

Supplementary Agenda

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|----|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 6 | a) | Homelessness Review 2022 and draft Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2023-2028
Minute reference marked to follow | Replacement Pages 13 - 14 |
| 6 | b) | Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24
Minute reference marked to follow | Replacement Page 91 |
| 6 | c) | Property Investment Strategy update
Minute reference marked to follow | Replacement Page 139 |
| 6 | d) | Budget & Council Tax Setting 2023/24
Minute reference marked to follow
Replacement Appendix P | Replacement Page 169 -
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Page 9 |
| 9. | | 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. | Pages 11 - 12 |

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.

Item 6 (a) - Homelessness Review 2022 and Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2023-2028

The attached report was considered by the Cabinet, and the relevant minute extract is below:

Cabinet (9 February 2023, Minute 91)

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health presented the report, which presented the findings of the Homeless review and outlined the Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy for 2023-28. The strategy had identified the need to increase the number of affordable homes in the District to meet the needs of residents. It aimed to address this through prevention, intervention, and sustainable solutions, delivered alongside partnership organisations. The Housing & Health Advisory Committee has considered the same report.

The Head of Housing advised Members that the consultation process gathered feedback from an online survey, consultation with Members, the new Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy forum, and partnership organisations. This process identified several key priorities, including the delivery of more social and affordable housing, promoting the housing options available, the information available to customers, and the importance of involving people with lived experience of homelessness in the strategy.

She outlined some of the steps taken to address these concerns. The Registered Provider Eligibility Criteria had been approved by Cabinet, which would help enable additional social and affordable housing. The Empty Homes Strategy would aim to bring more properties back into use. Face to face support was being provided at the Council Offices and the Swanley Hub, offering a wide range of support for homelessness and other issues, in conjunction with other Council teams and partners. The Landlord Incentive Scheme was being reviewed, and some successes had been had in working with landlords to transition people in temporary accommodation into 6 and 12-month tenancies. The Council was working with the Kent Housing Options Group to review temporary accommodation providers and ensure consistency and competitive rates.

The strategy would be monitored with the support of the Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy Forum on a quarterly basis to feed into the annual update to the Committee to ensure the services provided were meeting the changing needs of residents.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

- a) the feedback received from the public consultation be noted; and
- b) it be recommended to Council that the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy be adopted.

Item 6 (b) - Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24

The attached report was considered by the Cabinet, and the relevant minute extract is below:

Cabinet (9 February 2023, Minute 92)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Investment presented the report which outlined the Council's policies for borrowing and managing its investments, and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. He advised that yields had increased since the implementation of the revised strategy and stood on track to secure approaching £500,000 from this source in the current year. Finance and Investment Advisory Committee had considered the same report and recommended the report for approval.

The Senior Principal Accountant outlined the prudential indicators, the borrowing and repayment strategy, and the investment strategy for 2023/24. There were no major changes to the investment strategy. Multi Asset Income Funds were highlighted as a successful implementation of this strategy.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24, be approved.

Item 6 (c) - Property Investment Strategy 2023/24

The attached report was considered by the Cabinet, and the relevant minute extract is below:

Cabinet (9 February 2023, Minute 93)

The Portfolio Holder presented the report which updated Members on the progress of the Property Investment Strategy to January 2023 and its future direction. Members were advised that the Finance & Investment Advisory Committee were in support of the recommendation.

The Head of Finance further advised that the changes in government regulations and CIPFA prudential code meant that the Council could no longer borrow to make property investment purely for yield. He explained that the Investment Property income budget was derived from income from investment properties owned by the Council, interest from loans to Quercus 7, and dividends from Quercus 7.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that the Property Investment Strategy Criteria be adopted.

Item 6 (d) - Budget & Council Tax Setting 2023/24

The attached report was considered by the Cabinet, and the relevant minute extract is below:

Cabinet (9 February 2023, Minute 94)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Investment presented the report which set out the proposed budget for 2023/24. He advised that this was the final stage of the budget process which had seen significant member involvement. If approved, the net expenditure budget for 2023/24 would be £18.5m with the Council's Tax increasing by 2.98% resulting in Band D Council Tax being £236.70, an increase of £6.84. He was pleased to announce that the report would once again leave the council with a fully funded self-sufficient budget over the next 10 years.

The Council Tax and Recovery Manager set out the proposed changes to Council Tax premium charges which proposed to shorten the premium on long term empty dwellings from the current 2 years empty to 1 year from 1 April 2024; and 100% premium on all second homes from 1 April 2024, should the Regeneration & Levelling Up Bill receive Royal Assent. The Bill stated that to apply the changes, approval to do so must be given at least 12 months before the implementation date to ensure the required 12 month leading period.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Finance & Trading advised Members that it had once been again a challenging budget process with a number of changes made at each stage, and were listed in Appendix E. The position had improved since the report to Cabinet in January as the annual budget gap had reduced from £126,000 to £104,000 due to this council's share of the Collection Fund surplus. This gap would be funded from the Budget Stabilisation Reserve.

The Final Local Government Finance Settlement was announced earlier this week and there were no significant changes from the provisional settlement affecting this council. He advised that appendices P to S were not included within the Cabinet papers but would be included in the Council version of the report after the other preceptors have set their Council Tax.

The report included his opinion, as the Statutory Finance Officer, on the robustness of the budget estimates and adequacy of reserves. The flexibility of the 10-year budget approach assisted in these uncertain times but it should be recognised that when there was greater certainty it was highly likely that additional savings and income would be required in the next budget process.

Members discussed the report.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that

- (a) the Summary of Council Expenditure and Council Tax for 2023/24 set out in Appendix F, be approved;
- (b) the 10-year budget 2023/24 to 2032/33 which was the guiding framework for the detailed approval of future years' budgets set out in Appendix C(i) to the report, including the budget changes set out in Appendix E to the report, and that where possible any variations during and between years be met from the Budget Stabilisation Reserve, be agreed;
- (c) the Capital Programme 2023/26 and funding method set out in Appendix J(i) and Capital Strategy 2023/24 set out in Appendix J(iii), be approved;
- (d) the changes to reserves and provisions set out in Appendix K, be approved;
- (e) the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022/23, be rolled forward to 2023/24, with effect from 1 April 2023 (Appendix M), be approved;
- (f) the Council Tax premium on long term empty dwellings, be shortened from the current 2 years (empty) to 1 year from 1 April 2024 (Appendix N), be agreed in principle for implementation following Royal Assent to the relevant Act of Parliament;
- (g) the 100% Council Tax premium on all second homes from 1 April 2024 (Appendix N), be agreed in principle for implementation following Royal Assent to the relevant Act of Parliament; and
- (h) SCIA 18 be reviewed by Officers with the intention of the retention of the Out of Hours service during the peak months of the year.

COUNCIL 21 FEBRUARY 2023

COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2023/24

LATEST INFORMATION ON PRECEPTING AUTHORITIES

Town and Parish Councils

- 1 A list of town and parish council precepts is attached at Appendix Q and total £5,230,651. The increase in the average band D council tax for Town and Parish Councils is 4.14% and results in an average band D council tax figure of £100.61 for 2023/24.

Kent County Council

- 2 Kent County Council met on 9 February 2023 and their precept is £79,765,078. This will result in a band D council tax of £1,534.23. These are the figures including the addition of the council tax flexibility offer for authorities responsible for adult social care.

Kent Police and Crime Commissioner

- 3 The Kent Police and Crime Panel met on 1 February 2023 and approved the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed precept of £12,641,441. This will result in a band D council tax of £243.15.

Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority

- 4 Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority are meeting on 21 February 2023 and their precept is £4,538,753. This will result in a band D council tax of £87.30.

Item 9 - 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.

1. "Sencio is having financial problems due to a combination of factors ranging from the age of their buildings and plant, effect of COVID, competition from private gyms and rising utility costs.

I am assuming we are all agreed on the value of public swimming pools in Sevenoaks and Edenbridge. Should Sencio fail and government grants not be forthcoming, what are the Council's plans to make sure we retain public swimming pools in Sevenoaks and Edenbridge?"

Cllr. Purves
Sevenoaks Eastern

2. "Heavy rains have resulted in the drainage system in Northern Ward becoming overloaded. This has resulted in the culverts discharging untreated sewage into the Mill pond at the top of Mill Lane and local roads and gardens. This unpleasant and potentially harmful to human and wildlife situation has been happening for many years.

Can SDC do anything with the facilities providers to prevent this happening? Potentially this waterway joins up with the cherished chalk stream of the Darent River. This matter is urgent as there are proposals to build more than 1100 new homes in the immediate area at the Gasworks, Pinehurst Nursing Home and the Greatness Quarry.
Can local residents be reassured that SDC is dealing with this importance matter?"

Cllr. Dr. Canet
Sevenoaks Northern

