

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2016 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllrs. Dickins, Firth, Hogarth, Lowe, Piper and Searles

Cllrs. Abraham and Pett were also present.

54. Ruling by the Chairman regarding Urgent Matters

In accordance with Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman advised the Cabinet he had agreed to accept an urgent matter – “Draft Budget 2016/17 – Update.”

As a result of waiting for Government clarification, the report missed the statutory date for publication. However the Cabinet would be making its final recommendation on the budget at its meeting on 4 February 2016.

55. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 3 December 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.

56. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

57. Questions from Members

There were none.

58. Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee or Cabinet Advisory Committees

There were none.

59. Community Plan 2016-19 Public Consultation Draft

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Business commended and the Chief Officer, Communities and Business presented the report which sought approval of the public consultation draft of Community Plan for the period 2016-19. The document and its supporting Action Plan had been developed following comprehensive consultation with Members, residents, town and parish councils, a wide range of voluntary and community organisations and partner agencies.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning requested that the reference to ‘Explore opportunities from the proposed Quality Bus Partnership’ be deleted from the summary and initial

Cabinet - 14 January 2016

analysis as this was not being pursued. Members reviewed the draft consultation document and agreed amendments as follows:

- to amend, where used, the word 'threat' to alternative words such as 'concern' or 'challenge';
- to the change 'family' illustration on page 5 to something more representational of the population dynamic;
- to add a reference to the distance to Ebbsfleet;
- with regards to the health statistics, to ensure the 3 local health priorities were included;
- to amend references to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to include the whole range of issues being looked at;
- reference to be made to 'refuse' not rubbish collection service; and
- deletion of the remainder of the sentence after the word 'study' at the second bullet point, page 33, of the consultation draft.

Members thanked Officers for their work on the production of the consultation and its more succinct presentation.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That, subject to the amendments listed above, the public consultation draft Community Plan and strategic level action plan for the period 2016-19, be approved and run from 15 January to 26 February 2016.

60. Calculation of Council Tax Base and other tax setting issues

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report for Members consideration, advising that as part of the budget cycle the calculation of the council tax base of the district was required for tax setting purposes for the coming financial year and had to be approved by Cabinet and Full Council. The tax base was determined by converting all property and occupancy data to the equivalent number of band D properties and the figure was used to calculate the band D charge. He pointed out that the figures in the report were not the amounts of council tax that residents would pay, but the number of taxable properties.

The report showed that the current tax base for 2015/16 was 48,209 and the tax base for 2016/17 would be 48,896. The number of dwellings on the Valuation List had increased from 49,082 to 49,279. A collection rate of 99.4% had been included which was a small increase over that used in 2015/16.

The report also set out the timetable leading up to setting the council tax for 2016/17.

Cabinet - 14 January 2016

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) the report of the Chief Finance Officer for the calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2016/17 be approved;
- b) pursuant to the report of the Chief Finance Officer and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended) the amount calculated by the Sevenoaks District Council as its council tax base for the whole area for the year 2016/17 shall be 48,895.68;
- c) pursuant to the report of the Chief Finance Officer and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended) the amount calculated by the Sevenoaks District Council as the council tax base for 2016/17 for the calculation of local precepts shall be:

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Tax Base</u>
Ash-cum-Ridley	2,407.77
Badgers Mount	330.21
Brasted	783.17
Chevening	1,443.79
Chiddingstone	599.08
Cowden	416.68
Crockenhill	646.70
Dunton Green	993.01
Edenbridge	3,462.90
Eynsford	924.22
Farningham	638.94

Cabinet - 14 January 2016

Fawkham	283.79
Halstead	759.02
Hartley	2,510.65
Hever	599.68
Hextable	1,645.57
Horton Kirby & South Darent	1,277.09
Kemsing	1,816.83
Knockholt	619.96
Leigh	803.25
Otford	1,664.06
Penshurst	835.26
Riverhead	1,232.06
Seal	1,193.50
Sevenoaks Town	9,225.61
Sevenoaks Weald	613.40
Shoreham	677.81
Sundridge	921.84
Swanley	5,308.16
Westerham	1,957.48
West Kingsdown	2,304.19

- d) any expenses incurred by the Council in performing in part of its area a function performed elsewhere in its area by a parish or community council or the chairman of a parish meeting shall not be treated as special expenses for the purposes of section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Cabinet - 14 January 2016

61. Draft Budget 2016/17 - Update

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the update report for Members consideration, advising that it contained several small changes (including the Council Tax Base) since the report to the previous meeting, which bridged the previous budget gap of £13,000 per annum.

He reported that the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement had been published and as expected Revenue Support Grant (RSG) for 2016/17 had been reduced significantly, by 61%. As there had already been an assumption of no RSG in the 10-year budget from 2016/17, no changes had been made to the plan. For the first time the settlement also included indicative figures for the following three years and these contained a 'tariff adjustment' which was in effect a negative Revenue Support Grant. Discussions with Government were ongoing about this change and the implications to district councils.

The Chief Finance Officer reported that the Local Government Finance Settlement had been published on 17 December and further details and clarifications had been obtained over Christmas. The biggest change was the 'tariff adjustment'. Tariffs were one of the tools used to redistribute Business Rates (BR) but the Government had previously said that BR tariffs would not change until 2020 after a review had been carried out. The reason for the 'tariff adjustment' was that Government wanted to reduce Local Authority funding by a significant amount which in Sevenoaks District Council's (SDC) case was more than the RSG received. That was why the tariff adjustment was being referred to as a 'negative RSG' because SDC would have to make a payment to Government.

This Council was potentially affected from 2017/18 along with 14 other authorities (including Maidstone Borough Council, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, and eight in Surrey), more would be affected in the following two years.

The Leader had met the Secretary of State to highlight the implications of this change and the Chief Finance Officer had compiled a response to the Government Consultation on behalf of the authorities initially affected.

The Final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2016/17 was expected on 11 February and could contain changes to the approach taken to date. The figures included in the settlement for 2017/18 to 2019/20 were indicative so the 10-year budget had not been adjusted to reflect them. However, officers were continuing to look into options to address the indicative figures, should the Government continue with them, so that the 10-year budget remained fully funded going forward.

Cabinet would make its final recommendations on the budget at its meeting on 4 February with Council setting the budget on 16 February 2016.

The Chairman commended the work carried out by the Chief Finance Officer for all his hard work coordinating the collective response with the 14 other local authority's heads of finance.

Cabinet - 14 January 2016

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the report be noted.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.28 PM

CHAIRMAN

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 18 January 2016. The decisions contained in Minutes 60 and 61 take effect immediately. The decision contained in Minute 59 takes effect on 26 January 2016.