, blog, tweet or use any other type of social media to report any public meeting of their local government bodies, including, committees, sub-committees and joint committees.

- 6 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has now issued a draft Plain English guide to the regulations that explains what these new rules mean for the public attending local authority meetings, including meetings of a body's committees, sub-committees and any joint committees involving two or more bodies. The guide also covers meetings of a Council's executive, including any committees and sub-committees of the executive. The guide is set out at Appendix A to this report.
- 7 The Regulations allow any person to attend a public meeting of a "relevant local government body" (which includes District Councils and Parish Councils) for the purposes of reporting, and allow any persons with the aim of reporting to use any communication methods, including the internet, to publish, post or otherwise share the results of their reporting activities, during or after the meeting. However, oral reporting or commentary is prohibited.
- 8 'Reporting' is defined as:
- filming, photographing or audio recording of proceedings
  - using any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings of a meeting as it takes place or later, and
  - reporting or providing commentary on proceedings of a meeting, orally or in writing
- 9 The changes do not affect the current circumstances in which a private meeting may be held or a person may be excluded (for example, where exempt information would be disclosed or in the case of disorderly conduct).

### **Implications for the Council**

- 10 In relation to the requirement in the Regulations to allow reporting, the Council's Constitution currently needs updating as the Constitution currently does not permit filming at its meetings and photography and recording of meeting can only take place with the consent of the Members. As a result the Constitutional amendments are set out in red within Appendix B along with a Protocol for members of the public wishing to report on meetings which will form an Appendix to the Constitution.
- 11 The Protocol takes into account Health and Safety considerations and informs the public in relation to the Council's expectations on how reporting will take place in order that meetings are not disrupted.
- 12 Given the right for members of the public to record public meeting, it is recommended that Officers be given clear permission to record any meeting themselves. This would allow the Council to hold its own, unedited recording of proceedings.

### **Recording of decisions and access to documents**

- 13 The Regulations also:

## Agenda Item 6b

- require a written record to be made of any decision that has been delegated to an officer of the relevant local government body under a specific express authorisation, or under a general authorisation where the effect of the decision is to grant permissions or licences, affecting the rights of individuals, award contracts or incur expenditure which materially affects the body's financial position
- require that the written records are made available to the public at the relevant body's offices, on their website if they have one, by post if requested and on receipt of payment for copying and postage, and through any other means thought appropriate by the local government body
- require the written record to be available for public inspection for at least six years, and any supporting documentation for at least four years.

14 The Guide provides examples of decisions that should be recorded:

- decisions about awarding contract above specified individual/total values (the values will vary according to the relevant council or local government body)
- a decision to carry out major road works
- decisions to issue tree preservation orders
- building control decisions and notices
- decisions to give listed building consents

15 The Guide goes on to provide examples of decisions that need not be recorded:

- routine administrative and organisational decisions
- decisions on operational matters such as changes to services and charges
- decisions to give business relief to individual traders
- decisions to review the benefit claims of an individual applicant

16 The above examples, are stated to be illustrative and not exhaustive but gives some insight into the difficulties of interpreting the requirement.

17 As a result of these changes, Appendix A of the Constitution 'Access to Information Procedure Rules' needs to be updated as set out in red within Appendix B of this report.

## Key Implications

### Financial

There are no direct financial implications. However, there may be some additional costs associated with complying with the provisions in the Regulations although these will be indirect costs, such as additional officer time.

### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

Through the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Government is committed to opening up council meetings in England to digital and social media. The new Regulations are accompanied by a new guide for the Press and the public on attending and reporting on local government meetings which is attached at Appendix A. Although the new guidance does not have legal status it does accompany the Regulations and should be read in conjunction with the Regulations.

There is a risk that inaccurate or misleading information may be published before approved Minutes are available which could create difficult problems. However, the recording of Full Council, Development Control Committee and Licensing Hearings will mean that for those meetings the Council will have an accurate record of what took place. In addition, it may be possible to identify and record other particularly problematic committee meetings that may be taking place in the future.

There is a criminal penalty for non-compliance with the access to documents part of the Regulations whereby a person who has custody of documents which should be available for inspection, will commit an offence if that person refuses to disclose or intentionally obstructs the disclosure of such documents under the Regulations. The penalty for the offences is a fine not exceeding level 1 on the standard scale which is currently £200.

The Regulations have been brought in quickly without the usual form of consultation. As a result the DCLG recognises that a Council's existing Standing Orders might not be fully in line with the new requirements. If this is the case the DCLG have suggested that in the short-term, any provisions in our Standing Orders which could be taken to inhibit the new reporting rules should be waived. As soon as practical thereafter the Council should formally update their Standing Orders.

### Equality Impacts

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	Persons who are unable to attend Council Meetings because of disability or age will benefit from the changes taking place which enhances the ability to access information under the governments transparency agenda.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity?	Yes	

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Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		N/A

### Conclusions

The new rules help any members of the press and public who want to know about, view or report the work of local government bodies.

The new national rules increase the public's rights to film, audio-record, take photographs and use social media such as tweeting and blogging to report the proceedings of all such meetings that are open to the public.

The Council is required to provide reasonable facilities for any member of the public to report on meetings. The Protocol sets out a policy to ensure public safety and that disruption does not take place and takes into account those members of the public who do not want to be filmed.

Following Full Council being successfully recorded on a trial basis Council is requested to approve the roll out of routine recording of Full Council, Development Control Committee, and Licensing Hearings.

### Appendices

Appendix A – DCLG Guide for the Press and the public 'Open and accountable local government'.

Appendix B – Amendments to the Constitution.

### Background Papers:

DCLG letter to Chief Executives of Principal Local Authorities in England from Paul Rowsell dated 6 August 2014

Bevan Brittan publication Council meetings – lights, cameras, action!

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

Sevenoaks District Council Constitution

**Christine Nuttall**  
**Chief Officer for Legal and Governance**



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

## Open and accountable local government

A guide for the press and public on attending and reporting meetings of local government

## Agenda Item 6b

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## About this Guide

The national rules<sup>i</sup> have been changed to make councils, including parish and town councils<sup>ii</sup>, and other local government bodies such as fire and rescue authorities, more transparent and accountable to their local communities. A full list of bodies to which the rules apply is at **annex A**.

This plain English Guide<sup>iii</sup> gives practical information about what these new rules mean for members of the public attending meetings of local government bodies, including meetings of a body's committees, sub-committees and any joint committees involving two or more bodies. The Guide also covers meetings of any council's executive (i.e. the council's cabinet<sup>iv</sup>), including any committees and sub-committees of the executive.

In particular, this Guide gives practical information about how members of the public can use modern technology and communication tools to report on meetings they are attending, and about how to access information on decisions taken by a body's officers or individual members. This Guide will also help the public to know when they can attend meetings of local government bodies, and what documents and information are available to them. It should also help councillors and officers to comply with the new rules.

As the Guide explains, different rules apply to different meetings, particularly meetings of a parish council or parish meeting, and the meetings of a council's executive, its committees or sub-committees.

- **Part 1** focuses on the use of various communication tools for reporting the proceedings of any meeting of a local government body which is open to the public.
- **Part 2** explains how the public can access meetings of a council's executive, its committees and sub-committees, and records of executive decisions taken by individual members or officers.
- **Part 3** explains how the public can access all other meetings of a local government body, other than parish and town councils, and records of certain other decisions taken by officers.
- **Part 4** explains how the public can access meetings of parish and town councils, parish meetings and the Council of the Isles of Scilly, and records of certain decisions taken by those councils' officers.
- **Part 5** focuses on other rights that the public have to access information.

This Guide now replaces the Guide titled "Your council – going to its meetings, seeing how it works" that the department issued in June 2013.

All footnotes are listed at the end of the Guide.

# Part 1 Your rights to attend and report meetings

This part of the Guide applies to all the local government bodies listed at annex A.

## **Why are there new national rules?**

We now live in a modern, digital world where the use of modern communication methods such as filming, tweeting and blogging should be embraced for enhancing the openness and transparency of local government bodies. This will ensure we have strong, 21<sup>st</sup> century, local democracy where local government bodies are genuinely accountable to the local people whom they serve and to the local taxpayers who help fund them.

## **Who do these rules help?**

These rules help any members of the press and public who want to know about, view or report the work of local government bodies. The “press” is defined in the widest terms – including traditional print media, filming crews, hyper-local journalists and bloggers.

The new national rules<sup>v</sup> have increased your rights to film, audio-record, take photographs, and use social media such as tweeting and blogging to report the proceedings of all such meetings that are open to the public.

## **Are all meetings of a local government body open to the public?**

All meetings must be open to the public except in limited defined circumstances where the national rules require or allow the meeting to be closed to the public – see Part 2 for the rules for a council’s executive, Part 3 for the rules for other local government bodies, other than parish and town councils, and Part 4 for the rules for parish and town councils.

## **Can I film or audio-record the meeting?**

Yes, councils and other local government bodies are required to allow any member of the public to take photographs, film and audio-record the proceedings, and report on all public meetings. While no prior permission is required to carry out this activity, it is advisable that any person wishing to film or audio-record a public meeting let their local government staff know so that all necessary arrangements can be made for the public meeting. This is important because the rules require local government bodies only to provide reasonable facilities for any member of the public to report on meetings.

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There is no legal requirement for councils to webcast their meetings, but where councils and other local government bodies webcast any of their public meetings, they should, as a matter of good practice, notify the public.

### **Do I need to have advance permission to report the meeting?**

No. Whilst we would encourage people to contact staff in advance if they want to film or record, equally, we would discourage any system which “vetted” journalists or restricted reporting to “approved” journalists. Councils should support freedom of the press within the law and not seek to restrict those who may write critical comments.

### **Can I film or audio-record a private meeting<sup>vi</sup>?**

The rules on the use of communication methods, such as filming and audio-recording, only require local government bodies to allow the reporting of meetings open to the public. The relevant council or local government body may not allow you to film or audio-record its private meetings. You may also not be allowed to leave recording equipment in the room where a private meeting is held for the purpose of reporting on the meeting.

### **Can I tweet or blog a council or local government body meeting?**

Yes, the new rules<sup>vii</sup> allow for reporting of meetings via social media of any kind. Therefore bloggers, tweeters, and for example, Facebook, YouTube users and individuals with their own website, should be able to report meetings. You should ask your council for details of the facilities they are providing for reporting.

### **If I am a councillor, can I tweet or blog during council meetings?**

The national rules do not prevent councillors from tweeting and blogging at meetings, so they should be able to do so provided it is not disruptive and does not detract from the proper conduct of the meeting. Whilst councillors are expected to comply with their body’s code of conduct, this should not prevent councillors from tweeting or blogging when appropriate.

### **What sort of facilities will my council or local government body provide?**

Councils or local government bodies are required to provide “reasonable facilities” to facilitate reporting. This should include space to view and hear the meeting, seats, and ideally a desk. Councils and local government bodies should use their common sense to determine the range of reasonable facilities they can actively provide to support the free press in all its forms.

To facilitate public scrutiny and public reporting, local authorities should not conduct their meetings in foreign languages.

**Will I be allowed to film, tweet, blog or audio-record the meetings of other bodies not listed in annex A?**

The Government message is that all public bodies should adopt maximum openness and transparency. This is also essential for bodies or groups making decisions for their local area because they are expected to be open and transparent in their decision-making. While the new national rules do not apply to some local groups such as neighbourhood forums and Local Enterprise Partnerships, such groups are encouraged, when having public meetings, to embrace the use of modern technology and should allow the same filming, audio-recording, taking of photographs, tweeting and blogging as applied to local government bodies, particularly if they are in receipt of public funds. This will give local people the opportunity to see how decisions are being made that affect their community.

**Are there any limits to what I can say in a tweet or video I publish?**

The law of the land applies – including the law of defamation and the law on public order offences (see the Crown Prosecution Service guidance on social media<sup>viii</sup>).

Freedom of speech within the law should also be exercised with personal and social responsibility – showing respect and tolerance towards the views of others.

**Are there other limits that I should be aware of?**

The council or local government body should consider adopting a policy on the filming of members of the public, and ensure that they protect children, the vulnerable and other members of the public who actively object to being filmed, without undermining the broader transparency of the meeting.

**Will I be able to provide commentary during the meeting?**

Any person can provide written commentary during a meeting, as well as oral commentary outside or after the meeting. The new rules do not permit oral commentary to be provided during a meeting as this would be disruptive to the good order of the meeting.

**Can I be asked to leave a meeting because I'm taking photographs, filming or audio-recording the meeting or using social media?**

Generally, people attending public meetings must be readily able to film, audio-record, take photographs or use social media. Councils and other local government bodies must take steps to ensure this is the case. However, those undertaking these activities must not act in a disruptive manner, which could result in being excluded from the meeting.

### **What is disruptive behaviour?**

Essentially, this could be any action or activity which disrupts the conduct of meetings or impedes other members of the public being able to see, hear or film etc the proceedings. Examples can include:

- moving to areas outside the areas designated for the public<sup>ix</sup> without the consent of the Chairman,
- excessive noise in recording or setting up or re-siting equipment during the debate/discussion,
- intrusive lighting and use of flash photography; and
- asking for people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording.

You may be excluded from a meeting if you act in a disruptive manner.

### **Can I leave recording equipment in a public meeting room and record without being present?**

There is no legal prohibition, however, under the national rules, the local government body may require any such recording to stop if at any stage the meeting becomes a private meeting.

### **But the local authority says reporting is a breach of its Standing Orders?**

It is a legal duty for the local government body to follow the new provisions. If a local government body's existing Standing Orders are not fully in line with the new legislation, in the short-term, we recommend they simply waive the relevant provisions of those old Standing Orders which could be taken to inhibit the new reporting rules, and then take steps to update formally its Standing Orders.

## Part 2 Access to meetings and documents of a council's executive

This Part explains how the public can access meetings of a council's executive, its committees and sub-committees, and records of executive decisions taken by individual members or officers. A council's executive (i.e. the council's cabinet) is its main decision making body consisting of an elected mayor or leader and a number of councillors. This Part applies to councils with either a leader and cabinet or elected mayor and cabinet. It does not apply to councils operating the committee system or other local government bodies listed in Annex A.

### **What are the national rules for access to meetings and documents of a council's executive?**

The national rules are principally provided by the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 which introduced significantly greater transparency and openness into the meetings of a council's executive, its committees and sub-committees. The rules also strengthen the rights of councillors to access information about items to be discussed at a public or private meeting of their council's executive.

### **Who can make an executive decision in my council?**

The decision maker can be the executive, its committees and sub-committees, joint committees, joint sub-committees, individual councillors, and officers who have delegated responsibility from the executive to make executive decisions. Your council may have local rules<sup>x</sup> that will explain who may make a decision.

## Attending the meetings of your council's executive

### **How will I know about a forthcoming public meeting of my council's executive?**

Your council must give a notice of the meeting at least 5 clear days before it takes place. The details of the meeting must be published at your council's offices and on its website where practicable. The agenda must be published with any background papers. No item can be considered if the item is not available for inspection by the public with 5 clear days' notice.

Where an item is added to the agenda within 5 days before the meeting is scheduled to take place, a revised agenda, public report and background papers must be published as soon as the item is added to the agenda. In some circumstances, the whole or part of a

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report may not be available for public inspection because it contains either confidential or exempt information. In this case, the report should bear the phrase 'not for publication' and state that it contains confidential information or set out the description of the exempt information.

### **Can I obtain a copy of the agenda and other relevant papers for a public meeting of my council's executive?**

Yes, your council must provide you with a copy of the agenda, and other relevant papers once you have made payment of postage and/or copying charge. There are also additional legal rights to access information, outlined in Part 5 of this Guide.

### **Can a council's executive choose to meet in private?**

All meetings of an executive including meetings of its committees or sub-committees must be open to the public, except in limited defined circumstances where the national rules require or allow the meeting to be closed to the public.

The rules require a meeting of an executive to be closed to the public in two specific circumstances:

- If the presence of the public is likely to result in the council breaching a legal obligation to third parties about the keeping of confidential information; or
- a lawful power is used to exclude the public in order to maintain orderly conduct or prevent misbehaviour at a meeting.

In addition, a meeting can also be closed to the public where the executive so decides (by passing a resolution of its members) because exempt information would otherwise be likely to be disclosed. It is open to the executive if it chooses to consider in public matters involving exempt information. There is no over-riding legal requirement forcing councils to discuss exempt information in private.

### **What is confidential information?**

Confidential information means:

- information provided to the council by a Government department on terms which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public; and
- information which is prohibited from being disclosed by any enactment or by a court order.



### **What is exempt information?**

The descriptions of exempt information are set out in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The descriptions are listed at **Annex B** of this Guide.

### **Can I be asked to leave a public meeting?**

Yes. As a member of the public you can be asked to leave a meeting so that the executive, its committees or sub-committees can discuss matters in private, but only in the limited circumstances that are already explained.

### **How will I know about a private meeting of my council's executive?**

Prior to holding a private meeting, your council must have published on its website and at its offices at least 28 clear days' notice of its intention to consider a matter in private and the reasons for the private meeting. This is to ensure that members of the public have reasonable opportunity to make representations as to why the proposed private meeting should not be held in private.

At least 5 clear days before the meeting, your council must confirm its intention to go ahead with the private meeting through another notice on its website and at its offices. This second notice has to include details of any representations received and the council's response to them.

### **Can a private meeting of my council's executive be held if 28 days' notice is not given to the public?**

A private meeting can only be held without 28 days' notice after the agreement of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been obtained that the meeting is urgent and cannot reasonably be delayed. In the absence of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman, the permission of the Council Chairman (or, in their absence, the Vice Chairman) must be obtained. If this agreement is granted the council must publish a notice about why the meeting is urgent and cannot be deferred. This notice must be available at its offices and on their website. If agreement is not given then the meeting must either be held in public, or the council must comply with the 28 day notice requirements.

### **Can I attend an executive's pre-briefing meeting with local authority officers?**

No. The rules apply only to when councillors meet as a decision making body to exercise their statutory executive responsibilities. The rules do not apply to political groups' meetings or to informal briefing meetings for councillors.

## Recording of decisions of public meetings

### **If I am not at the meeting, how will I know of any decisions made?**

The fact that you are unable to attend a public meeting of your council's executive, its committees or sub-committees does not mean you cannot find out about the decisions made there. The national rules require a council to keep records of any executive decisions<sup>xi</sup> made as soon as reasonably practicable after any public meeting. The written records must reflect the following information:

- Details of the decision and the date it was made;
- reasons for the decision;
- any other options considered and why those options were rejected;
- details of any conflict of interest of an executive member of the decision-making body; and
- a note of dispensation granted by the Head of Paid Service in respect of any declared conflict of interest.

You can then inspect the records and any reports considered at the meeting at your council's offices and on the council's website if it has one. All of these documents can be inspected for six years beginning from the date of the meeting apart from background papers which can be inspected for four years beginning from the date of the meeting. These records may be kept in electronic format.

### **Apart from information about meetings, are there other means of knowing about decisions likely to be made by a council's executive, its committees and sub-committees?**

Yes. The national rules require a council to publish its intention to make a key decision<sup>xii</sup> in a document at least 28 clear days prior to when the decision is intended to be made. The notice has to include details of the individual or executive body that will make the decision, the matter that is subject to a decision, other documents to be considered, and where these other documents are available. This notice document must be available at the council's offices and on its website before the decision is made.

This allows you to have sufficient knowledge in advance of those decisions that will be of genuine concern to you and your local communities.

**Can a key decision of a council's executive<sup>xiii</sup> be made without giving the 28 days' notice?**

Yes, provided the following requirements are met:-

- the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman is informed in advance and in writing (or all the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee) about what the decision is concerning;
- a notice about the key decision to be made is made available for inspection at the council's offices and published on the website; and
- 5 clear days elapse following the day a notice is published about the key decision to be made.

If there is a case of special urgency, for example an urgent decision on a negotiation, expenditure or contract, the decision must only be made if the agreement of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman is received. In the absence of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman, the permission of the Council Chairman (or in their absence the Vice Chairman) must be obtained. If agreement is given, a notice explaining why the decision is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred, must be published and should be available at the council's offices and on its website as soon as reasonably practicable.

**Can 28 days' notice of a key decision also provide 28 days' notice required for a council executive's private meeting?**

It is up to your council to decide whether the 28 day key decision document should contain the details required for a private meeting notice. Where there is an intention to make a key decision at a private meeting, your council must comply fully with all the national rules.

**Can my council's executive make key decisions and not follow the national rules?**

No. Councils must comply with all the national rules since they are prescribed by law. Should a decision be made without applying the key decision rules because the council thinks that the decision is not a key decision, but subsequently the Overview and Scrutiny Committee decides the decision is a key decision, the executive may be asked to submit a report to the full council.

## Executive decisions by an individual member or officer

### **Can an individual member or an officer of a council's executive take decisions on matters that are the executive's responsibility?**

Yes, where the rules of your council allow this. Decision makers can be individual councillors, and officers who have delegated responsibility from the executive to make executive decisions.

### **How will I know about an executive decision taken by a member or officer?**

When a member or officer takes a decision on matters that are the responsibility of the council's executive, this must be recorded in writing. The form of the written record is for the council to decide, but the following should be included:

- details of the decision and the date it was made;
- reasons for the decision;
- any other options considered and why those options were rejected;
- details of any conflict of interest declared by any executive member consulted in relation to the decision; and
- a note of dispensation granted in respect of any declared conflict of interest.

### **Are all decisions made by councils' officers to be so recorded?**

No. The requirement to record decisions extends only to "executive decisions". Executive decisions can sometimes be defined in your council's rules. Decisions which are taken by officers under specific delegations from a meeting of their council's executive are clearly executive decisions. However, many administrative and operational decisions officers take on how they go about their day to day work will be delegated within the council's rules and are not in this "executive decisions" category; as such they do not need to be recorded.

The decisions that should be not recorded might include the following examples:

- Decisions to allocate social carers to particular individuals, or for example, to provide walking aids;
- decisions to allocate a social housing unit to an applicant or to send someone to carry out repairs;
- decisions to review the benefit claims of an individual applicant and
- decisions to allocate market stalls to individual traders.

Where officers have been empowered to act on behalf of their council's executive, examples of decisions that should be recorded could include:

- Decisions about awarding contracts above specified individual or total values;
- decisions to exercise powers of Compulsory Purchase;
- decisions on disposal of and/ or provision of allotment land and green spaces;
- awarding of Discretionary Rate Relief
- the opening hours of local libraries; and
- the holding of car boot sales/markets on council-owned land.

*This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, rather a series of examples to illustrate that, in the interests of maximum transparency, these Regulations require more than just key decisions to be recorded.*

*Ultimately it is for local decision makers to decide what information should be recorded on the basis of the national rules.*

### **How can I see any records of decisions taken by executive members or officers?**

Once a record of executive decisions taken by an executive member or officer has been made, you should be able to inspect the record at the council's offices and on its website as soon as reasonably practicable.

However you will not be able to see some of the information if it is considered to be either confidential or exempt information.

### **Can I ask for a copy of any records of executive decisions?**

Yes. You can ask for a copy of any documents relating to executive decisions and your council should supply the information once you have paid for the postage, copying or any other necessary charge for transmission which will be determined by your council. There are also additional legal rights to access information, outlined in Part 5 of this Guide.

## Your rights as a councillor

### **If I am a councillor, do I have any right to access meeting documents?**

As a councillor, you can inspect any document that contains material to be discussed at least 5 days before a public meeting is held. In case of a private meeting or decision made by an individual executive member or officer, you can inspect the document within 24 hours of the conclusion of the meeting or the decision being made.

In addition, if you are a member of an overview and scrutiny committee, you can ask for any document that contains business transacted at a meeting of the executive, its committees or sub-committees or officer of the authority. The executive must provide the

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document within 10 days after it (the executive) receives the request. In an instance where the executive cannot release the whole or part of the document, the executive must provide you with a written explanation.

### **What other rights do councillors have to inspect documents of their councils?**

In addition to the rights conferred on councillors by these Regulations in relation to executive decision making, councillors also have statutory rights to inspect documents of the council and its committees under Part 5A of the Local Government Act 1972. Councillors may also request information held by their council under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 in relation to environmental information). Councillors may have rights under the common law to inspect such documents held by their council as are reasonably necessary for them to perform their duties.

### **What happens if documents relating to executive decisions are not made public?**

It is a criminal offence if, without a reasonable excuse, a person who has in his or her custody a document<sup>xiv</sup>, which the national rules require to be made available to the public, refuses to supply the whole or part of the document or intentionally obstructs any other person/s from disclosing such a document.

If a person is found guilty of such a criminal offence, he/she can be fined up to £200<sup>xv</sup>.

## Part 3 Access to non-executive meetings and documents of a local government body, other than parish and town councils

This Part explains how the public can access all meetings (other than those of a council's executive) of a council or other local government body, other than parish and town councils. These meetings include those of a body's committees, sub-committees and any joint committees involving two or more local government bodies. It also explains how to access the records of certain non-executive decisions taken by the officers of local government bodies, other than parish and town councils.

### Attending the meetings

#### **How will I know about a forthcoming meeting of my council or local government body which will be open to the public?**

Your council or local government body must give a notice of the meeting at least 5 clear days before a public meeting is held. The details of the meeting, such as the time and place, must be published at your council or local government body's offices. The notice may also be published on the body's website where practicable. You can also inspect the agenda and any background papers at least 5 clear days before the meeting.

Where an item is added to the agenda within 5 days before the meeting is scheduled to take place, a revised agenda and background papers must be published as soon as the item is added to the agenda.

An item that is not on the agenda can only be considered in special circumstances if the chairman is of the opinion that the item should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency. Any such special circumstances should be specified in the minutes.

#### **How can I obtain a copy of the agenda and other relevant papers for a public meeting?**

If you are representing a newspaper, your council or local government body must provide you with a copy of the agenda and any background upon payment of postage and/or copying charge. Councils and local government bodies are encouraged to provide a similar service to other members of the public upon request and payment of postage and/or copying charge.

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In some circumstances, the whole or part of a report may not be available for public inspection if it contains either confidential or exempt information. In this case, the report should bear the phrase 'not for publication' and state that it contains confidential information or set out the description of the exempt information.

There are also additional legal rights to access information, outlined in Part 5 of this Guide.

### **Can a meeting be held in private?**

The rules require a meeting of a council or local government body to be closed to the public in two circumstances:

- If the presence of the public is likely to result in the council or local government body breaching a legal obligation to third parties about the keeping of confidential information; and
- if the council or local government body decides (by passing a resolution of its members) because exempt information would otherwise be likely to be disclosed. It is open to the council or local government body if it chooses to consider in public matters involving exempt information. There is no over-riding legal requirement compelling the body to discuss exempt information in a private meeting.

The rules do not prevent the chairman from excluding any member of the public in order to maintain orderly conduct or prevent genuine misbehaviour at a meeting.

### **What is confidential information?**

Confidential information means:

- information provided to the council or local government body by a Government department on terms which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public; and
- information which is prohibited from being disclosed by any enactment or by a court order.

### **What is exempt information?**

The descriptions of exempt information are set out in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The descriptions are listed at **Annex B** of this Guide.



### **Can I be asked to leave a public meeting?**

Yes. As a member of the public you can be asked to leave a meeting so that the council or local government body, its committees or sub-committees can discuss matters in private, but only in the limited circumstances that are already explained. The rules do not prevent the chairman from excluding any member of the public in order to maintain orderly conduct or prevent genuine disruption at a meeting.

### **How will I know about a private meeting of my council or local government body?**

The rules do not require your council or local government body to notify the public if a meeting will be held in private. However, where part of a public meeting will be held in private, it should be explained when the public is notified of the meeting.

### **Can I attend a pre-briefing meeting with local authority officers?**

No. The rules do not apply to political groups' meetings or to informal briefing meetings for councillors.

## **Recording of decisions of public meetings**

### **If I am not at the meeting, how will I know of any decisions made?**

The fact that you are unable to attend a public meeting of your council or local government body, its committees or sub-committees does not mean you cannot find out about the decisions made there. The national rules require the council or local government body to make the following documents available for inspection after a public meeting:

- a copy of the minutes;
- a summary of the proceedings, where applicable;
- a copy of the agenda;
- a copy of any report for the meeting as relates to any item during which the meeting was open to the public; and
- a copy of a list of the background papers for any report for the meeting.

You can then inspect the records and any reports considered at the meeting at your council or local government body's offices and on the council or local government body's website if it has one. All of these documents can be inspected for six years, apart from background papers which can be inspected for four years beginning from the date of the meeting.

## Decisions by officers

### **Can an officer take decisions on matters that are the council or local government body's responsibility?**

Yes, where the council or local government body's rules<sup>xvi</sup> allow this.

### **How will I know about decisions made by officers?**

The new national rules require the recording of certain decisions<sup>xvii</sup> taken by officers acting under powers delegated to them by a council or local government body, its committees or sub-committees or a joint committee. The written record must be available for inspection at the council or local government body's offices and on the website if it has one<sup>xviii</sup>, as soon as reasonably practicable, and should include:

- The decision taken and the date the decision was taken;
- the reason/s for the decision;
- any alternative options considered and rejected; and
- any other background documents.

Where a decision is taken under a specific express authorisation, the names of any member of the council or local government body who has declared a conflict of interest must be recorded.

The relevant council or local government body must retain and make the written record of their officers' decisions available for inspection for six years beginning from the date of the meeting. The background papers should also be available for inspection for four years beginning from the date of the meeting. These may be kept in electronic format.

### **Can I see all decisions made by my council or local government body's officers?**

No. The requirement to record applies to all decisions taken by officers whilst acting under a specific express authorisation and to only three categories of decision taken whilst acting under a general authorisation. These categories cover decisions to "grant a permission or licence"; that "affect the rights of an individual" (i.e. to change an individual's legal rights)<sup>xix</sup>; or to "award a contract or incur expenditure which, in either case, materially affects<sup>xx</sup> that relevant local government body's financial position".

Officers take many administrative and operational decisions about how they go about their day to day work within the council's or local body's rules. These decisions will not need to be recorded.

You will not be able to inspect some recorded decisions if the whole or part of the records contains confidential or exempt information.

Examples of decisions that should be recorded could include:

- Decisions about awarding contracts above specified individual or total values (the values will vary according to the relevant council or local government body);
- a decision to carry out major road works;
- determination of licencing applications, building control decisions and notices; and
- decisions to give listed building consents.

Where decisions are already required to be published by other legislation, they do not need to be recorded again provided the record published includes the date the decision was taken and the reasons for the decision.

Decisions that do not need to be recorded might include the following examples:

- Routine administrative and organisational decisions such as giving permission to a local society to use the authority's premises;
- decisions on operational matters such as day to day variations in services;
- decisions to give business relief to individual traders;
- decisions to review the benefit claims of an individual applicant; and
- decisions taken in response to requests under the Data Protection Act 1998 or the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

*These are a few selected examples and not an exhaustive list. It is for the council or local government body to decide what information should be recorded on the basis of the national rules.*

### **Can I ask for a copy of any records of decisions taken by an officer of my council or local government body?**

Yes. You can ask for a copy of any documents relating to decisions taken by an officer acting under specific or general delegated powers once you have paid for the postage, copying or any other necessary charge for transmission which will be determined by your council or local government body.

There are also additional legal rights to access information, outlined in Part 5 of this Guide.

### **What happens if documents relating to decisions are not made public?**

It is a criminal offence if, without reasonable excuse, a person with custody of a document<sup>xxi</sup> (which is required by the national rules to be made available to the public),

## Agenda Item 6b

refuses to supply the whole or part of the document, or intentionally obstructs any other person/s from disclosing such a document.

If a person is found guilty of such a criminal offence, he/she may be fined up to £200<sup>xxii</sup>.

## Part 4 Access to meetings and documents of parish and town councils

As a member of the public, you have the right to attend the annual parish and town meeting, as well as the meetings of parish and town councils<sup>xxiii</sup>, and of the Council of the Isles of Scilly. This Part explains how the public can access meetings of these councils and records of certain decisions taken by those council's officers.

### **Attending meetings of parish councils and the Council of the Isles of Scilly**

#### **How will I know about a forthcoming meeting of a parish or town council or the Council of the Isles of Scilly which is open to the public?**

Parish and town councils and the Council of the Isles of Scilly must give notice of their meeting at least 3 clear days before it takes place. Where a parish meeting<sup>xxiv</sup> is called, at least 7 clear days' notice must be given.

Notice of the meeting specifying the business to be discussed must be placed in a central conspicuous place within the parish or area at least 3 clear days before the meeting. These councils are also encouraged to place copies of the agenda, meeting papers and notice of meetings at offices and on their website, if they have these facilities.

#### **Can a parish or town council or the Council of the Isles of Scilly choose to meet in private?**

All meetings of these councils must be open to the public, except in limited defined circumstances. These councils can only decide, by resolution, to meet in private when discussing confidential business or for other special reasons where publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

#### **What is confidential information and publicity prejudicial to the public interest?**

Though not an exhaustive list, we expect this to cover matters such as discussing the conduct of employees, negotiations of contracts or terms of tender, or the early stages of a legal dispute.

#### **Can I be asked to leave a public meeting?**

Yes. As a member so the public you can be asked to leave a meeting so that the council can discuss matters in private, but only in the limited circumstances described above. The rules also do not prevent the chairman from excluding any member of the public in order to maintain orderly conduct or prevent genuine disruption at a meeting.

## Recording of decisions of public meetings

### **If I am not at the meeting, how will I know of any decisions made?**

The fact that you are unable to attend a public meeting of your parish and town council, its committees or sub-committees does not mean you cannot find out about the decisions made there. The national rules require the parish and town councils to make a copy of the minutes available for inspection after a public meeting.

You can inspect the minutes at your council's offices and on the council website if it has one.

## Decisions by officers

### **Can an officer take decisions on matters that are the parish or town council's responsibility?**

Yes, where the parish or town council's rules allow this.

### **Are there means of knowing about decisions made by individuals?**

Yes. The rules require the recording of certain decisions<sup>xxv</sup> taken by officers acting under powers delegated to them by a parish or town council, its committees or sub-committees or a joint committee. The written record should include:

- The decision taken and the date the decision was taken;
- the reason/s for the decision;
- any alternative options considered and rejected; and
- any other background documents.

You can see these records of decisions made by officers along with any other background papers because they have to be available for inspection at the council's offices and on its website as soon as is reasonably practicable after the decisions are made<sup>xxvi</sup>.

The relevant parish or town council must retain and make the written record of their officers' decisions available for inspection for six years beginning from the date of the meeting. The background papers should also be available for inspection for four years beginning from the date of the meeting. These may be kept in electronic format.

**Can I see all decisions made by my parish or town council's officers?**

No. The requirement to record applies to all decisions taken by officers whilst acting under a specific express authorisation, and only to three categories of decision taken whilst acting under a general authorisation. These categories cover decisions to “grant a permission or licence”; that “affect the rights of an individual”(i.e. to change an individual's legal rights)<sup>xxvii</sup>; or to “award a contract or incur expenditure which, in either case, materially affects<sup>xxviii</sup> that relevant local government body's financial position”.

Officers take many administrative and operational decisions on how they go about their day to day work within the council's rules. These decisions will not need to be recorded.

You will not be able to inspect some recorded decisions if the whole or part of the records contains confidential information or any other information, which its publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

Examples of decisions that should be recorded could include:

- Decisions about awarding contracts above specified individual/total values (the values will vary according to the relevant parish or town council); and
- decision to renew a lease to an Allotment Association.

Where decisions are already required to be published by other legislation, they do not need to be recorded again provided the record published has the date the decision was taken and the reasons for the decision.

Decisions that do not need to be recorded might include the following examples:

- Routine administrative and organisational decisions such as the purchase of office supplies or repairs;
- a decision to sign an allotment tenancy agreement;
- decisions to allocate burial plots; and
- decisions to book rooms or sports grounds; and decisions to approve works undertaken by a contractor.

*These are a few selected examples and not an exhaustive list. It is for the council to decide what information should be recorded on the basis of the national rules.*

**Can I ask for a copy of any records of decisions taken by an officer of my parish or town council?**

Yes. You can ask for a copy of any documents relating to decisions taken by an officer acting under specific or general delegated powers once you have paid for the postage,

## Agenda Item 6b

copying or any other necessary charge for transmission which will be determined by your parish or town council.

There are also additional legal rights to access information, outlined in Part 5 of this Guide.

### **What happens if documents relating to decisions are not made public?**

It is a criminal offence if, without reasonable excuse, a person with custody of a document<sup>xxix</sup> which is required by the national rules to be made available to the public, refuses to supply the whole or part of the document, or intentionally obstructs any other person/s from disclosing such a document.

If a person is found guilty of such a criminal offence, he/she may be fined up to £200<sup>xxx</sup>.



## Part 5 Your other rights of access to information

### **Are there other rights I can exercise?**

The Local Government Transparency Code sets out the minimum datasets that your local authority should publish. These include spending transactions valued over £500, salaries of senior staff, organisational charts, contracts and the location of public land and assets. The Code applies to local authorities, including parish councils with annual income or expenditure (whichever is the higher) over £200,000<sup>xxxi</sup>. Local authorities with annual income or expenditure of above £6.5m will soon be statutorily required to comply with Part 2 of the Code when the relevant regulations are in place. You can obtain further information on this from:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/308185/Local\\_Government\\_Transparency\\_Code\\_2014\\_Final.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/308185/Local_Government_Transparency_Code_2014_Final.pdf)

You can inspect a council's detailed financial accounts, ledgers and records under section 15 of the Audit Commission Act 1998. In addition, the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011<sup>xxxii</sup> cover checking not just the accounts, but also "all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers and receipts related to them". More information on this right is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/making-local-councils-more-transparent-and-accountable-to-local-people/supporting-pages/peoples-rights-to-see-council-accounts>

Also, you have the right to request information held by your council by submitting a Freedom of Information Act request to your council (a similar regime exists in relation to environmental information under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004). Information on the Freedom of Information Act and data protection is available on the Information Commissioner's Office website at: <http://ico.org.uk/>

You have certain rights to re-use for your own purposes documents held by the council under the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005. These Regulations provide that any request for re-use must be in writing, and where possible and appropriate the council must make the document concerned available for re-use by electronic means. More information is available at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/1515/introduction/made>

### **Where can I find the legislation relating to access to local government bodies' and council's executive meetings and information?**

The relevant legislation about access to local government body meetings and information is in Section 40 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The relevant provisions are available at the following link:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/2/section/40>

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The detailed provisions on how any person can report on the meetings of a local government body are in The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 which can be found at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/id/uksi/2014/2095>

The legislation relating to access to information regarding decisions made by council executives, and their committees, sub-committees and joint committees is Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000 – see sections 9G and 9GA. This part was inserted as a result of amendments made by the Localism Act 2011 and the relevant provisions are available at the following link:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/schedule/2/part/1>

The detailed provisions on the rights to attend meetings and obtain information of an executive are in the secondary legislation made under the 2000 Act, that is the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 which can be found at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/2089/contents/made>

The legislation relating to access to meetings and documents of a council and other local government bodies can be found in Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972, available at the following link:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/part/VA>

The legislation relating to access to meetings of a parish or town council can be found at section 1 the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, available at the following link:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/8-9/67/section/1>

## Annex A – Description of the local government bodies that are covered by the new rules

- (a) a district council,
- (b) a county council in England,
- (c) a London borough council,
- (d) the London Assembly (Greater London Authority),
- (e) the Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a local authority or police authority,
- (f) the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority,
- (g) Transport for London,
- (h) a joint authority established under Part 4 of the Local Government Act 1985,
- (i) an economic prosperity board,
- (j) a combined authority,
- (k) a fire and rescue authority in England constituted by a scheme under section 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 or a scheme to which section 4 of that Act applies,
- (l) a National Park Authority for a National Park in England,
- (m) the Broads Authority,
- (n) the Council of the Isles of Scilly,
- (o) a parish council, and
- (p) a parish meeting.

The new national rules also apply to the committees, sub-committees and joint committees of these local government bodies.

## Annex B – Descriptions of Exempt Information

The exempt information set out at Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 Act is as follows:

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes—
  - a. to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
  - b. to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

The qualifications to the list of exempt information are as follows:

**A.** Information falling within number 3 above is not exempt information by virtue of that paragraph if it is required to be registered under--

[the Companies Acts (as defined in section 2 of the Companies Act 2006)];  
the Friendly Societies Act 1974;  
the Friendly Societies Act 1992;  
the *Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965* [Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies and Credit Unions Acts 1965] to 1978;  
the Building Societies Act 1986; or  
[(f) the Charities Act 2011.

**B.** Information is not exempt information if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.

**C. Information which—**

falls within any of numbers 1 to 7 above; and  
is not prevented from being exempt by virtue of number A or B above,

is exempt information if, and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

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- <sup>i</sup> The new national rules are in The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/...) and The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012 (S.I. 2012/2089).
- <sup>ii</sup> A parish or town council may also be called a city, community, neighbourhood or village council. Any reference to parish council in this Guide also refers to these bodies.
- <sup>iii</sup> The Guide should not be taken as providing any definitive interpretation of the statutory requirements on councils, members, officers, or of public rights: those wishing to address such issues should seek their own legal advice.
- <sup>iv</sup> A council's cabinet is its main decision making body, consisting of an elected mayor or leader and a number of councillors.
- <sup>v</sup> Part 2 of the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/...)
- <sup>vi</sup> "Private meeting" is a meeting or part of a meeting during which the public are excluded for limited and certain circumstances described in the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012
- <sup>vii</sup> Regulation 4 of The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014
- <sup>viii</sup> [http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/a\\_to\\_c/communications\\_sent\\_via\\_social\\_media/](http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/a_to_c/communications_sent_via_social_media/)
- <sup>ix</sup> Any area designated for the public should be appropriate for filming, audio-recording and photographing.
- <sup>x</sup> Each council has its own rules for doing business - its constitution and standing orders- which must be in line with any national rules.
- <sup>xi</sup> [An "executive decision" means a decision made or to be made by a decision maker in connection with the discharge of a function which is the responsibility of the executive of a local authority.](#)
- <sup>xii</sup> ["key decision" means an executive decision which, is likely—  
to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or  
to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority.](#)
- <sup>xiii</sup> All references to 'a council executive' should be construed to include the executive's committees and sub-committees, joint committees, and joint sub-committees.
- <sup>xiv</sup> A document can be the written record of executive decisions made by an executive member or officer or any other background papers.
- <sup>xv</sup> This fine could change to reflect any future changes in legislation and/or national policy.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Each council or local government has its own rules for doing business - its constitution and standing orders- which must be in line with any national rules.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Regulation 7(2) of the 2014 regulations.
- <sup>xviii</sup> If a local government body does not have offices or a website, other appropriate means should be used to allow you to access these documents, such as publishing the information on a website of another local authority body in the area.
- <sup>xix</sup> These decisions do not include decisions taken pursuant to an existing framework of rights.
- <sup>xx</sup> As the financial position of bodies affected by these rules varies, what constitutes the material threshold is a judgement that should be made by individual bodies.
- <sup>xxi</sup> A document can be the written record of decisions made by an officer, or any background papers.
- <sup>xxii</sup> This fine could change to reflect any future changes in legislation and/or national policy.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> A parish or town council may also be called a city, community, neighbourhood or village council. Any reference to parish council in this Guide also refers to these bodies.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> A parish meeting is a meeting for all of the local government electors of the parish. This can be in the case of an annual meeting in an area where there is a separate parish council, or any meeting of local government electors where there is no separate parish council.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Regulation 7(2) of the 2014 regulations.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> If a parish or town council does not have offices or a website, other appropriate means should be used to make the papers accessible to the public, such as publishing the information on the website of the local principal authority.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> These decisions do not include decisions taken pursuant to an existing framework of rights.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> As the financial position of bodies affected by these rules varies, what constitutes the 'material threshold' is a judgement that would be made by individual bodies.
- <sup>xxix</sup> A document can be the written record of decisions made by an officer, or any background papers.
- <sup>xxx</sup> This fine could change to reflect any future changes in legislation and/or national policy.

<sup>xxxi</sup> The government has recently consulted on a new transparency code for certain authorities with a turnover not exceeding £25,000 pa, which will act as a substitute for routine external audit. The draft code is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-transparency-code-for-parish-councils>

<sup>xxxii</sup> Under the new Audit framework, this right is restated in Section 26 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The Government will be consulting shortly on draft regulations in relation to the new arrangements. Some changes are proposed to the framework for exercising public rights, but broadly the aim is to simplify and clarify arrangements. The intention is for the regulations to be in place for the accounting period 2015-16.

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## Constitutional Changes

### Part 1 – Page 6

10.8 ~~Local p~~ People's rights to information and to participate are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Procedure Rules. (Appendix A - Access to Information Procedure Rules)

10.9 Any member of the press or public has the right to film, blog, tweet or use any other type of social media to report any public meeting of the authority including committees, sub-committees and joint committees. Reference Appendix Z of the Constitution entitled "Protocol on Reporting Meetings"

### Local Peoples' Responsibilities

10.910 ~~Local p~~ People must not be violent, abusive or threatening to Members or Officers and must not wilfully damage things owned by the Council, Members or Officers.

10.1011 ~~Local p~~ People are asked that:

- they treat Council Officers and Members with respect;
- that they provide all the relevant information to help the Council deal with their request efficiently
- they do not verbally or physically abuse Council Officers and Members.
- they do not attend the Council offices under the influence of alcohol or drugs

### Part 2 – Pages 17 and 18

#### 29. Disturbance by Public

29.1 Removal of Member of the Public - If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chairman will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the Chairman will order their removal from the meeting room.

29.2 Clearance of Part of Meeting Room - If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chairman may call for that part to be cleared.

29.3 Photography and Recording of Meetings - ~~The consent of Members present at any meeting shall be required before any person may record, broadcast or photograph proceedings at the meeting. Any recording, broadcasting or photography shall be conducted in a manner to be directed by the Chairman and shall cease immediately if either:~~  
~~Members so resolve; or~~

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~~the chairman so directs.~~

~~The Council will provide reasonable facilities to facilitate the audio/visual reporting of meetings. The public is welcome to record, by any means, meetings of the Council and its Committees using suitable non-disruptive methods.~~

~~29.4 The Chairman of the meeting has the discretion to halt any recording if the recording causes disruption to the meeting.~~

~~29.5 Oral reporting or commentary at the meeting is prohibited. More information is contained within the Protocol entitled "Reporting Meetings" set out at Appendix Z.~~

### **Appendix A: Access to Information Procedure Rules**

#### **25. Decisions by Officers**

~~25.1 Certain decisions made by officers must be captured in a written record. These are decisions that have been delegated to an officer of the Council under a specific express authorisation, or under a general authorisation where the effect of the decision is to:~~

- ~~• grant permissions or licences,~~
- ~~• affect the rights of individuals,~~
- ~~• award contracts or incur expenditure which materially affects the body's financial position.~~

~~25.2 The written record is made available to the public at the Council Officers, on the Council's website, by post if requested and on receipt of payment for copying and postage.~~

~~25.3 The written record will be available for public inspection as soon as reasonably practicable for at least six years, and any supporting documentation for at least four years. These can be kept in electronic format.~~

#### **APPENDIX Z: Protocol on Reporting Meetings**

1. ~~Members of the press and public are entitled to report on any public meeting of Sevenoaks District Council including Council, Committees, sub-committees and Cabinet, except in circumstances where the public have been excluded as permitted by law. Reference Appendix A of the Constitution entitled "Access to Information Procedure Rules" in relation to exclusion to Access by the Public to Meetings.~~

2. ~~Reporting means:-~~

~~Filming, photographing or making an audio recording of the proceedings of the meeting;~~

Using any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later such as tweeting and blogging or other means of social media.

3. Any person can provide written commentary during a meeting, as well as oral commentary outside or after the meeting. Oral commentary cannot be provided during a meeting as this would be disruptive to the good order of the meeting.
4. In order to assist preparations, anyone attending a meeting is asked where possible to advise Democratic Services staff at least two working days before the meeting on 01732 227247 or email democratic.services@sevenoaks.gov.uk if they wish to report on the meeting and how they wish to do so. This is to enable employees to guide anyone choosing to report on proceedings to an appropriate place from which to be able to report effectively. The request should include the following information:
  - which meeting this request refers to;
  - the name, organisation (if applicable) and contact details of the person making the request;
  - what equipment it is intended will be used (e.g. camera/audio recorder/video camera/ laptop)
5. Members of the public are asked to remain seated throughout the meeting as standing up and walking around could distract from the business in hand. If members of the public do need to stand or to enter/leave the room they are asked to do so quietly and discreetly with respect to the meeting and those observing it.
6. You may be excluded from a meeting by the Chairman if you act in a disruptive manner. Disruptive behaviour would include:
  - Moving to areas outside the areas designated for the public without the consent of the Chairman,
  - Excessive noise in recording or setting up or re-siting equipment during the debate/discussion,
  - Intrusive lighting and use of flash photography; and
  - Asking for people to repeat statements for the purpose of recording
  - Or any other behaviour considered by the Chairman to be disruptive.
7. For meetings held in the Council Offices, the public are welcome to use the Council's Wi-Fi facilities which can be accessed by selecting "SDC-GUEST"
8. In order to avoid accidents, the Council regrets that it is unable to facilitate members of the public using electric plug sockets in meetings for their equipment.

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9. Where possible, it is asked that recording equipment be set up before the meeting starts.
10. If during the meeting a motion is passed to exclude the press and public, because confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, then all rights to report the meeting are removed.
11. If the meeting for which agreement is given to report is adjourned by the Chairman then any reporting should stop at the point at which the meeting is adjourned.
12. Anyone filming a meeting is asked to only focus on those actively participating.
13. Members of the public may be filmed or recorded whilst attending a council meeting and attendance at the meeting signifies a member of the public's agreement to this.
14. Any request made by the Chairman of the meeting regarding respecting the public's right to privacy should be complied with.
15. Members of the public should abide by any instruction given to them by a Council staff member in the event of the fire alarm sounding
16. Photographs, audio, and visual recording should not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing the views being recorded in a way that may ridicule or show lack of respect.

If as a member of the public you do not wish to be photographed, filmed or recorded please inform the Democratic Services Officer in attendance at the meeting or the Chairman of the relevant committee when notice that a request to photograph, record or film has been received is given and we will try to assist, where reasonably possible.

## MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES 2014/15

### Council – 4 November 2014

Report of Chief Officer Legal and Governance

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: No

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**Contact Officer(s)** Vanessa Etheridge Ext. 7199

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**Recommendation to Council:** That the dissolution of the Sevenoaks District Strategic Board be noted and the amended memberships of Committees for 2014/15, attached as an Appendix to this report, be approved.

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### Introduction and Background

- 1 Since the meeting of Annual Council where Members were asked to agree the Chairmen, Vice Chairmen and membership of Committees in line with the Council's Constitution and decision making structure, Cllr. Mrs. Bracken has asked to step down from Scrutiny Committee and Cllr. Neal has become a member of the UK Independence Party (UKIP), membership of which affects political proportionality of the Council's committees. Also, since its last meeting in July of the Sevenoaks District Strategic Board, it has been decided by Kent County Council (KCC) Members not to continue participating in the Board but to maintain contact on an informal basis and for Officers to maintain contact with each other on a project by project basis.
- 2 Members are therefore asked to agree the dissolution of the Sevenoaks District Strategic Board, and the proposed amendments to the current committee memberships set out in the Appendix to this report. (Appendix to follow).

### Key Implications

#### Financial

None directly arising from this report.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

None directly arising from this report.

## Agenda Item 7a

### Equality Impacts

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	N/A
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity?	No	
c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

### **Appendices**

Council Committee Memberships

### **Background Papers:**

[Council's Constitution](#)

**Christine Nuttall**  
**Chief Officer for Legal and Governance**

## LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2015/16

### Council – 4 November 2014

Report of: Chief Finance Officer

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: No

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**Executive Summary:** Through the Local Government Finance Bill the Government abolished council tax benefit and placed a requirement on local authorities to introduce their own local council tax support schemes with effect from 1 April 2013.

In November 2012 Council agreed the form of the local council tax support scheme to be administered for three years from 1 April 2013. 2015/16 will be the final year of the agreed local council tax support scheme.

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**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Brian Ramsay

**Contact Officer(s)** Meryl Young, Head of Revenues and Benefits. Ext. 7397

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### Recommendation to Council:

As resolved by Council on 27 November 2013, Members approve that from 1 April 2015 all residents of working age receive a deduction on the amount of council tax support they are entitled to, calculated on the basis of the previous council tax benefit scheme, of 18.5%.

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**Reason for recommendation:** The Council has implemented a local council tax support scheme to replace the previous council tax benefit scheme as required by the Local Government Finance Bill.

The decision on any amendments to the council's local scheme must be taken by Council and to meet the requirements of legislation the decision of Council must be made by 31 January 2015 for those amendments to take effect from 1 April 2015.

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### Introduction and Background

- 1 In November 2012 the Council agreed the local council tax support scheme for Sevenoaks District Council that took effect on 1 April 2013. The scheme that was agreed was one that had been developed across Kent and included the following criteria:
  - The District accepts a standard deduction of 18.5% on all non-pensioner claimants (i.e. if a claimant currently receives 100% benefit, they will receive 81.5% discount under this scheme);

## Agenda Item 7b

- and agrees to reduce the exemption on Class C empty properties from 6 months to 3 months;
  - then Major Precepting Authorities will agree to reimburse the district if it incurs a cost on new council tax discounts from the local scheme that is higher than the grant receivable from the government;
  - and pay £125,000 to each district each year as a contribution to the increased administration, collection and recovery costs of the new scheme;
  - and reimburse each district reasonable increased administrative costs necessarily incurred if the case load on the local scheme (during the period of this agreement) exceeds the case load of the council tax benefit scheme (as at 31 March 2013) by more than 15%.
- 2 In year 1 of the scheme, from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 the Council also applied transitional protection for all residents of working age eligible to receive council tax support. This transitional protection ensured that in year 1 only all residents of working age received a deduction of 8.5% on the amount of council tax support they are entitled to, as calculated on the basis of the previous council tax benefit scheme.
- 3 Members should note that the agreed scheme applies for three years and will enter its final year in 2015/16 before it will be subject to a detailed review.
- 4 In November 2013 the Government announced that it would be making amendments to Prescribed Requirements. Prescribed Requirements are those elements of the Council's local scheme which legislation requires it adopts.
- 5 At its meeting of 17 December 2013 Council considered the changes required to the local council tax support scheme made necessary by the Governments amendments to the Prescribed Requirements and resolved that they should be extended to working age claimants as well as claimants of pension age.

### **Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2015/16**

- 6 The local council tax support scheme for 2015/16 will be unchanged from that adopted in 2014/15. In accordance with the decision of Council in December 2013 allowances, premiums and income bands will be increased in line with the government's published figures. This ensures that the Council remains true to its original decision that its own local scheme is based on the previous council tax benefit scheme and provides for a consistent and equitable approach for residents of all ages that require support in paying their council tax bill.

### **Other Options Considered and/or Rejected**

- 7 None.



**Key Implications**

Financial

- 8 Under the previous council tax benefit scheme the Council paid approximately £6.8m in Council Tax Benefit and this was fully reimbursed as Government grant. It is estimated that in 2015/16 the Council will spend a £5.8 on local council tax support.
- 9 For the first year of the council tax support scheme, 2013/14, the Government provided £6.1m in funding for the local council tax support scheme which was distributed amongst the major preceptors (County, Fire & Police).
- 10 In both 2014/15 and 2015/16 the funding for the local council tax support scheme is included within the overall government grant and is paid for from revenue funding. For 2015/16 the District Council would fund £700,000 of the overall £5.8m cost of the scheme.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

- 11 The scheme is governed by the Local Government Finance Act which requires the Council to consider its scheme annually and take a decision on any amendments to the scheme for 2015/16 to be made by Council before 31 January 2015.

Equality Impacts

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?	Yes	An impact assessment of the local council tax support scheme was completed prior to its adoption in November 2012. (Available at <a href="http://cds.sevenoaks.gov.uk/documents/s8499/Local%20Council%20Tax%20Support%20Scheme%20-%20Appendix%20B.pdf">http://cds.sevenoaks.gov.uk/documents/s8499/Local%20Council%20Tax%20Support%20Scheme%20-%20Appendix%20B.pdf</a> )
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity?	Yes	A review of that impact assessment was completed in October 2014, with no significant new impacts identified.  The review of the impact assessment is provided at Appendix A to this report for Members information.
c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		See Appendix A to this report.

**Conclusions**

- 12 The Council adopted its local support for council tax scheme in November 2012 and it took effect from 1 April 2013. The scheme calculates entitlement to

## Agenda Item 7b

support with their council tax bill based on the previous council tax benefit scheme and applies and 18.5% reduction for working age claimants which the Council reduced to 8.5% in the first year to provide transitional support.

- 13 It is recommended Members approve that from 1 April 2015 all residents of working age receive a deduction on the amount of council tax support they are entitled to, calculated on the basis of the previous council tax benefit scheme, of 18.5%, as resolved by Council on 27 November 2013.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Review of Equality Impact Assessment

### **Background Papers:**

Local Support for Council Tax scheme – Report to Council (27 November 2013)

<http://cds.sevenoaks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=1464>

Local Support for Council Tax scheme 2014/15 – Report to Council (17 December 2013)

<http://cds.sevenoaks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=1665>

Local Support for Council Tax Scheme rules

[http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/126688/Council-Tax-Support-Local-Schemes-SDC-2014.pdf](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/126688/Council-Tax-Support-Local-Schemes-SDC-2014.pdf)

Local Government Finance Act 2012

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/17/contents>

**Adrian Rowbotham**  
**Chief Finance Officer**

**Review of Equality Impact Assessment  
Local Council Tax Support Scheme**

<b>Subject of assessment</b>	<b>Local Council Tax Support Scheme</b>		
<b>Lead Officer (job title)</b>	Lee Banks		
<b>Date of assessment</b>	13/10/2014	<b>Is this a review of a service or decision?</b>	Service
<b>Are there any changes since the original assessment which are relevant to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty?</b>			No
<b>If yes, please indicate which of the aims it is relevant to:</b>			
Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation			Not applicable
Advance equality of opportunity			Not applicable
Foster good relations			Not applicable
For each of the following characteristics, summarise any new data, consultation activity, interpretation of the impacts and actions that can be taken to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts.			
<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Summary of any new information and impacts</b>		<b>Actions</b>
<b>Disability</b>	The Council's initial impact assessment identified that an 18.5% reduction in council tax support had the potential to negatively impact on people with disabilities as a result of the relatively high proportion in protected pensioner households. People with a disability would, on average, pay £2.52 more per week towards their council tax bill.		WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
	The review of the impact assessment for the 2015/16 concluded that (when adjusted for the increase in council tax levels) people with a disability would, on average, pay £2.44 more per week towards their council tax bill. It is therefore concluded that the impact on disabled claimants has not altered significantly since the initial impact assessment.		
<b>Carers</b>	The Council's initial impact assessment identified that an 18.5% reduction in council tax support had the potential to negatively impact on carers as a result of the relatively high proportion in protected pensioner households. Carers would, on average, pay £2.87 extra per week towards their council tax bill.		WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
	The review of the impact assessment for the 2015/16 concluded that (when adjusted for the increase in council tax levels) people with a disability would, on average, pay £3.77 more per week towards their council tax bill. It is therefore concluded that the impact on carers is more significant than initially anticipated. This is partially explained by a fall in the proportion of claimants that are carers of pension age. As a result there is a greater number of payments that		

**Review of Equality Impact Assessment  
Local Council Tax Support Scheme**

	receive an 18.5% deduction which reduces the average payment for the total caseload.	
<b>Race</b>	This information is not collected from claimants as it is not relevant to the calculation of council tax benefit.	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
<b>Gender</b>	<p>The Council's initial impact assessment identified that an 18.5% reduction has potential to negatively impact on females as they are more likely to be the primary applicant and / or have dependent children. Females would pay £1.85 extra per week toward their council tax bill whilst males would pay £1.60 extra per week. This is a gap of £0.25 per week or £13 per year.</p> <p>The review of the impact assessment for the 2015/16 concluded that (when adjusted for the increase in council tax levels) females would pay £2.12 extra over week towards their council tax bill whilst males would pay £2.23 extra per week. This is a gap of £0.11 per week or £5.72 per year.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that the impact on females is less significant than initially anticipated. However it is recognised that both male and female claimants are required to pay more each week towards their council tax than initially anticipated.</p>	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>
<b>Age</b>	<p>The Government have prescribed that low income pensioners must be protected from any reduction in support. The Council therefore has no discretion in implementing this aspect of the scheme.</p> <p>The Council's initial impact assessment identified that an 18.5% reduction across all working age claimants would see those aged 18-24 receiving the lowest reduction (£178) and those aged 35-44 receiving the highest reduction (£188), on average, per year. The difference in average reduction of £10 per year equates to an additional payment towards a claimants council tax of £0.19 per week.</p> <p>The review of the impact assessment concluded that those aged 55-64 receive the lowest reduction in council tax support of £159 and those aged 25-34 receive the highest reduction of £218, on average, per year. The difference in average reduction of £59 per year equates to an additional payment towards a claimants council tax of £1.13 per week.</p> <p>It is therefore concluded that variance of average impact by age is more significant than initially anticipated and that people of all age groups are required to pay more each week towards their council tax than initially anticipated.</p>	WKEP Aim: <a href="#">Other actions as a service provider</a>

**Review of Equality Impact Assessment  
Local Council Tax Support Scheme**

<b>Religion / Belief</b>	This information is not collected from claimants as it is not relevant to the calculation of council tax benefit.			
				WKEP Aim:Other actions as a service provider
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	This information is not collected from claimants as it is not relevant to the calculation of council tax benefit.			
				WKEP Aim:Other actions as a service provider
<b>Pregnancy / Maternity</b>	This information is not collected from claimants as it is not relevant to the calculation of council tax benefit.			
				WKEP Aim:Other actions as a service provider
<b>Marital or Civil Partnership Status</b>	This information is not collected from claimants as it is not relevant to the calculation of council tax benefit.			
				WKEP Aim:Other actions as a service provider
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	This information is not collected from claimants as it is not relevant to the calculation of council tax benefit.			
				WKEP Aim:Other actions as a service provider
<b>Additional comments / summary</b>	<p>As pensioners are protected, the reduction in the level of support falls to working age claimants.</p> <p>The actual average cut for any given group will depend on how many of that group are in protected pensioner households. Since the initial assessment the proportion of claimants of pension age has reduced from 51.4% to 48.7%. As a result a greater proportion of claimants are now working age. This means that a greater proportion of council tax support payments are reduced by 18.5% than anticipated in the initial impact assessment.</p> <p>Resultantly when the impact on the whole caseload is assessed the outcome is an increase in the average amount of council tax that claimants are expected to pay.</p> <p>In mitigation the Council's local council tax support scheme continues to adopt the calculation methods of the previous council tax benefit scheme. As a result it continues to provide more support to some groups than others (households with young families, people with disabilities and carers).</p>			
Please tick the outcome of this assessment:	No impact	Adjust the policy	Continue the policy	Stop and remove the policy
Date assessment will be reviewed:	30/10/2015			

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Cllr Fleming - Leader's report

Date: 17 October 2014

Final

Date	Event	Comments
8 – 10 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGA Conference - Bournemouth</li> </ul>	
11 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preview of proposed development of 98-116 London Road</li> </ul>	
15 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement and Innovation Board</li> </ul>	
17 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGA adult Social Care Efficiency</li> <li>• Conservative Group meeting</li> <li>• Councillors Forum/LGA Executive meeting</li> </ul>	
22 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent Council Leaders</li> </ul>	
23 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Berkeley Homes</li> <li>• Chairman's reception – West Kent Area - KCC</li> </ul>	
24 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel</li> <li>• Sevenoaks Area Mind AGM</li> </ul>	
25 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WKP meeting</li> </ul>	
29 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edenbridge Town Council Liaison meeting</li> <li>• Escalate Approval Board</li> </ul>	
30 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biggin Hill meeting</li> </ul>	
<b>August</b>		
19 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KCC - West Kent LSTF</li> </ul>	
22 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Escalate Approval Board</li> </ul>	
26 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCA Interviews</li> </ul>	
27 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional Escalate Approval Board meeting</li> </ul>	
29 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business breakfast meeting</li> </ul>	
<b>September</b>		
1 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement and Innovation Board/Performance Support Panel</li> <li>• BBC Interview – school budgets/free school meals</li> </ul>	
3 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fort Halstead Briefing with PPS</li> <li>• Swanley Town Council Liaison meeting</li> </ul>	
4 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointments Panel</li> <li>• Councillors Briefing</li> <li>• Tackling Disadvantage Research - Maidstone</li> </ul>	
8 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Residents re Buckhurst 2 Car park KMEP meeting Maidstone</li> </ul>	
9 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel</li> </ul>	
10 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGA Leadership Board</li> <li>• Leadership Centre 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary seminar</li> </ul>	
11 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors Forum/LGA Executive meeting</li> <li>• Meeting with Carolyn Downs</li> </ul>	
12 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bradbourne Lakes – BRA</li> <li>• Berkeley Homes – 98 – 116 London Road</li> </ul>	

## Agenda Item 11

	development	
18 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handelsbanken launch</li> </ul>	
22 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening of new school building at Lady Boswell's school</li> </ul>	
23 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with Local Landowners</li> <li>• Meeting with Gurvinder Sandher – Partnership working</li> </ul>	
24 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent Council Leaders meeting</li> </ul>	
25 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DCN Executive meeting</li> </ul>	
26 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent LEP team meeting and SELEP</li> <li>• Telephone conversation with John Hine</li> </ul>	
29 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercialism in Local Government Conference - Manchester</li> </ul>	
30 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Escalate Approval Board</li> </ul>	
<b>October</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	
1 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Westerham Town Council Liaison meeting</li> <li>• Sevenoaks Society</li> </ul>	
2 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WKHA/SDC Annual Liaison meeting</li> <li>• Children's Improvement Meeting</li> </ul>	
3 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Kent Escalate Event – Brands Hatch</li> </ul>	
7 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Kent Skills Fest - Tonbridge</li> </ul>	
8 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening of new M &amp; S Sevenoaks</li> <li>• West Kent Health and Wellbeing Board</li> <li>• Sevenoaks Town Partnership Executive meeting</li> </ul>	
9 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling Disadvantage – next steps - Maidstone</li> </ul>	
10 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with E C Harris re SDC Property Investment Strategy</li> <li>• Sevenoaks Executive Council Meetings</li> </ul>	
13 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement and Innovation Board -London</li> </ul>	
13 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit Liaison meeting</li> </ul>	
15 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Sector Income Generation – exploring alternative revenue streams</li> </ul>	
17 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grand opening of Knole Academy new buildings/refurbishments</li> <li>• Gatwick meeting in Tonbridge</li> </ul>	
20 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Escalate Approval Board</li> </ul>	
21 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing Demand for Public Services conference - London</li> </ul>	
22 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGA Leadership Board</li> </ul>	
23 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors Forum/LGA Executive meeting</li> <li>• Meeting with LGA Chairman David Sparks</li> </ul>	
28 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Escalate Approval Board</li> </ul>	
29 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sevenoaks Town Forum</li> </ul>	
30 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAB – AGM – PF speaking</li> </ul>	