

POLICY & PERFORMANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

26 November 2015 at 7.00 pm
Conference Room, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks

AGENDA

Membership:

Chairman: Cllr. Fleming Vice-Chairman: Cllr. Miss. Stack
Cllrs. Abraham, Clark, Eyre, Kelly, Krogdahl, Maskell, McGregor, Mrs. Morris, Parkin and Thornton

	<u>Pages</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Apologies for Absence		
1. Minutes To agree the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 September 2015, as a correct record	(Pages 1 - 4)	
2. Declarations of Interest Any interests not already registered		
3. Actions from previous meeting (if any)		
4. Update from Portfolio Holder		Cllr. Fleming Tel: 01732 227180
5. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee (if any)		
6. Budget: Review of service Dashboards and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs)	(Pages 5 - 28)	Adrian Rowbotham Tel: 01732 227153
7. Local Government Devolution	(Pages 29 - 32)	Lee Banks Tel: 01732 227161
8. Swanley Regeneration	(Pages 33 - 38)	Mark Bradbury Tel: 01732 227099
9. Property Disposal Update	(Pages 39 - 46)	Mark Bradbury Tel: 01732 227099
10. Work Plan	(Pages 47 - 48)	

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)

POLICY & PERFORMANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2015 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman) (Chairman)

Cllr. Miss Stack (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Clark, Eyre, Kelly, Maskell, McGregor, Mrs. Morris, Parkin,
Miss. Stack and Thornton

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Krogdahl

11. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2015, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

12. Declarations of Interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

13. Actions from previous meeting

There were none.

14. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Chairman and Portfolio Holder for Policy & Performance updated the Committee that the Council's budget setting process for 2016/17 had begun with the Finance Advisory Committee considering the Financial Prospects report. The report built on the strong foundations built over recent years and started to move the Council forward in its aim to be self-sufficient and would be considered by Cabinet at the meeting on 17 September 2015. The Chairman noted the excellent feedback he had heard on the finance training provided by officers to assist Members with the budget setting process that would shortly be considered by each Advisory Committee.

The Chairman advised that the Audit Letter was considered at the last meeting of the Audit Committee and that the external auditors had shown support for the Council's financial strategy.

15. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

16. Customer Experience Project - Update

The Customer Services Manager presented a report updating Members on the Council's customer experience project. During 2014 the Council set out a number of corporate

projects that it wanted to achieve to support the commitments it made within its Corporate Plan. The Customer Experience Project incorporated the delivery of a new council website and improved consistency of the Council's visual identity.

Since the last update in March 2015, the Council had implemented a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which was the IT system that supported the running of the customer contact centre and reception area. The new system provided a more effective platform to integrate with the new website to enable straight forward and simple self service tasks for customers.

The Customer Service Manager provided Members with a [presentation](#) which gave an update on the progress of the new website and the visual identity guide that would inform the design and content of all future Council publications, including the website.

Resolved: That the progress on the Council's Customer Experience project be noted.

17. Asset Management Strategy

The Head of Economic Development and Property presented a report seeking the views of Members on the development of a new Asset Management Strategy following the establishment of the Economic Development and Property Team and the delivery of the Council's Property Investment Strategy.

Members were advised of the new categories and what these would include for the new strategy. The Head of Economic Development & Property explained that the new strategy would allow for more effective asset management to deliver a mix of capital receipts, increased income and reduced costs to the Council. When supported by a clear asset management plan it would enable the Council to accurately budget for receipts and savings.

Members were advised that, subject to their approval, a draft Asset Management Strategy together with a supporting annual Asset Management Plan would then be prepared for consideration by the Committee and Cabinet.

Resolved: That the proposed scope and parameter of a proposed Asset Management Strategy be prepared and brought back to a future meeting of the committee for consideration prior to the Strategy being presented to Cabinet for approval.

18. Corporate Projects - Update

The Head of Economic Development and Property presented a report and updated Members on the Council's Corporate Projects and the progress of earning income from Council owned assets.

Resolved: That the progress on the Council's Corporate Projects and proposed timescale for future recommendations and decisions be noted.

19. Work Plan

Members noted and agreed the current work plan.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.34 PM

CHAIRMAN

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BUDGET 2016/17: REVIEW OF SERVICE DASHBOARDS AND SERVICE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (SCIAS)

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee – 26 November 2015

Report of	Chief Finance Officer
Status:	For Decision
Also considered by:	Housing and Health Advisory Committee – 22 September 2015 Economic and Community Development Advisory Committee – 24 September 2015 Direct and Trading Advisory Committee – 6 October 2015 Legal and Democratic Services Advisory Committee – 8 October 2015 Planning Advisory Committee – 13 October 2015 Finance Advisory Committee – 17 November 2015
Key Decision:	No

Executive Summary: This report sets out updates to the 2016/17 budget within the existing framework of the 10-year budget and savings plan. The report presents proposals that have been identified which need to be considered, together with further suggestions made by the Advisory Committees, before finalising the budget for 2016/17.

Informed by the latest information from Government and discussions with Cabinet, it is proposed that from next year the Council sets a budget which assumes no funding from Government through the Revenue Support Grant. This is the first major step taken towards the Council's ambition to be financially self-sufficient as set out in its Corporate Plan.

To achieve this aim and to ensure a balanced budget position over the next 10 year period, whilst also increasing the Council's ability to be sustainable beyond that time, a savings requirement of £500,000 in 2016/17 is required, along with additional income or savings of £100,000 in each of the following nine years.

Portfolio Holder	Cllr. Searles
Contact Officer(s)	Adrian Rowbotham Ext. 7153 Helen Martin Ext. 7483

Recommendation to each Advisory Committee:

- (a) Advise Cabinet with views on the growth and savings proposals identified in Appendix D applicable to this Advisory Committee.
- (b) Advise Cabinet with further suggestions for growth and savings.

Reason for recommendation: It is important that the views of the Advisory Committees are taken into account in the budget process to ensure that the Council's resources are used in the most suitable manner.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Council's financial strategy over the past eleven years has worked towards increasing financial sustainability and it has been successful through the use of a number of strategies including:
 - implementing efficiency initiatives;
 - significantly reducing the back office function;
 - improved value for money;
 - maximising external income;
 - the movement of resources away from low priority services; and
 - an emphasis on statutory rather than non-statutory services.
- 2 Over this period the Council has focused on delivering high quality services based on Members' priorities and consultation with residents and stakeholders. In financial terms, the adoption of this strategy has to date allowed the Council to move away from its reliance on general fund reserves.
- 3 Due to the level of funding and other potential changes and uncertainties, it is increasingly difficult to anticipate with sufficient accuracy what the level of Government settlement is likely to be. However, using the data sources available to the Council, this report sets out a budget over the 10-year period but recognises that it is likely that more accurate data will become available in future months and current assumptions may need to be updated.
- 4 In setting its budget for 2011/12 onwards, the Council recognised the need to address both the short-term reduction in Government funding as well as the longer-term need to reduce its reliance on reserves. The outcome was a 10-year budget, together with a four-year savings plan, that ensured the Council's finances were placed on a stable footing but that also allowed for flexibility between budget years.
- 5 With the amount of Revenue Support Grant provided by Government continuing to reduce at a significant rate it is important that the council aims to become more financially self-sufficient by having a balanced economy and a financial strategy that is focused on local solutions. These solutions include:

- a) continuing to deliver financial savings and service efficiencies;
 - b) growing the council tax base; and
 - c) generating more income.
- 6 The intention of this report is to provide Members of each Advisory Committee an opportunity to give their views on potential growth and savings items that could be included in the updated 10-year budget that will be presented to Council on 16 February 2016.
- 7 The 'Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy 2016/17 and Beyond' report has been presented to Cabinet to start the budget setting process for 2016/17.
- 8 This report presents members with the following documents relating to the budget for 2016/17:
- a) Service Dashboards relating to the Advisory Committee (Appendix A);
 - b) 2015/16 Budget by Service relating to the Advisory Committee (Appendix B);
 - c) Summary of the Council's agreed savings plan and growth items (Appendix C);
 - d) New growth and savings items proposed (Appendix D);
 - e) Service Change Impact Assessment forms (SCIAs) for the new growth and savings items relating to the Advisory Committee – if applicable (Appendix E);
 - f) 10-year budget (Appendix F);
 - g) Budget timetable (Appendix G).

Financial Self-Sufficiency

- 9 The Council's Corporate Plan, introduced in 2013, set out an ambition for the Council to become financially self-sufficient. This would mean the Council no longer required direct funding from Government, through Revenue Support Grant or New Homes Bonus, to deliver its services.
- 10 This approach was adopted in response to the financial challenges the Country is faced with in bringing its public spending down to ensure it is able to live within its means. In practice this has seen Government funding to local authorities dramatically reduced since 2010/11 with Sevenoaks District Council seeing a 32% reduction in its funding from government in 2015/16 alone.
- 11 The decision to become financially self-sufficient is intended to give the Council greater control over their services, reducing the potential for decision making to be influenced by the level of funding provided by government to local authorities.
- 12 The attached 10-year budget assumes no Revenue Support Grant from 2016/17 and no New Homes Bonus from 2019/20. If funding continues to be received from these sources, the intention is to put it into the Financial Plan Reserve which can be used to support the 10-year budget by funding investment to save initiatives and

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support for the Property Investment Strategy. One of the aims of the Property Investment Strategy is to achieve returns of 6%; therefore using funding for this purpose will result in additional year on year income that is not impacted by Government decisions.

- 13 Cabinet are keen to become financially self-sufficient early to be ahead of the game and after reviewing the assumptions in the 10-year budget it is clear that it is an achievable aim to be free from Government control and be able to move ahead in the knowledge that this council has the financial resources to provide the services that the district's residents want into the future.

Service Dashboards

- 14 This is a new document as it is the intention to provide Members with improved information during the budget setting process to provide context and inform any growth and savings ideas that Members may put forward.
- 15 The Service Dashboards cover a summary of the services provided, objectives, challenges and risks, achievements and opportunities, priorities and performance.
- 16 Appendix A contains the Service Dashboards for those services directly relevant to this Advisory Committee and Appendix B contains the budget for those services.

Savings Plan

- 17 Appendix C to this report sets out a summary of the savings and growth items approved by Council since the 10-year budget strategy was first used in 2011/12, which have allowed the Council to deliver a 10 year balanced budget.
- 18 The savings plan requires a total of £5.3 million to be saved between 2011/12 and 2016/17 which is an average saving of nearly £900,000 per annum. In the twelve years from 2005/06, over £10m of savings will then have been made.
- 19 Further savings are scheduled to be made in later years as previously agreed by Council.

Proposed Growth Items

- 20 Growth items are items that are in addition to non-service issues and risks, such as grant settlements, impacts of economic change and other pressures highlighted in the 'Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy 2016/17 and Beyond' report considered by Cabinet on 17 September 2015.

- 21 A list of the growth items proposed can be found in Appendix D and a summary by Advisory Committee is shown in the following table:

Advisory Committee	Annual Impact £000	10-year Budget Impact £000
Direct and Trading	36	360
Economic and Community Development	39	390
Finance	55	550
Housing and Health	-	-
Legal and Democratic Services	40	400
Planning	-	-
Policy and Performance	-	-
Total	170	1,700

- 22 In addition, the growth item for making the staffing establishment levels permanent in the Economic Development and Property Team (SCIA1) is included in the 'New Growth' line on the 10-Year Budget.

Proposed Savings Items

- 23 A number of savings items are also being proposed which can also be found in Appendix D and a summary by Advisory Committee is shown in the following table:

Advisory Committee	Annual Impact £000	10-year Budget Impact £000
Direct and Trading	(15)	(75)
Economic and Community Development	(10)	(100)
Finance	(233)	(2,330)
Housing and Health	(40)	(400)
Legal and Democratic Services	-	-
Planning	(20)	(200)
Policy and Performance	(300)	(3,000)
Total	(618)	(6,105)

- 24 Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs) contain further details for all proposed growth and savings items. SCIAs applicable to this Advisory Committee can be found in Appendix E.
- 25 Members should note that even if all of the growth and savings proposals included in Appendix D are agreed, further savings will still need to be identified to reach the £500,000 target.

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Financial Summary

- 26 It is increasingly difficult to produce an accurate forecast at this early stage due to the level of uncertainty, in particular for Government Support. The assumptions currently included take into account the latest information available but a number of assumptions may change before the final budget meeting in February 2015.
- 27 The 10-year budget attached at Appendix E includes the changes that were included in the 'Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy 2016/17 and Beyond' report.

Role of the Advisory Committees

- 28 Views of the Advisory Committees on the growth and savings items proposed together with any additional suggestions will be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 3 December 2015.
- 29 To assist the Advisory Committees in making additional suggestions, a number of questions will be asked and Members will be requested to write their answers on post-it notes and put on the relevant board.
- 30 The questions that Members will be asked at the Advisory Committees are:
 - a) What services should the Council invest more in?
 - b) What services should the Council disinvest from?
 - c) What services work well?
 - d) What services don't work well?
 - e) What issues would you like Cabinet to take into account?
- 31 Officers will summarise the answers before the Committee decides on suggestions to be recommended to Cabinet. The focus of the answers and recommendations should be on the services within the terms of reference of the Advisory Committee however, comments relating to other services will also be passed onto Cabinet.

Process and Timetable

- 32 This report is the second stage of the budget process as shown in the Budget Timetable (Appendix G).
- 33 It is possible that Advisory Committees may have to re-address service budgets in January if significant changes have taken place leading to a large and unmanageable deficit.

Key Implications

Financial

All financial implications are covered elsewhere in this report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications.

For the effective management of our resources and in order to achieve a sustainable budget it is essential that all service cost changes and risks are identified and considered.

Challenges and risks are included in the Service Dashboards and each Service Change Impact Assessment (SCIA) includes the likely impacts including a risk analysis.

Financial risks will be reviewed again when the Cabinet publishes its proposals for the annual budget.

Equality Assessment

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and varies between groups of people.

Individual equality impact assessments have been completed for all Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs) to ensure the decision making process is fair and transparent.

Conclusions

The Strategic Financial and Business Planning process has ensured that the Council follows a logical and well considered process and approach in dealing with the many difficult financial challenges which it has faced. The 10-year budget has further improved this process and helped to ensure that the Council is well placed in dealing with more immediate and longer-term financial challenges.

By becoming financially self-sufficient at an early stage, this Council will become much more in control of its own destiny as the Property Investment Strategy should provide a much more stable income stream than the reducing direct government funding streams.

The attached 10-year budget shows that this Council can continue to be financially stable going into the future with a level of assurance that any council would aspire to.

This budget process will once again be a major financial challenge for a Council that already provides value for money services to a high standard. In making any budget proposals, Members will need to consider the impact on service quality and staff well-being, to ensure that these proposals lead to an achievable 10-year budget that supports the Council's aspirations for customer-focused services.

Members' consideration and scrutiny of the relevant services is an essential and key element in the business and financial planning process. If the net total of growth and

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savings proposals identified by the Advisory Committees and approved by Cabinet does not reach the £500,000 savings target, additional savings will be required that may result in service changes, to ensure a balanced budget position.

Appendices

Appendix A – Service Dashboards relating to this Advisory Committee.

Appendix B – 2015/16 Budget by Service relating to this Advisory Committee.

Appendix C – Summary of the Council's agreed savings plan and growth items.

Appendix D – New growth and savings items proposed.

Appendix E - Service Change Impact Assessment forms (SCIAs) for the new growth and savings items relating to this Advisory Committee (if applicable).

Appendix F – 10-year budget.

Appendix G – Budget timetable.

Background Papers:

- a) Report to Council 17 February 2015 – Budget and Council Tax Setting 2015/16
- b) Report to Cabinet 17 September 2015 – Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy 2016/17 and Beyond

Adrian Rowbotham
Chief Finance Officer

Advisory Committee responsibilities

Special projects (asset acquisition, disposal and redevelopment)

Objectives

- To support the Council's vision to become self-sufficient by developing a property portfolio in accordance with the Council's Property Investment Policy
- Ensuring most effective use of Council property and land assets, including disposing of surplus land and buildings
- Supporting the economic development of the District through progressing regeneration and redevelopment opportunities

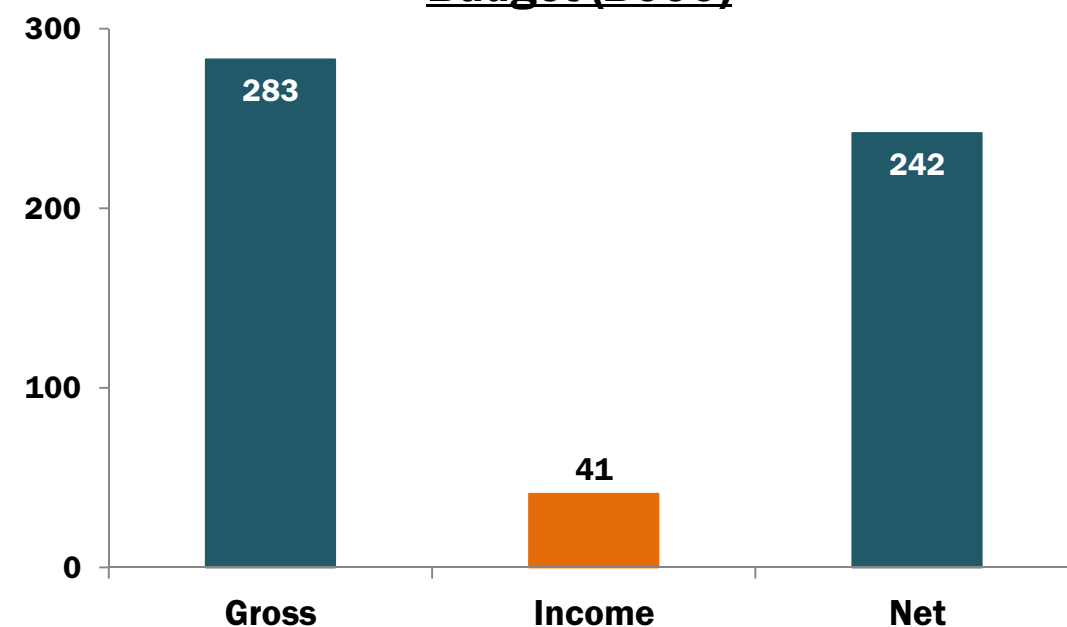
Achievements & Opportunities

- Investment in property assets in Sevenoaks and Swanley generating a minimum return on investment of 6%, which will contribute £470k per annum to Council budgets
- Secured a development partner to bring forward a planning application for a hotel and car park development in Sevenoaks
- Disposal of surplus assets generating an income in excess of £4m for the District Council
- Developing the Council's first Economic Development Strategy and action plan

Challenges & Risks

- Delivering a hotel in Sevenoaks town
- Continuing to seek opportunities to dispose of surplus land
- Delivering regeneration in Swanley through Council owned sites at Meeting Point and Swanley Working Men's Club
- Finding a cost neutral solution for Swanley Leisure Centre

Economic Development & Property Budget (£000)



Service contribution

Statutory service 🏠 🏠 🏠 🏠 🏠

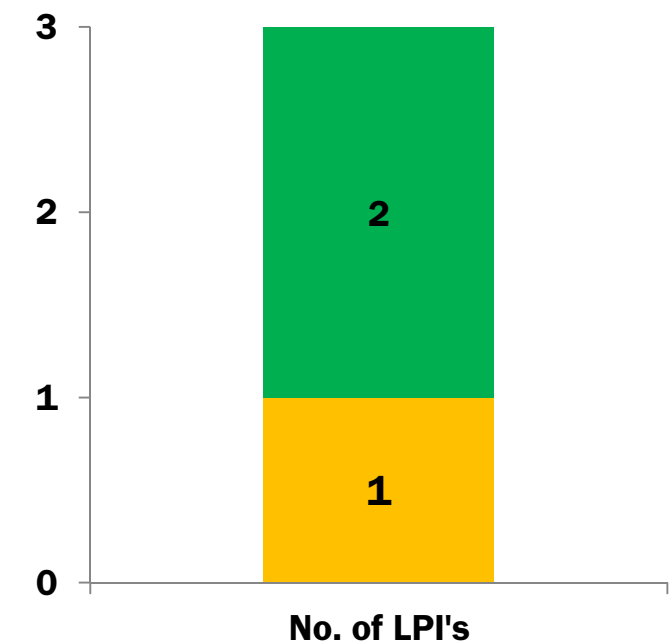
Income generating 💰 💰 💰 💰 💰

Working in partnership 🗣️ 🗣️ 🗣️ 🗣️ 🗣️

Corporate priorities

- Self sufficiency ✓ Value for Money ✓
- Safe district ✗ Collect rubbish effectively ✗
- Protect Green Belt ✗ Local Economy ✓

Performance



Advisory Committee responsibilities
Customer Service standards, digital & Human Resources

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Objectives

- To support and deliver high quality customer service across the organisation and to co-ordinate and deliver service improvements from the complaints process
- To provide a comprehensive HR and payroll service to the organisation; supporting recruitment, training and development, employee relations and staff wellbeing
- To provide high quality IT solutions for staff and customers; supporting improvements in the way the Council delivers its services and creating efficiencies and savings from the effective use of digital solutions

Achievements & Opportunities

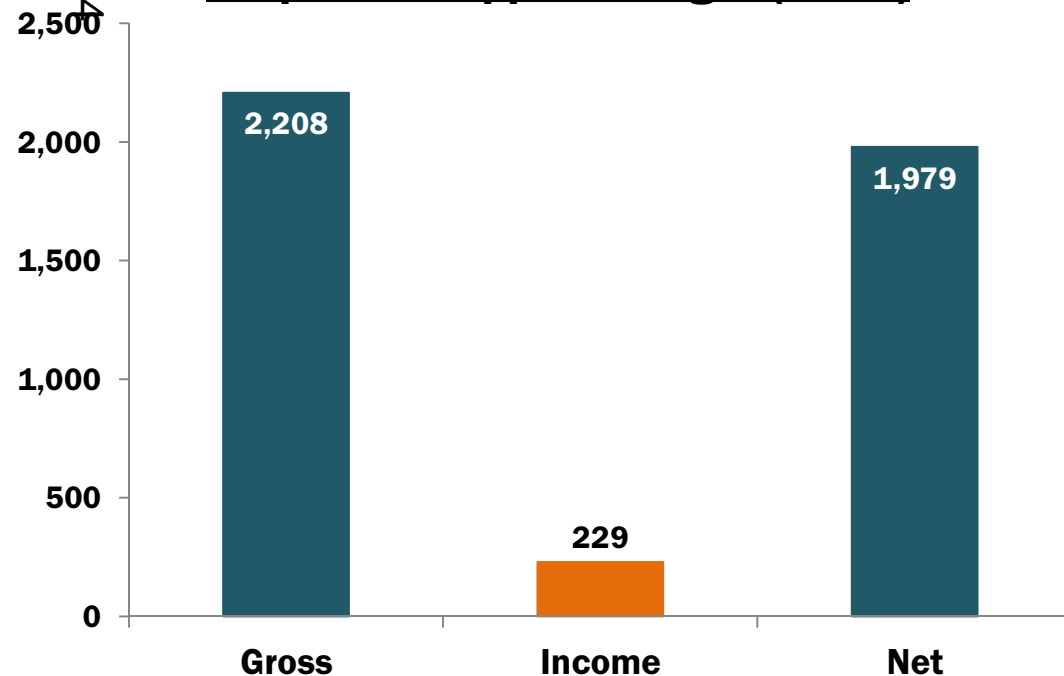
- Reduced customer complaints, with only four stage two complaints received in 2014/15
- Providing of a new council website designed with a strong customer focus and providing a platform for more online services
- Supported the Council to achieve Gold status through Investors in People
- Through the paper-less project removed the equivalent of approximately 2 million sheets of paper, reducing costs and removing manual processes as a result
- Supported the delivery of shared services and financial savings for the Council through the delivery of innovative IT solutions

Challenges & Risks

- To deliver a new Council website that improves the experience for the customer and enables more services to be delivered online
- To maintain low levels of customer complaints and improve services by learning from customer feedback
- To maintain the Council's Investors in People status at Gold level
- Through improved use of IT delivering innovative digital solutions that improve the service to the customer and create efficiencies for the Council

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Corporate Support Budget (£000)



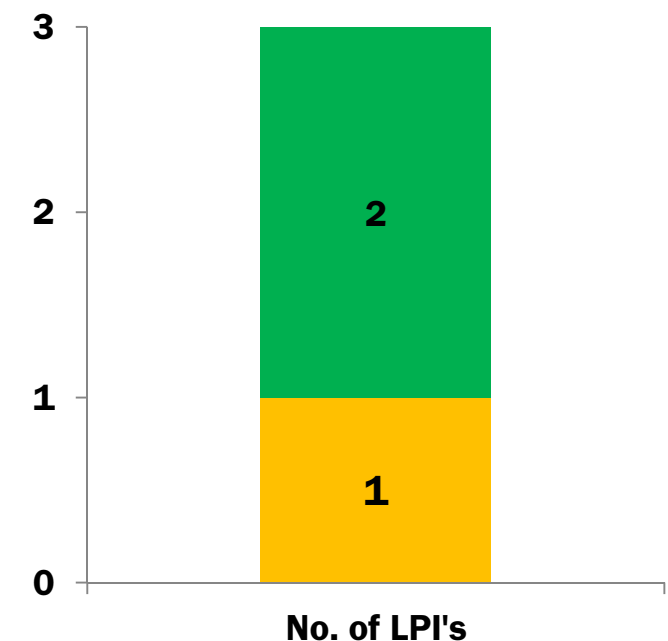
Service contribution

Statutory service 🗝️🗝️🗝️🗝️🗝️
Income generating 💰💰💰💰💰
Working in partnership 🗣️🗣️🗣️🗣️🗣️

Corporate priorities

Self sufficiency ✓ Value for Money ✓
Safe district ✗ Collect rubbish effectively ✗
Protect Green Belt ✗ Local Economy ✗

Performance



Advisory Committee responsibilities
Corporate policy & performance and communications

Objectives

- To set out the Council’s policy direction and monitor progress against it through the Corporate Plan
- To set the Council’s performance management framework, review service performance and support Council services to improve
- To deliver the Council’s Communications Strategy and action plan
- To respond to media enquiries, promote Council initiatives and services and produce and distribute InShape, the Council’s magazine

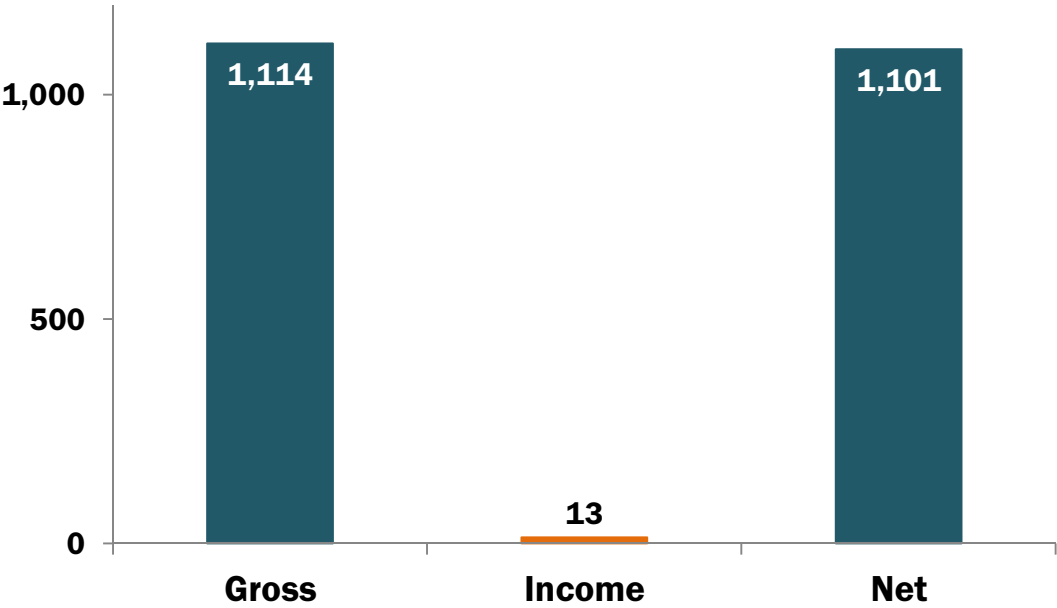
Achievements & Opportunities

- Continued strong performance across Council services as recognised from performance monitoring, resident consultation and independent peer review.
- High values of trust and satisfaction amongst residents
- The delivery of a new Council website provides an opportunity to further improve Council services through greater adoption of digital services, transforming the way services approach the customer
- The Council priority to achieve a sustainable, self-sufficient budget position provides an opportunity for new communications campaigns and marketing of Council services

Challenges & Risks

- Supporting the ongoing improvement of services, with a focus on Council priorities such as paper-less, online services and self-sufficiency
- Seeking to deliver initiatives that enable the Council to manage the increasing demand for its services within the resources available
- Seeking to protect and enhance the Council’s reputation as it responds to continued reductions in Council funding, changes to regulations and moves towards self-sufficiency

Transformation & Strategy Budget (£000)



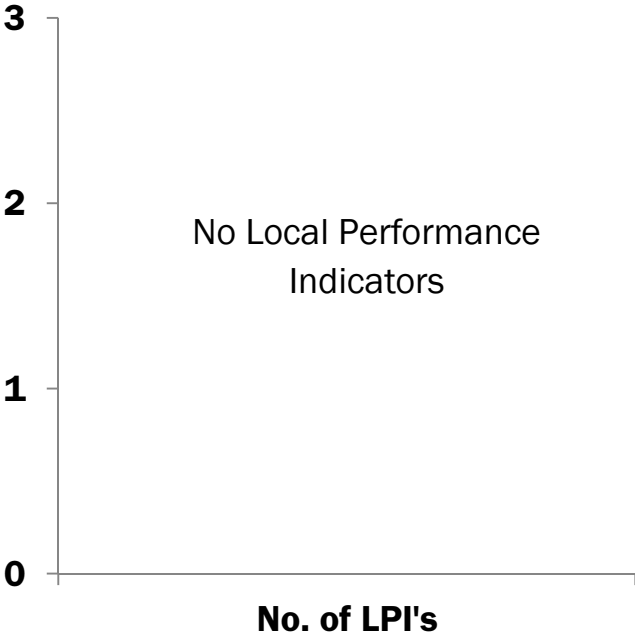
Service contribution

- Statutory service
- Income generating
- Working in partnership

Corporate priorities

- Self sufficiency ✓
- Value for Money ✓
- Safe district ✗
- Collect rubbish effectively ✗
- Protect Green Belt ✗
- Local Economy ✗

Performance



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Policy and Performance Advisory Committee: 2015/16 Budget by Service

Revenue		2015/16	2015/16	2015/16
Chief Officer	Description	Expenditure	Income	Net
		£'000	£'000	£'000
Communities and Business	Economic Development & Property	283	(41)	242
Corporate Support	Administrative Expenses - Corporate Support	27	0	27
Corporate Support	Asset Maintenance IT	263	0	263
Corporate Support	Support - Contact Centre	441	0	441
Corporate Support	Support - General Admin - Print	194	(194)	0
Corporate Support	Support - IT	930	(24)	906
Corporate Support	Support - Local Offices	56	0	56
Financial Services	Action and Development	7	0	7
Financial Services	Administrative Expenses - Transformation and Strategy	6	0	6
Financial Services	Consultation and Surveys	3	0	3
Financial Services	Corporate Management	1,092	0	1,092
Financial Services	Corporate Savings	(163)	0	(163)
Financial Services	External Communications	163	(13)	150
Financial Services	Performance Improvement	6	0	6
Corporate Support	Administrative Expenses - Human Resources	17	(3)	14
Corporate Support	Support - Human Resources	280	(8)	272
		3,604	(283)	3,321

Capital		2015/16
Chief Officer	Description	Expenditure
		£'000
Env & Op Svs	Car Park	4,000
Finance	Property Investment Strategy	8,000
		12,000

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Summary of the Council's Agreed Savings and Growth Items

Appendix C

SCIA Year	No.	Description	2011/12 £000	2012/13 £000	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	Later Years £000	Total £000
		Direct and Trading Advisory Committee								
		No savings or growth agreed from 2016/17 onwards								
		Economic and Community Development Advisory Committee								
2014/15	2	Economic Development & Property Team - SCIA originally called 'Broadband and business growth' (reversal of temporary growth item)						(50)	(30)	
		Finance Advisory Committee								
2011/12	62,63	Staff terms and conditions - savings agreed by Council 18/10/11						(143)	(836)	
2015/16	1	Staffing: Employers National Insurance increase from April 2016 - implications due to change in legislation						200		
2015/16	10	External Audit fee reduction (reversal of temporary saving item)							30	
2015/16	11	Dartford BC partnerships: revised split of costs (reversal of temporary saving item)						90		
		Housing and Health Advisory Committee								
2015/16	17	Housing Advice: Bed and breakfast reduction (reversal of temporary saving item)						10		
2015/16	18	Housing Advice: Private sector letting scheme (reversal of temporary saving item)						10		
		Legal and Democratic Services Advisory Committee								
		No savings or growth agreed from 2016/17 onwards								
		Planning Advisory Committee								
2014/15	15	Planning: Use CIL funds for monitoring						(50)		
		Policy and Performance Advisory Committee								
2014/15	18	Corporate Projects (reversal of temporary growth item)						(60)		
2014/15	21	Customer Services: Channel shift programme						(20)		
		Total Savings	(2,984)	(841)	(314)	(479)	(533)	(103)	(806)	(6,060)
		Total Growth	371	45	50	327	177	90	(30)	1,030
		Net Savings	(2,613)	(796)	(264)	(152)	(356)	(13)	(836)	(5,030)

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New Growth and Savings Proposals

Proposal shown as 'New Growth' on the attached 10-year budget						
SCIA Year	No.	Description	Year	Ongoing	Annual Impact £000	10-year Budget Impact £000
Growth						
Policy and Performance Advisory Committee						
2016/17	1	Economic Development & Property: Staffing establishment levels made permanent	2016/17	yes	88	1,342
Total					88	1,342

Proposals not included on the attached 10-year budget						
SCIA Year	No.	Description	Year	Ongoing	Annual Impact £000	10-year Budget Impact £000
Growth						
Direct and Trading Advisory Committee						
2016/17	2	Street Cleaning: Fly-tipping clearance and enforcement action	2016/17	yes	36	360
Economic and Community Development Advisory Committee						
2016/17	3	Tourism: Full-time Tourism Officer	2016/17	yes	39	390
Finance Advisory Committee						
2016/17	4	Facilities Management: Loss of asset maintenance income	2016/17	yes	13	130
2016/17	5	Facilities Management: Asset maintenance at Hever Road Travellers Site	2016/17	yes	30	300
2016/17	6	Finance: Insurance Premium Tax increase	2016/17	yes	12	120
Housing and Health Advisory Committee						
none						
Legal and Democratic Services Advisory Committee						
2016/17	7	Register of Electors: Individual Electoral Registration	2016/17	yes	40	400
Planning Advisory Committee						
none						
Policy and Performance Advisory Committee						
none						
Sub Total					170	1,700

Proposals not included on the attached 10-year budget						
SCIA Year	No.	Description	Year	Ongoing	Annual Impact £000	10-year Budget Impact £000
Savings						
Direct and Trading Advisory Committee						
2016/17	8	Playgrounds: Reduction in asset maintenance	2016/17	5 yrs	(7)	(35)
2016/17	9	Public Conveniences: Reduction in asset maintenance	2016/17	5 yrs	(8)	(40)
Economic and Community Development Advisory Committee						
2016/17	10	Youth: Reduction in contributions to projects	2016/17	yes	(10)	(100)
Finance Advisory Committee						
2016/17	11	Facilities Management: Reduction in utility costs	2016/17	yes	(15)	(150)
2016/17	12	Facilities Management: Reduction in maintenance and consumables cost	2016/17	yes	(66)	(660)
2016/17	13	Facilities Management: Increased print income	2016/17	yes	(10)	(100)
2016/17	14	Various partnerships: Revised split of costs	2016/17	yes	(70)	(700)
2016/17	15	Finance: Partnership work covered within existing resources	2016/17	yes	(72)	(720)
Housing and Health Advisory Committee						
2016/17	16	Housing Advice & Standards: Housing Register	2016/17	yes	(15)	(150)
2016/17	17	Disabled Facility Grants: Fee income	2016/17	yes	(20)	(200)
2016/17	18	Private Sector Lettings (PSL) scheme: reduced contribution	2016/17	yes	(5)	(50)
Legal and Democratic Services Advisory Committee						
none						
Planning Advisory Committee						
2016/17	19	Planning: Efficiency review	2016/17	yes	(20)	(200)
Policy and Performance Advisory Committee						
2016/17	20	Pay costs saving	2016/17	yes	(300)	(3,000)
Sub Total					(618)	(6,105)
Net Savings Total					(448)	(4,405)
Net Savings required in 10-Year Budget					(500)	
Remaining shortfall IF all of the above SCIA's are agreed					(52)	

SERVICE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SCIA 20 (16/17)

Chief Officer:	Chief Executive	Service:	All Services
Activity	Pay costs	No. of Staff:	369.27 fte

Activity Budget Change	2016/17 Growth / (Saving) £000	Later Years Comments (ongoing, one-off, etc.)
Pay costs saving	(300)	Ongoing

Reasons for and explanation of proposed change in service

Pay costs will reduce in two key ways:

Firstly, Council approved the proposed Senior Management Restructure on 3 November 2015. The proposed restructure delivers on a commitment made by the Chief Executive to undertake a review of Senior Management to ensure the Council is well placed to manage the opportunities and future challenges it is presented with.

The restructure proposes to reduce the number of Chief Officers and under a new structure of a Chief Executive and five Chief Officers a further review of how services are delivered will take place to identify additional required savings.

Secondly, the Council has a procedure in place that requires a contribution of three months salary to be made to the vacant posts budget when an officer leaves their post.

The three month contribution reflects the time period that posts are most likely to be vacant for a robust recruitment and selection process to be completed. Where it is evident services would be affected by delaying recruitment or making the contribution, procedures allow for it to be waived.

Savings can also be generated when an officer that leaves the Council is replaced by an officer on the same pay band but on a lower scale point.

Key Stakeholders Affected

All Council staff

SERVICE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**Likely impacts and implications of the change in service (include Risk Analysis)**

The risk of reducing the senior management structure, whilst retaining the Council's ability to deliver on its vision and promises and the corporate projects Members have set out, is considered to be low.

The extent of contributions collected from vacancies is dependent on the levels of staff turnover in the organisation and there is always some risk that the target will not be met.

Risk to Service Objectives (High / Medium / Low)

Low

2015/16 Budget

	£'000
Operational Cost	13,706
Income	-
Net Cost	13,706

Equality Impacts

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Ten Year Budget - Revenue

	Budget 2015/16 £000	Plan 2016/17 £000	Plan 2017/18 £000	Plan 2018/19 £000	Plan 2019/20 £000	Plan 2020/21 £000	Plan 2021/22 £000	Plan 2022/23 £000	Plan 2023/24 £000	Plan 2024/25 £000	Plan 2025/26 £000
Expenditure											
Net Service Expenditure c/f	14,136	14,253	13,676	14,248	14,499	14,659	15,210	15,564	15,925	16,293	16,666
Inflation	473	569	506	622	446	638	454	461	468	473	478
Superannuation Fund deficit: actuarial increase	0	(721)	300	0	0	200	0	0	0	0	0
Net savings (approved in previous years)	(356)	(13)	(162)	(271)	(216)	(187)	0	0	0	0	0
New growth	0	88	28	0	30	0	0	0	0	0	0
New savings/Income	0	(500)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
Net Service Expenditure b/f	14,253	13,676	14,248	14,499	14,659	15,210	15,564	15,925	16,293	16,666	17,044
Financing Sources											
Government Support											
: Revenue Support Grant	(1,516)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(1,818)	(2,247)	(1,348)	(1,348)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council Tax	(9,298)	(9,597)	(9,905)	(10,221)	(10,546)	(10,879)	(11,222)	(11,574)	(11,935)	(12,307)	(12,688)
Locally Retained Business Rates	(1,934)	(1,973)	(2,012)	(2,052)	(2,093)	(2,135)	(2,178)	(2,222)	(2,266)	(2,311)	(2,357)
Interest Receipts	(301)	(250)	(250)	(250)	(250)	(250)	(250)	(250)	(250)	(250)	(250)
Property Investment Strategy Income	0	(500)	(500)	(700)	(700)	(700)	(700)	(700)	(800)	(800)	(800)
Contributions to/(from) Reserves	(233)	(233)	(353)	(353)	(353)	(353)	(353)	(179)	(179)	(635)	148
Total Financing	(15,100)	(14,800)	(14,368)	(14,924)	(13,942)	(14,317)	(14,703)	(14,925)	(15,430)	(16,303)	(15,947)
Budget Gap (surplus)/deficit	(847)	(1,124)	(120)	(425)	717	893	861	1,000	863	363	1,097
Contribution to/(from) Stabilisation Reserve	847	1,124	120	425	(717)	(893)	(861)	(1,000)	(863)	(363)	(1,097)
Unfunded Budget Gap (surplus)/deficit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Assumptions	
Revenue Support Grant:	-100% in 16/17
Locally Retained Business Rates:	2% all years
Council Tax:	2% in all years
Interest Receipts:	£250,000 16/17 onwards
Property Inv. Strat.:	£500,000 from 16/17, £700,000 from 18/19, £800,000 onwards
Pay award:	1% in 16/17 - 19/20, 2% later years
Other costs:	2.25% in all years
Income:	2.5% all years

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2016/17 Budget Setting Timetable

	Date	Committee
Stage 1		
Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy 2016/17 and Beyond	1 September	Finance AC
	17 September	Cabinet
↓		
Stage 2		
Review of Service Dashboards and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs)	22 September	Housing & Health AC
	24 September	Economic & Comm. Dev. AC
	6 October	Direct & Trading AC
	8 October	Legal & Dem. Svs AC
	13 October	Planning AC
	17 November	Finance AC
	26 November	Policy & Performance AC
↓		
Stage 3		
Budget Update (incl. Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs), feedback from Advisory Committees)	3 December	Cabinet
↓		
Stage 4		
Budget Update (incl. Government Support information)	14 January	Cabinet
↓		
Stage 5		
Budget Update and further review of Service Change Impact Assessments (if required)	January - February	Advisory Committees
↓		
Stage 6		
Budget Setting Meeting (Recommendations to Council)	4 February	Cabinet
↓		
Stage 7		
Budget Setting Meeting (incl. Council Tax setting)	16 February	Council

Note: The Scrutiny Committee may 'call in' items concerning the budget setting process.

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEVOLUTION

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee – 26 November 2015

Report of Chief Executive

Status: For Information

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: This report provides the background to, and a brief summary of, the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill. It outlines the current progress nationally and suggests that the Council considers engaging with Government over what could be achieved locally as it achieves a self-sufficient budget position.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Fleming

Contact Officer(s) Lee Banks Ext.7161

Recommendation to Policy and Performance Advisory Committee:

That Members note the report.

Reason for recommendation: To update Members on the Governments Local Government Devolution Bill, the agreements being progressed across the country to date and the District Councils position in relation to devolution.

Introduction and Background

- 1 In the run up to the 2015 General Election and in the months since the subject of devolution of powers from central to local government has taken significant strides forward.
- 2 After election in 2010 the coalition government prioritised reducing the national budget deficit and prioritised themes of localism (and the ‘big society’) and rebalancing the national economy. ‘Regional’ agencies set up by the previous Government were abolished, instead local authorities and business leaders were encouraged to establish ‘Local Enterprise Partnerships’ (LEPs). During 2011, the government began to both resource and empower (eventually 39) LEPs.
- 3 In the same year the Government announced ‘new city deals’, which offered cities a ‘deal’ of enhanced powers, resources and flexibilities in return for stronger local leadership and decision-making. Deals with the eight core city regions were agreed by July 2012. They offered the cities funding from a range of schemes and enhanced powers in areas such as skills (through youth contracts, apprentices hubs), business support (e.g. growth hubs), and infrastructure measures (e.g. single pot funds and joint investment programmes). In return, cities undertook to

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establish Combined Authorities, LEP-led or other strengthened governance arrangements.

- 4 In October 2012 the Heseltine report was published, which suggested much greater decentralisation of powers and resources to LEPs, and strong local governance structures. The Government responded by extending the offer of 'city deals' and established what became the 'single local growth fund' which provided funding of approximately £6bn for LEP's to bid for.
- 5 From 2013 the implementation of this approach delivered a further 20 city deals, and 39 'local growth deals' (with each of the LEPs). In governance terms the operation of five Combined Authorities (CAs) progressed across five northern 'city regions' – Greater Manchester (GMCA – from 2011), followed in April 2014 by Leeds, Liverpool, North East and Sheffield.
- 6 As the 2015 general election approached the debate on further devolution of funding and powers grew more prominent. Some of this was stimulated by the Scotland referendum where the status of 'England' (as a nation) became an increasingly popular topic of debate.
- 7 In November 2014 the Government announced the Greater Manchester Devolution Agreement. This introduced the 'metro-mayor' model for sub-national leadership and governance and it also extended the scope of devolution to health and care integration.

Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill

- 8 The Government's Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill was introduced to the House of Commons on July 2015, having been debated in the House of Lords since late May.
- 9 The Bill proposes to give effect to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority agreements, and also provides the legislative framework that would enable devolution deals to be agreed for the rest of England. This framework covers Combined Authorities (CAs) and other forms of local governance where CAs may not be feasible. It also extends what may be 'in-scope' of any devolution arrangements significantly beyond the local growth remit of previous legislation and deals.
- 10 In response to the Bill, and to its reinforcement in the July 2015 Budget, Government invited other areas to make proposals for enhanced local governance and devolution deals. 38 areas responded to Government by the deadline of September 2015, this did not include any proposal(s) from Kent.
- 11 To date further deals have been announced with Cornwall (a single unitary council area), Sheffield, North East and Tees Valley, with an expectation that up to 10 further deals being taken forward in the Spending Review, which takes place on 25 November.
- 12 The emphasis in the devolution discussion has, so far, been on cities and large combined authorities. However, there is a growing recognition that with 54% of the

UK's economic output from non-metropolitan areas, smaller areas have a significant role to play, and there is a need for truly local deals.

- 13 In speaking with representatives of Hampshire and the Isle of White the Council is aware that they have submitted proposals that include a commitment to “identify and agree opportunities to delegate or devolve functions from county to district councils, parish councils and community groups, in keeping with the principles of subsidiarity and local customer focus”. The detail behind these proposals is continuing to be developed.
- 14 The financial arguments for devolution have been made by a number of organisations including the Local Government Association who argued in their white paper “Devo Next” that £11billion could be saved by simplifying and streamlining the many different funding pots for local economic growth and regeneration.
- 15 As an additional stimulus for devolution, the Chancellor has announced that in return for additional responsibilities by 2020 local authorities will be able to retain all business rates revenue collected locally (estimated at £26billion). Local authorities will be able to reduce those rates (and collect less). Elected (metro) mayors might be able to raise rates for infrastructure projects with the support of local businesses. Further details on this are expected at the 2015 Spending Review.

Devolution and the District Council

- 16 Sevenoaks District Council has, over the last decade, been consistently recognised as high performing. From April 2016 the Council will no longer place reliance on direct funding from Government to deliver its services. Being financially self-sufficient provides the Council with a level of certainty in its financial planning and means that it is well placed to consider its own position in relation to devolution, with the aim of delivering ever improved outcomes for residents and businesses.
- 17 An opportunity exists for the Council to seek to talk to Government about a local deal that rewards its achievements. This would not be devolution as explored nationally but a deal that would seek to transform how some services, as determined by Members, are delivered locally.
- 18 It is proposed that how this could be achieved is explored further and a “road map” is developed for further consideration by Members.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

- 19 None.

Key Implications

Financial

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

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Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal or risk implications arising from this report.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Conclusions

The Government has through its Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill set out a legal framework that enables deals to be approved with Council's across England. 38 proposals for devolution were received by Government and five have been agreed to date. The Council is in a unique position of seeking to be financially self-sufficient from April 2016 and this provides an opportunity for the Council to seek to talk to Government about a local deal that rewards its achievements.

Appendices None

Background Papers: None

Dr Pav Ramewal
Chief Executive

SWANLEY REGENERATION

Policy & Performance Advisory Committee – 26 November 2015

Report of Chief Officer Communities & Business

Status: For Recommendation to Cabinet

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary:

This report seeks approval to the demolition of redundant premises at the Former Swanley Working Men's Club, 18 High Street, 27 to 37 High Street and Bevan Place Car Park, Swanley

This report supports the Key Aim of Value for money

Portfolio Holder Cllr Fleming

Contact Officer(s) Mark Bradbury Ext. 7099

Recommendation

That the Committee recommends that Cabinet approves the demolition of redundant premises at the Former Swanley Working Men's Club, 18 High Street, 27 to 37 High Street and Bevan Place Car Park, Swanley subject to a detailed appraisal of the VAT implications.

Reason for recommendation: Development of these sites will generate income and capital receipts that can be reinvested. High quality development will serve the needs of the town and improve an important area of the town, thus supporting the Council's Economic Development strategy. It will also result in higher performing assets in accordance with the Council's approved Property Investment Strategy.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Council has owned property comprising the Bevan Place Car Park, 16 High Street and 27 – 37 High Street, Swanley for some time. The Former Swanley Working Men's Club was acquired in March 2015.
- 2 The site of the Bevan Place Car Park and Working Men's Club is allocated in the Adopted ADMP for residential development. Whilst 16 High Street is not included in the allocation, it is immediately adjacent and the allocation encourages a comprehensive scheme.

Agenda Item 8

- 3 Planning Consent was granted in September 2015 to demolish 27 – 37 High Street and redevelop the site to provide 400 Square metres of commercial space on the ground floor with 14 flats one two upper floors.
- 4 Age Concern used to occupy 27 -37 High Street but vacated to new premises in Swanley earlier this year.
- 5 The Citizens Advice Bureau and the Local Food Bank currently occupy 16 High Street, both will be relocating, by agreement, to new premises in Swanley by the end of this year. The occupiers had been responsible for payment of business rates.
- 6 West Kent Mediation Service occupy a portakabin situated within the Bevan Place car park. They have now agreed terms to move into offices at Knole Academy and will move in December 2015. Again the tenant had been responsible for business rates.

Demolition

- 7 It is intended that both sites will be redeveloped in the near future. We are in the process of procuring architects to design a high quality scheme that will raise the standard of design in Swanley town centre and create an attractive gateway which will act as a catalyst for further regeneration. These proposals will be drawn up and consulted upon as part of the planned Masterplan for the Regeneration & Growth of Swanley & Hextable.
- 8 In the meantime empty buildings on the sites will expose the Council to a business rates liability as well as attracting unwanted attention from vandals and squatters creating Health & Safety and maintenance issues.
- 9 Consultant Building Surveyors AHP Partnership (of Sevenoaks) have therefore been appointed to prepare specifications and procure and manage contractors to clear and hoard the sites. It is intended that the hoardings will be used to promote the masterplanning and regeneration of Swanley, encouraging as many local residents and businesses as possible to be involved in the consultation for the masterplan.
- 10 The works are currently out to tender and due back on 27th November. A report on the budget costs will be tabled at Committee and a detail report updated following the tender will be tabled at Cabinet on 3rd December. If approved, works are programmed to start in January.

Conclusions

- 11 Early demolition of the buildings will:-
 - Remove the Council's business rates liability
 - Reduce the risk of vandalism or squatting
 - Improve the visual appearance of the sites

- Prepare the sites for redevelopment

12 It is therefore recommended that Members recommend to Cabinet that the properties be demolished subject to the outcome of the tender process and a detailed assessment of the VAT implications.

Key Implications

Financial

Development of these sites will generate income and capital receipts that can be reinvested in higher performing assets in accordance with the Council's approved Property Investment Strategy.

Early demolition of these (soon to be) vacant premises will reduce the Council's liability to Business Rates and potential costs relating to squatting and health & safety.

Works such as demolition or other site clearance for 27 -37 High Street, and the laying of foundations, are zero-rated (the council will not incur VAT), if they are carried out 'in the course of' construction of dwellings. HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) expect there to be at least outline planning permission for construction (this site has planning consent for residential development granted in September 2015), and for it to be clear that construction work will follow shortly afterwards otherwise they may challenge zero-rating if there is a delay. With regards to Bevan Place Car Park/Working Men's Club site we will not be able to zero rate if site investigation or demolition work is carried out before planning permission. A detailed assessment of the VAT implications will be completed once the tender prices are received.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendation.

No significant risks have been identified for the Council in progressing the sale. The land is not required for operational purposes.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

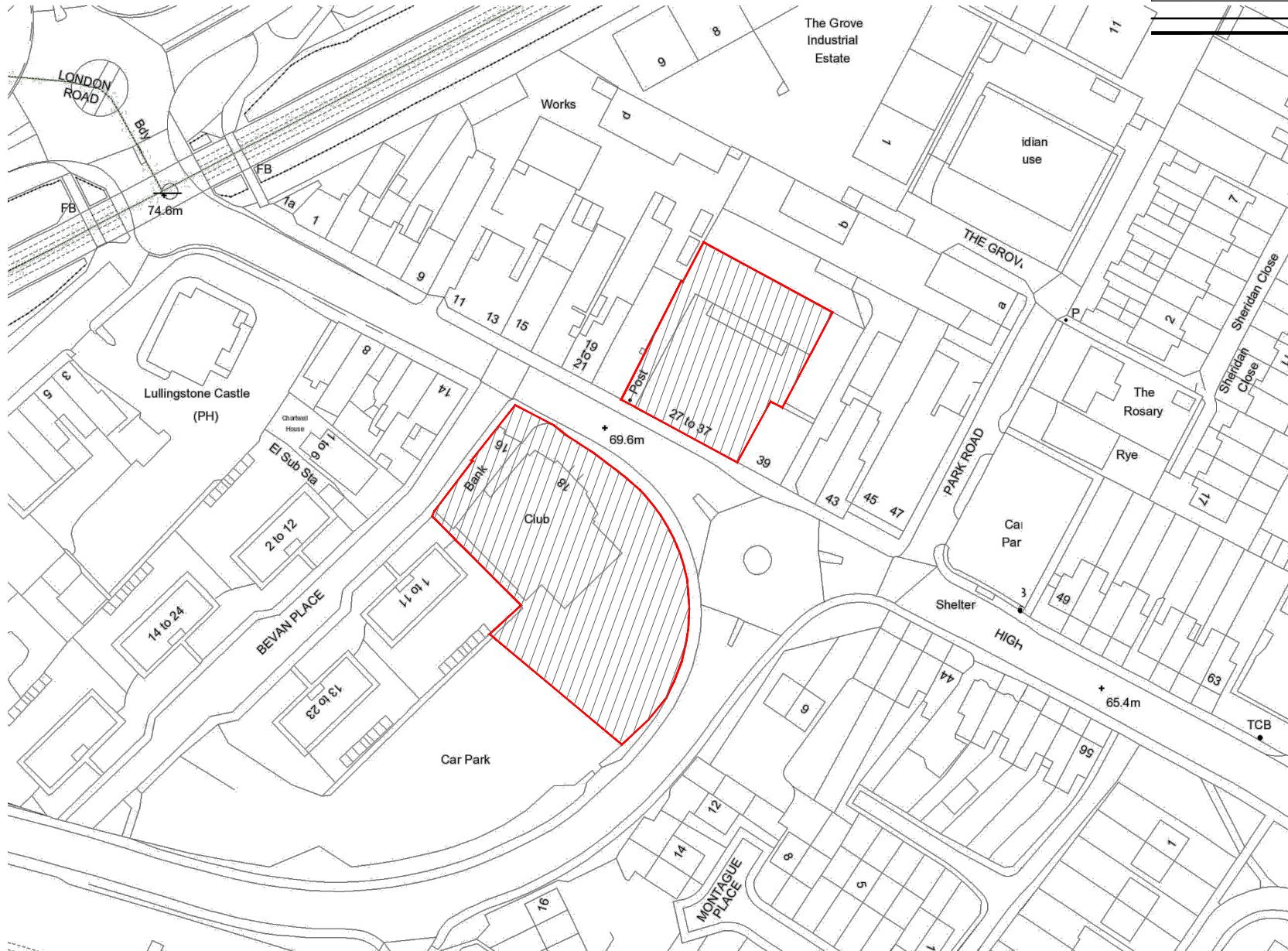
Appendices: Appendix A : Site Plan

Background Papers: None

Lesley Bowles

Chief Officer Communities & Business

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REV.	REVISION DESCRIPTION:	REV'D BY:	DATE REV'D:

REVISIONS:

STATUS:



AHP Architects and Surveyors Ltd
18 St. John's Hill, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 3NP
The Mount, 2 Trent Valley Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 6EG
Tel: 01732 463916 | Email: info@ahptd.co.uk | www.ahptd.co.uk

PROJECT:

SWANLEY SITES - DEMOLITION WORKS
HIGH STREET, SWANLEY BR8 8AE

CLIENT:

SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL

DRAWING TITLE:

LOCATION PLAN
16-18 HIGH STREET, SWANLEY
27-37 HIGH STREET, SWANLEY

DRAWN BY:	DATE:	PAGE SIZE:	SCALE:
CRG	10/11/15	A4	1:1250

DRAWING NUMBER: REVISION NUMBER:

A812-001

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PROPERTY DISPOSALS UPDATE

Policy & Performance Advisory Committee – 26 November 2015

Report of Chief Officer Communities & Business

Status: For Recommendation to Cabinet

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary:

This report seeks approval to the disposal of surplus property assets at Shacklands Road, Badgers Mount

This report supports the Key Aim of Value for money

Portfolio Holder Cllr Fleming

Contact Officer(s) Mark Bradbury Ext. 7099

Recommendation

That the Committee recommends to Cabinet the disposal of surplus land at Shacklands Road, Badgers Mount and authorises the Head of Economic Development and Property to agree detailed Heads of Terms

Reason for recommendation: Disposal of surplus and underperforming assets will generate capital receipts that can be reinvested in higher performing assets in accordance with the Council's approved Property Investment Strategy.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Council owns an area of woodland in Badgers Mount adjacent to the M25 motorway. This land lies outside of the areas of woodland managed as an amenity for the public. The land is shown edged red on the attached plan.
- 2 Part of the woodland, edged green on the attached plan has been sold on a long lease to one adjoining owner. That owner is now interested in acquiring further land and 2 other neighbouring residential owners are also interested. Between them they are interested in acquiring all of the land.
- 3 One other neighbouring property has also been approached and they have indicated that they are not interested.
- 4 The land is wooded and does provide a visual and aural screen between the adjoining properties and the M25 motorway. The woodland has not previously

Agenda Item 9

been protected by a Tree Preservation Order although it is Ancient Woodland. When the Council sold the land edged green (on a long lease) a number of trees were felled by the lessee to allow horses to be grazed.

Disposal

- 4 The land does not form part of the Council's operational needs nor is it managed as a community facility. It does not generate an income or have potential to generate an income in line with the Council's Property Investment Strategy criteria. Therefore in accordance with the principles of Asset Management discussed at the Planning and Performance Advisory Committee on with members the property is surplus to requirements.
- 4 It is therefore proposed that the land is sold in agreed parcels to the three interested parties. Agreement has been reach in principle and subject to Cabinet approval based on a guide price of £20,000 per hectare.
- 5 A Tree Preservation Order has been made covering the entirety of the land and it is proposed that sales would not be completed until the Order is confirmed.
- 6 It is also proposed that the sale will be subject to conditions that the property is owned and managed as private woodland in perpetuity.

Badgers Mount Parish Council

- 7 Badgers Mount Parish Council have been consulted on the proposals and have met with the Property Team and with the Leader of the Council.
- 8 The Parish Council advise that they would prefer the District Council to retain ownership on the basis that 'the only way to ensure that the protection of the woodland is maintained is that it remains in Public Ownership'. They have advised that if the District Council does not wish to retain ownership the Parish Council would be prepared to enter into discussions regarding a transfer to them. We understand that they would not be prepared to pay market value. A copy of a letter from the Parish Council is attached as Appendix B.

Conclusions

- 9 The land is surplus to requirements and the making of a Tree Preservation Order and sale of the land to neighbouring residents with suitable restriction on the use of the land is likely to be the most appropriate route to ensuring the maintenance of the land for the amenity of those residents. It also offers Value for Money to taxpayers.
- 10 It is therefore recommended that the offer be accepted and the Head of Economic Development be authorised to agree detailed terms.

Key Implications

Financial

Disposal of surplus and underperforming assets will generate capital receipts that can be reinvested in higher performing assets in accordance with the Council's approved Property Investment Strategy

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

Resources from the Council's legal team are and will continue to be needed to complete the disposal process.

No significant risks have been identified for the Council in progressing the sale. The land is not required for operational purposes.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Appendices:

Appendix A : Site Plan

Appendix B : Letter from Parish Council

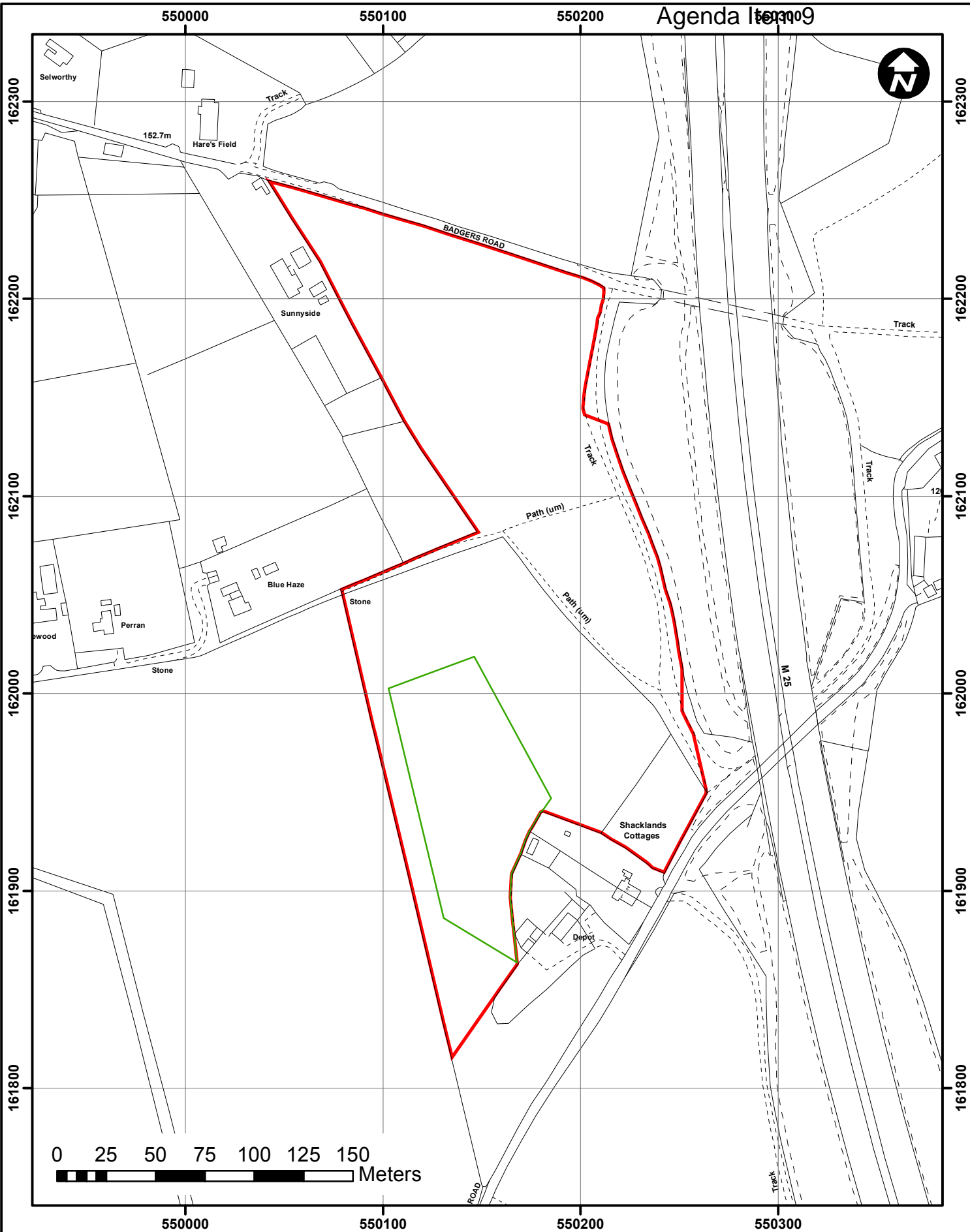
Background Papers:

None

Lesley Bowles

Chief Officer Communities & Business

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Mark Bradbury
Head of Economic Development and Property
Sevenoaks District Council
Argyle Road
Sevenoaks
TN13 1HG

21st October 2015

Dear Mr Bradbury

RE: Woodland West of M25 between Shacklands Road and Badgers Road, Badgers Mount

Following the meeting on 22nd September 2015 between Cllrs John Grint and Noel Wills, and Leigh Keating, we confirm the following.

Badgers Mount Parish Council is very concerned about the proposed disposal of part of Jenkins Neck Wood adjacent to the west side of the M25 motorway between Shacklands Road and Badgers Road, and east of Sunnyside, Blue Haze and F M Conway's Chelsfield Depot, Badgers Mount.

At the inquiry into the Swanley to Sevenoaks section of the M25, great importance was given to the woodland alongside the motorway providing both visual and acoustic screening. At that time the woodland was owned by the Forestry Commission, a Government Department, which would ensure that the woodland was properly maintained to preserve this screening. Some additional areas of land were also acquired and planted with trees to provide additional screening to mitigate visual and acoustic intrusion. The protection provided by all areas of woodland adjacent to the motorway was, therefore, well accepted. This woodland is the community's only effective barrier against the noise and pollution generated by the M25 and, as such is an important part of the local infrastructure.

After SDC took over responsibility of these woods, the previous owner of Sunnyside succeeded in persuading you not to clear the trees because of the assurances which had been given that they would be retained to maintain the essential screening.

In 2008, you leased part of this woodland adjacent to the Shacklands Road Cottages. This area is designated Ancient Woodland on your maps. The majority of the trees were felled to make a field for grazing horses, and coppiced sweet chestnuts have not re-grown, which they would normally start to do in the following spring. Residents report that there appears to have been an increase in noise levels from the motorway since this occurred.

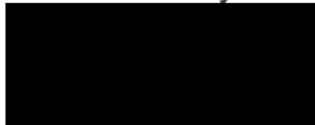
We have received a copy of the Tree Preservation Order, which has just been made on this woodland, and that this, together with the Ancient Woodland designation, should give further protection. However, this Council is sceptical about Sevenoaks District Council's ability to enforce these protections in view of what has already occurred. A TPO is not necessarily a guarantee of protection as it is sometimes ignored, and once the trees are gone, they are gone. Enforcement can only act after the event which by that time it is too late and would take decades for the barrier to re-grow. If the trees are felled following the proposed sale, the increased noise will impact on both the tranquillity of the present local community and on the value of many of the properties.

Badgers Mount Parish Council believes that the only way to ensure that the protection of the woodland is maintained is that it remains in Public Ownership. If Sevenoaks District Council is no longer prepared to carry out this function and is unable to guarantee that the woodland will not be cleared, then this Council would like to enter into discussions with Sevenoaks District Council with a view to the transfer of ownership of the woodland to Badgers Mount Parish Council.

Our view, that it is important that this woodland be retained by the public, is supported by Shoreham Parish Council and by Halstead Parish Council.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Moon
Clerk to Badgers Mount Parish Council

Policy & Performance Advisory Committee Work Plan 2015/16 (as at 13/11/15)

26 November 2015	1 March 2016	Summer 2016	Autumn 2016
Budget: Review of Service Dashboards and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs) Local Government Devolution Swanley Regeneration Property Disposal Update	Open Data and Transparency Council Projects – Update Draft Corporate Plan	Annual Complaints Report – 2015/16	

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