

09 June 2016 at 7.00 pm

Conference Room, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks
Despatched: 01.06.16





Cabinet


Membership:

Chairman, Cllr. Fleming; Vice-Chairman, Cllr. Lowe
Cllrs. Dickins, Firth, Hogarth, Piper and Searles

Agenda

	Pages	Contact
Apologies for Absence		
1. Minutes To agree the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 April 2016, and 10 May 2016 as a correct record	(Pages 1 - 12)	
2. Declarations of interest Any interests not already registered		
3. Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)		
4. Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee or Cabinet Advisory Committees	(Pages 13 - 14)	
a) Matter referred by Scrutiny Committee held on 3 May 2016		
REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEES		
5. Council Tax Reduction Scheme 	(Pages 15 - 60)	Adrian Rowbotham Tel: 01732 227153
6. Provisional Outturn 2015/16	(Pages 61 - 80)	Helen Martin Tel: 01732 227483

 Indicates a Key Decision

 indicates a matter to be referred to Council

EXEMPT INFORMATION

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.

If you wish to obtain further factual information on any of the agenda items listed above, please contact the named officer prior to the day of the meeting.

Should you need this agenda or any of the reports in a different format, or have any other queries concerning this agenda or the meeting please contact Democratic Services on 01732 227247 or democratic.services@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2016 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr Lowe (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Dickins, Firth, Hogarth, Piper and Searles

Cllrs. Abraham, Clark, Maskell, Parkin and Scholey were also present.

The Chairman extended his congratulations on behalf of all present, to Her Majesty Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and of Her other Realms and Territories, Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith, on the occasion of her 90th birthday.

82. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 3 March 2016 be approved and signed as a correct record.

83. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

84. Questions from Members

There were none.

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

There were none.

CHANGE IN AGENDA ITEM ORDER

With the agreement of Cabinet, the Chairman brought forward consideration of agenda item 8 (Minute 86).

86. Kent Environment Strategy - A Strategy for Environment, Economy and Health

The Chairman welcomed Carolyn McKenzie, Head of Sustainable Business and Communities at Kent County Council (KCC), who presented the report which requested adoption of the refreshed Kent Environment Strategy (KES).

The previous Kent Environment Strategy ran from 2011 to 2015 and delivered multiple partnership projects and outcomes, which were detailed through the Kent Environment Strategy monitoring and Climate Local Kent reports on the KCC website. In light of the strategy coming to an end and with significant changes in Central Government, both at

Ministerial and policy level, a refresh has been undertaken with partners and had been subject to public consultation from 27 July to 25 September 2015, and subsequently updated to reflect feedback. The final draft of the strategy had been endorsed, for adoption, at the Kent Leaders Meeting on 24 November 2015, adopted by Kent County Council on 25 January 2016 and was now seeking adoption at District Council level.

It was intended that the Strategy would be reviewed annually, and the next stage of the process would be action plans.

In response to a question, the Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services advised that the target of a reduction in waste going to landfill of 10% by 2020 was challenging but he was confident it could be met with KCCs new disposal contracts.

The Head of Sustainable Business and Communities KCC, reported that the intention was to fully integrate the strategy with other key strategies. With reference to a question on air quality targets, she advised whilst ambitious advances technology would help.

She thanked the Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services, the Housing Policy Manager and Energy Conservation & Initiatives Officer for all their help and support.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the Kent Environment Strategy – a strategy for environment, health and economy, be adopted.

87. Response to decisions made by Cabinet in response to petition relating to New Ash Green Village Centre, submitted to Full Council

The Head of Health and Housing presented a report which summarised the progress made in accordance with the decisions reached by Cabinet at its meeting on 17 September for the Council's future involvement in matters relating to New Ash Green Village Centre. A meeting was taking place with the landowner and the Regeneration Adviser in May, and a newsletter would be issued to residents once there was more to report.

The Portfolio Holder Economic and Community Development commented that the report was a good example of new ideas within a limited scope of powers.

The Chairman used his discretion and allowed Cllr Clark, local ward Councillor, to [address](#) the Cabinet. He thanked Officers for their work but was concerned that much of the work carried out was not visible and therefore the public's perception was that nothing was being done. He noted and was pleased that there was to be a newsletter and hoped this would be published within the next month or two. He highlighted particular areas of concern.

The Chairman commented that unfortunately the District Council was not a lead agency and was already doing all it could, but agreed that there needed to be communication.

Resolved: That the Council's progress in response to issues raised by the petition, be noted.

88. Sevenoaks District Community Plan 2016-19

The Chief Officer Communities & Business presented a report which sought approval of the final 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 results of the public consultation were appended and had been taken into consideration in the final draft. The action plan and associated success measures were the result of discussion with partner agencies about realistic delivery of the aspirations in the Community Plan.

It was requested that population figures be revisited to ensure correlation with other documents; that time by train to London specify from where and the timing checked; and noted Cllr Clayton was not a Sevenoaks District Councillor.

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, subject to the amendments discussed, the final draft Community Plan and strategic level action plan for the period 2016-19, be approved.

89. Future operation of Wildernesse Sports Centre

The Chief Officer Communities & Business presented a report which asked Members to consider the surrender of the Council's legal interests at the Wildernesse Sports Centre site, due to the considerable practical and financial implications arising as a result of the substantial works proposed as part of the new Grammar School development by Kent County Council and the complexity of the future multiple use of the site.

She reported that with reference to the third recommendation within the report, legal advice had been received that Sevenoaks District Council does not have powers to 'ensure' the all weather pitch at Wildernesse remained available for community use. KCC had given an assurance that they would use their best endeavours to keep it available to the community, and that in the future there was every intention that it would remain available for community use. She advised that Sencio would like to vacate by 3 June 2016.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health advised that she was in support of the proposals due to the considerable practical and financial implications. Members were concerned that there was no firmer assurance that the pitch would remain available for community use, especially as there was no other usable full size all weather pitch within the district and despite the financial pressure were inclined not to agree. Members

therefore discussed appropriate wording for the third recommendation, and sought assurance that the community group users would be advised accordingly.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

The Chairman moved and it was

Resolved: That

- a) the Council's legal interests at the Wildernesse Sports Centre site be surrendered;
- b) Officers be granted delegated powers to agree Heads of Terms for the surrender of leases/agreements at Wildernesse Sports Centre with Kent County Council and Sencio Community Leisure; and
- c) this be taken forward with Kent County Council on the proviso that KCC either maintains, or makes provision for, community use of the all weather pitch at Wildernesse.

90. Sevenoaks First

Members considered a report on a proposal to produce an inward investment magazine for the Sevenoaks District. Agreement was sought to proceed with a publication date of October/November 2016 and a launch event before the Christmas.

The production of the investment magazine would help raise the profile of the district to outside developers and investors, show that the district was open for business and explain the business opportunities for developing and living in the district.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic & Community Development commented that the idea had been well received when mentioned at the last meeting, and had been assured the Council would retain editorial control.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the production of an inward investment magazine for Sevenoaks District, be endorsed and a growth item put forward for future years of £4,950.

91. Residents Survey 2015

The Portfolio Holder for Policy & Performance advised that the Policy & Performance Advisory Committee had considered the same report, received a [presentation](#), and had agreed to recommend it to Cabinet.

The Communications Manager presented the report which set out the results of the 2015 Residents' Survey carried out from 24 October to 2 November 2015 by an independent research company on behalf of the Council. The purpose of the survey was to evaluate the level of satisfaction with the Council and its services, the effectiveness of the Council's communications activities and to establish where local people obtain information about the Council. The data was collected by way of a telephone survey of 201 Sevenoaks District residents, who collectively formed a broadly representative sample of the District population.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the results of the 2015 Residents Survey, be noted.

92. Communications Strategy

The Head of Transformation & Strategy presented a report which asked Members to consider and comment on the current strategy and proposed work plan that would support officers to deliver the aims and objectives set out in the strategy.

The Chairman advised that the Policy & Performance Advisory Committee had considered the same report and had agreed to recommend it to Cabinet.

There was some discussion concerning population data used. It was suggested that the census data should be used for all reports and if not, the report should clearly state this and explain why.

Members requested that conferences and seminars be listed under forms of communications and that the last two paragraphs of 'Reaching our audience' be reworded to reflect that Economic Development & Property team were the main drivers behind the 'work' rather than promise to support and develop the local economy. That the second paragraph under 'Communications at Sevenoaks District Council' to be amended to read 'and will not suggest content for personal media releases' and 'orally' replaced with 'personally' in the penultimate paragraph.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That, subject to minor amendments, the Communications Strategy be adopted.

93. Community Safety Strategy & Action Plan 2016-17

The Community Safety Manager presented a report which sought approval for the 2016-17 Community Safety Strategy and [Action Plan](#). The plan responded to the community safety priorities identified in the most recent Strategic Assessment.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic & Community Development advised that the Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee had considered the same report and had agreed to recommend it to Cabinet. He commented that it was an excellent document that he would like to see communicated alongside the Community Plan.

Members made a small number of minor amendments/corrections which were noted by the Community Safety Manager.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the Community Safety Strategy & Action Plan for 2016-17, subject to minor amendments, be approved.

94. Proposal for joint CCTV control room

The Portfolio Holder for Direct & Trading Services presented the report which updated Members on the investigations into the feasibility of merging CCTV control rooms to establish a West Kent Hub based at Sevenoaks, providing annual cost savings, increasing resilience of the existing CCTV and out of hours service, and allowing a return to 24/7 manned monitoring. He advised that the Direct & Trading Advisory Committee had considered and debated the same report and the options and had agreed to recommend it to Cabinet.

The Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services reported that updated figures for Option D, advising that the potential savings were less than those quoted in the report at £18,000 for SDC, £21,000 for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (T&MBC) and £10,000 for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC). However it was likely that this could be even less if the monitoring arrangements were exposed to competitive tendering.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

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- a) in principle, a joint agreement be entered into with TWBC and T&MBC to establish a West Kent CCTV hub, based at the Sevenoaks offices;
- b) the preferred monitoring arrangements be Option A as set out within the report
 - ‘24 hour CCTV coverage and out of hours service for all 3 Councils. This model includes a dedicated Supervisor and 12 operators. This provides, mainly for three operators to be on duty, but at certain less busy times this will be reduced to 2 operators. Estimated Cost: £104,933 per Council; and
- c) a one-off Capital budget of £37,300 be approved, representing 50% of the cost of enlarging the existing Sevenoaks CCTV control room.

95. Equality Policy Statement and Objectives 2016 - 2020

The Portfolio Holder for Legal & Democratic Services presented the report setting out the Council's equality policy statement and objectives for 2016-2020 which had been considered by the Legal & Democratic Services Advisory Committee who had agreed to recommend it to Cabinet.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That, subject to minor amendments being made to page 4 of the document, the Equality Policy Statement and Objectives for 2016-2020 be adopted.

96. Proposal to extend Licensing Partnership

Members considered a report which set out the proposal to extend the current Licensing Partnership with the London Borough of Bexley as a fourth and equal partner alongside Maidstone Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Legal & Democratic Services presented the report advising that the Legal & Democratic Services Advisory Committee had considered the same report and had agreed to recommend it to Cabinet.

Members queried whether this was the first time a partnership had taken place between a District Council and a London Borough. Officers agreed to look into it and publicise if it were the case.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the London Borough of Bexley's Licensing Team functions joining the Licensing Partnership as a fourth and equal partner, be approved.

97. Asset maintenance - White Oak Leisure Centre, Swanley

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report which highlighted maintenance works required to the White Oak Leisure Centre, Swanley for continued, safe operation in the short to medium term. He further advised that the Finance Advisory Committee had considered the same report and agreed to recommend it to Cabinet.

The Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services advised that the works would be carried out at the same time. In the interim, daily safety inspections were taking place.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

- a) the works identified in the report, at an estimated cost of £90,000, be undertaken, and this expenditure be funded by a combination of asset maintenance budgets (£25,860) and by a supplementary estimate (£64,140);
- b) any underspend in the 2015/16 leisure asset maintenance budget be carried forward into 2016/17;
- c) authority be granted to the Finance Portfolio Holder to authorise any expenditure above the approved asset maintenance budget to secure the continued safe operation of the White Oak Leisure Centre for the short to medium term; and
- d) recommended to Council that the works identified to be carried out at White Oak Leisure Centre, at an estimated cost of £64,140 be funded by a supplementary estimate.

98. Financial Results to the end of February 2016

The Head of Finance presented a report on the Council's financial results 2015/16 to the end of February 2016, which showed an overall favourable variance of £185,000. The end of year position forecast was to be £144,000 better than budget, which was just under 1 % of the net budget for the year. Property Investment Strategy income was to be transferred to the Budget Stabilisation Reserve.

The Finance Advisory Committee had considered the same report and had agreed to recommend it to Cabinet with no further comment.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Cabinet - 21 April 201699. Provisional Outturn 2015/6 and carry forward requests

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report which had also been considered by the Finance Advisory Committee who had agreed to recommend it to Cabinet.

The Head of Finance advised that the Council's forecast outturn for 2015/16 was a favourable variance of £144,000 and requested that six specific unspent revenue budgets and one capital budget be carried forward to 2016/17. Additional monies received through retained business rates, beyond that budgeted were to be transferred to reserves for the funding of identified corporate projects and a further provision made for the additional levy relating to Municipal Mutual Insurance Ltd.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

- a) the Revenue 'carry forward' requests totalling £138,652 plus the unspent budget allowed for Asset Maintenance for Leisure buildings as set out in paragraph 7 of the report be approved;
- b) the Capital carry forward request totalling £117,000 as set out in paragraph 8 of the report be approved;
- c) the amount of business rates retained in excess of the budgeted sum for 2016/17 be transferred to a reserve to enable previously identified corporate projects to proceed; and
- d) a sum of £32,000 be set aside to provide for an additional levy in respect of Municipal Mutual.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.58 PM

CHAIRMAN

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 25 April 2016. The decisions contained in Minutes 86, 87, 89, 90, 91, 92, 94, 95, 96, 98 and 99 take effect immediately. The decisions contained in Minutes 93 and 97 take effect on 4 May 2016. Decisions contained in Minutes 88 and 97 would be considered at Council on 26 April 2016.

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2016 commencing at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr Lowe (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Dickins, Firth, Hogarth, Piper and Searles

Cllrs. Horwood, Mrs. Hunter, Thornton, Mrs. Bayley, Maskell, Parkin and Pett were also present.

1. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declaration of interest made.

2. Appointments to Advisory Committees and terms of reference 2016/17

The Cabinet considered a report which proposed the membership of the Cabinet Advisory Committees and terms of reference.

Resolved: That the quorum, memberships and terms of reference for the Cabinet Advisory Committees be agreed as set out in the Appendix to the report.

3. Community Infrastructure Levy Spending Board and terms of reference

The Cabinet considered a report proposing the membership of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Spending Board, terms of reference and protocol for speakers.

Resolved: That the membership, terms of reference and protocol for speakers for the Community Infrastructure Levy Spending Board be agreed as set out in Appendices A and B to the report.

4. Appointments to other organisations 2016/17

The Cabinet considered the report which sought to confirm the Council's executive appointments to other organisations.

Resolved: That the appointments to other organisations for the municipal year 2016/17 as set out in the Appendix to the report, be confirmed.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.55 PM

CHAIRMAN

Item 4 (a) - Reference from Scrutiny Committee held on 3 May 2016

Relevant minute extract below

39. Questions to the Portfolio Holder for Direct & Trading Services

The Portfolio Holder for Direct & Trading Services provided an update on services within his Portfolio. He explained that the Council was the only District Council in the County still to run weekly refuse and recycling collection, with a 93% satisfaction rate compared to the national average of 77%. A Heritage Lottery Fund grant had recently been announced for the Greensand Ridge. The Council had proposed a CCTV Partnership, with Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councils which was due to create savings. A further 66 parking spaces had been added by expanding the car park in Westerham. He also noted that Direct Services had created a £233,000 surplus for the year.

The Chairman asked the Portfolio Holder's three greatest concerns. He explained that the first was the provision of greater parking in Sevenoaks, rather than merely restricting and displacing it. A small change in fuel prices could make a considerable difference on the 430,000 litres of diesel purchased each year. Finally he was keen for an increase in household waste recycling rates.

The Vice Chairman enquired about the current status of the CCTV Service and whether some parking charges in Sevenoaks Town were too high. The Portfolio Holder advised that the CCTV Partnership would provide staffing resilience and savings of £44,000 over 10 years. Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's out of hours telephone service already came to Sevenoaks but CCTV was fed to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The parking charges were a response to demand and customers were signposted to other car parks. However, there would be an impact on the High Street if there were not a turnover of parking.

A Member noted that the Council lost approximately half of parking ticket appeals to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal, whereas Planning Services had a target to win 75% of appeals. The Portfolio Holder explained that only 0.17% of appeals went to the Tribunal which was the fewest in Kent and less than half of the national average. Nationally more than half of such appeals were lost by Councils. Officers no longer attended appeals as it was not cost effective, but when they used to attend they would win more than half of the appeals. He felt that the 15 appeals in the last year were statistical outliers given the 1,897 notices at the previous stage of appeal. The Committee asked that the Portfolio Holder consider introducing such a target.

Members asked the benefits of an in-house CCTV service. The Portfolio Holder responded that it allowed Officers to become particularly familiar with the local areas and stay connected to local venues through the Pub Watch and Shop Safe schemes.. The partnership would be managed by a legal agreement between the three Authorities

Agenda Item 4

The Portfolio Holder was asked for the Council's plans to tackle flytipping. He noted there were environmental and social costs to flytipping. The Council had become the first point of contact for reports for all matters and would remove all flytipping unless obstructing the carriageway or on private land, while advertisements for an Environmental Enforcement Officer would close shortly. Due to changes in legislation, householders could be held legally responsible if their waste were passed to somebody who later flytipped it.

Resolved: That Cabinet be asked to consider whether it would be appropriate to apply a target of 75% of Penalty Charge Notice appeals to be won at the Traffic Penalty Tribunal.

Item 5 - Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The attached report was considered by the Finance Advisory Committee on 24 May 2016, and the relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of this agenda.

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COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

Cabinet - 9 June 2016

Report of Chief Finance Officer

Status: For Decision

Also considered by: Finance Advisory Committee - 24 May 2016

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary: The report updates Members on the progress that has been made on the review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in liaison with other Kent authorities.

Members are asked to agree the broad scheme framework in readiness for public consultation, and give delegated authority to the Chief Finance Officer and Finance Portfolio Holder.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Searles

Contact Officer Adrian Rowbotham Ext. 7153
Nick Scott Ext. 7397

Recommendation to Finance Advisory Committee:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (a) Note the work undertaken thus far within Kent collectively, the resultant Options Appraisal set out in **Appendix A** and the Kent Finance Officers' group recommendation that any new CTR Scheme should be based on the current scheme but with a series of potential modifications upon which we should consult;
- (b) Launch a consultation on the potential introduction of a range of modifications to the current CTR scheme for working age claimants as follows:
 - (i) Increasing the minimum contribution rate for working age claimants to 20% or (up to) 25%;
 - (ii) Introducing a band cap at a band D;
 - (iii) Removing Second Adult Rebate;

- (iv) Reducing the capital limit to £6,000;
 - (v) Including Child Benefit and Child maintenance in the assessment of income;
 - (vi) Introducing a Minimum Income Floor for self-employed claimants (based upon the living wage at 35 hours per week for full time or 16 hours a week for part-time workers); and
 - (vii) Aligning regulations of the current CTR scheme with HB and (prescribed) Pension Age CTR scheme.
- (c) Through the consultation, seek views as to whether an Exceptional Hardship Policy should be incorporated as part of the scheme;
 - (d) Through the consultation, seek views on other ways of meeting the demands highlighted through the report other than changing the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme (as set out in paragraph 30);
 - (e) Note the Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) at Appendix C; and
 - (f) Endorse the proposed arrangements in respect of consultation and, subject to there being no significant changes required to the above proposals following the outcome of approvals by other Kent district councils, give delegated authority to the Chief Finance Officer to finalise the consultation material in liaison with the Finance Portfolio Holder.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

- (a) Note the work undertaken thus far within Kent collectively, the resultant Options Appraisal set out in **Appendix A** and the Kent Finance Officers' group recommendation that any new CTR Scheme should be based on the current scheme but with a series of potential modifications upon which we should consult;
 - (b) Launch a consultation on the potential introduction of a range of modifications to the current CTR scheme for working age claimants as follows:
 - (i) Increasing the minimum contribution rate for working age claimants to 20% or (up to) 25%;
 - (ii) Introducing a band cap at a band D;
 - (iii) Removing Second Adult Rebate;
 - (iv) Reducing the capital limit to £6,000;
 - (v) Including Child Benefit and Child maintenance in the assessment of income;
 - (vi) Introducing a Minimum Income Floor for self-employed claimants
-

(based upon the living wage at 35 hours per week for full time or 16 hours a week for part-time workers); and

- (vii) Aligning regulations of the current CTR scheme with HB and (prescribed) Pension Age CTR scheme.
- (c) Through the consultation, seek views as to whether an Exceptional Hardship Policy should be incorporated as part of the scheme;
- (d) Through the consultation, seek views on other ways of meeting the demands highlighted through the report other than changing the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme (as set out in paragraph 30);
- (e) Note the Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) at Appendix C and
- (f) Endorse the proposed arrangements in respect of consultation and, subject to there being no significant changes required to the above proposals following the outcome of approvals by other Kent district councils, give delegated authority to the Chief Finance Officer to finalise the consultation material in liaison with the Finance Portfolio Holder.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) was introduced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in April 2013 as a replacement for the Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme administered on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 2 As part of its introduction, Central Government set out a number of key elements:
 - The duty to create a local scheme for Working Age applicants was placed with Billing Authorities;
 - Government funding to authorities was reduced by the equivalent of 10% from the levels paid through benefit subsidy to authorities under the previous CTB scheme; and
 - Persons of Pension Age would be protected under regulations prescribed by Government.
- 3 Across Kent, a common approach was adopted for the design of local schemes, with the new schemes broadly replicating the former CTB scheme but with a basic reduction in entitlement for working age claimants. In Sevenoaks District, working age claimants must pay at least 18.5% of the council tax liability. The figure of 18.5% represented the 10% funding loss applied to the working age caseload across Kent. In other parts of Kent, the % varies. Therefore, although we do have a 'common platform' across Kent, local schemes at district level have been tailored to local needs.

Agenda Item 5

- 4 Since its introduction in April 2013, our own local scheme has been refreshed annually for data changes, but the core elements remain as were originally agreed.
- 5 The scheme is underpinned by the Kent-wide agreement, which recognises that all the Kent districts (as the billing authorities) will seek to have a common 'platform'. In return, the major precepting authorities (Fire, Police and the County) agreed to collectively pay to each district council an 'administration fee' of £125,000 each year, for three years, to assist with the costs of delivering and managing the schemes.
- 6 The original three year period ceased on 31 March 2016, but it was agreed with Kent County Council, Kent Police and Kent and Medway Fire & Rescue that the scheme would effectively 'roll on' for one more year (i.e. into 2016/17).

Scope of Review

- 7 When the new scheme started in April 2013, over 3,000 households within the district were affected.
- 8 Collection of the council tax balances has been challenging, however with focus on these accounts and some changes to recovery procedures, the scheme has been successful. The 'administrative fee' paid by the major precepting authorities has been essential in assisting with the costs of processing applications and in the recovery of debts.
- 9 The overall level of applicants, both working age and pension age, has fallen since the introduction of the local scheme and therefore, the total cost of the scheme has fallen since inception.
- 10 However, the '90%' funding that the government passed on to billing authorities through Revenue Support Grant (RSG) to support the costs of local schemes has effectively been cut with the reductions in local government finance settlements. Therefore, although the costs have reduced due to a lower claimant base, the outcome is that a greater share of the cost burden is falling on the billing authorities and the other major precepting bodies. This outcome has been one of the main catalysts for the review.
- 11 A group of Finance Officers from the Kent districts and major precepting authorities have been working closely together in setting the objectives of the review, and maintaining a common approach to the design of the local schemes. A consultant has been brought in on behalf of the Kent districts and major precepting authorities, and the costs are being shared. Thus far, the consultant has been assisting in the evaluation of alternative scheme models and will, in due course, assist us with the public consultation process.
- 12 The Kent authorities have collectively agreed the following objectives for the review:

- a) Having regard to the reductions in government grant and the financial pressures we face, to make the scheme less costly (if possible) and more efficient in terms of its operation; and
 - b) To have regard to the impact such changes may have on vulnerable residents and target support to those in most need.
- 13 It has been recognised by the Kent Finance Officers' group that the contributions that the major precepting authorities make towards the administration of the scheme are essential. Changes to the local scheme could potentially lead to a need to collect even more council tax from individuals who may find it difficult to pay; as well as those individuals finding the resultant changes difficult to comprehend.
- 14 Therefore, in parallel with the review of the local schemes, representatives from the Kent district councils are working with the major precepting authorities to formulate a new funding 'model' for assistance towards the administrative costs. At the time of writing the work is at an early stage, but it is likely that the model will include a smaller 'flat rate' grant topped up by a share of any additional proceeds as a result of our taxbase increasing (i.e. incentive based).
- 15 Clearly, the arrangements will need to be sufficient to incentivise the districts to undertake the additional work, and it will be essential that the arrangement is consistent across all districts and there are long term arrangements to ensure certainty of funding. Discussions are underway in this regard, but Members are assured that the major preceptors are committed to working with the district councils towards a mutually acceptable solution.

Options for Change to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

- 16 In liaison with the consultant, the Kent Finance Officers' group has considered a wide range of options for potential change having regard to the objectives set out at paragraph 12 **Error! Reference source not found.** and the 'suitability' for Kent. These options are shown in Appendix A.
- 17 The most practical option would be to maintain a scheme similar to our current scheme (see option 7 in Appendix A) because:
- It is known to our claimants and largely mirrors the housing benefit (HB) system:
 - The Council's Revenues and Benefits system is adapted for this type of scheme and would, therefore, require little additional cost; and
 - Staff are familiar with the administration of this type of scheme and, as it is also aligned to HB, we can continue to take advantage of 'economies of scale'.

Agenda Item 5

- 18 In respect of the link to HB mentioned above, we cannot overlook the fact that, as we transition towards the full introduction of Universal Credit (UC), the future of HB for working age claimants is unclear. That said, it is difficult to assess the longevity of HB and, therefore, how long councils will need to maintain a 'skill set' for its administration. As Members are probably aware, the roll-out of UC has been further delayed and not likely to be completed until 2021 at the earliest. In addition, there is a strong likelihood that the pensioner caseload will remain on HB (and therefore not move over to UC) for the foreseeable future, which would mean that billing authorities would need to retain a workforce that has the skills to administer the HB scheme.
- 19 In order to meet the challenges of funding pressures, some adjustments to the 'current' scheme will inevitably need to be made. Initially, the major precepting authorities had suggested that we seek to reduce the cost of the scheme through the increase in the minimum contribution rate (currently 18.5% for working age claimants in the SDC area) and Members may be aware that Medway Council has recently increased its minimum contribution rate to 35%. However, evidence from around the country suggests that there is a "tipping point" (somewhere between 20% and 25%) after which collection rates are affected significantly. This 'tipping point' tends to affect claimants on low or fixed incomes; particularly single persons and couples with no dependants. Increasing the minimum % that a working age claimant needs to pay beyond a "tipping point" could be counter-productive and unrealistic.
- 20 Nevertheless, for the reasons set out in paragraph 2 it is important that we seek to reduce the overall costs further whilst maintaining fairness and a sense of 'reality' as to what is feasible. Therefore, it is felt that a combination of, or a selection from, Options 7 (a - h) in Appendix A built onto the current scheme may be more appropriate in meeting the objectives we have set.
- 21 Members will note from option 7e at Appendix A that it is not recommended that we consult on the inclusion of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in the assessment of total income. However, it is recommended to 'test the water' through the consultation process on the inclusion of child benefit and child maintenance in the assessment of total income. Until as recently as 2009, these income sources were not disregarded within the former Council Tax Benefit Scheme, and some councils have reverted to including these income sources in their local CTR schemes. It is recognised that this is potentially controversial in the same way as PIP and DLA, but on balance it is felt that the concept should at least be tested with the public through a consultation.
- 22 Due to the potential impact of changes on vulnerable residents (objective b in paragraph 12), it is considered that it is important that an 'Exceptional Hardship' policy is integral to the new scheme. Whilst details of this policy still need to be drawn up, it is anticipated that applications would be accepted where claimants have qualified for CTRS but are in need of further support due to severe financial hardship.

23 It is therefore recommended that the Council retains a scheme similar to the current one but consults the public on the potential integration into that scheme of Options 7(a - h) as set out in Appendix A.

24 A combination of some, or all, of these possible options may be required in order to achieve the objective of reducing overall costs. It is our intention that the resultant scheme will retain some longevity, certainly until there is more certainty about the full roll-out of UC. Members are also reminded that the group believes that an important feature of the new scheme should be the adoption of an Exceptional Hardship policy to protect vulnerable residents in severe financial hardship. This concept needs to be tested as part of the consultation.

Other Alternatives to Changing the Current Scheme

25 As Members are aware, the Council must find additional savings of £100,000 each year in the 10-year budget due to cuts in government funding. The Council is restricted by how much it can raise council tax annually without having a local referendum, and our reserves are finite.

26 Through our Financial Strategy, we already have planned over the 10-year budget period to use the Budget Stabilisation Reserve to ensure that the Council has a sustainable financial position going forward.

27 The 10-year budget already assumes that the Council will increase council tax by 2% each year from 2017/18 which is likely to be the maximum permitted without triggering a referendum. The Council could increase council tax further, but the costs of holding a referendum would need to be factored in, and the public would need to support the proposed increase.

28 The Council's general fund reserve is already at the recommended level of 10% of the net revenue budget so it is not proposed to reduce it.

29 Members will appreciate, therefore, that realistic alternative options to changing the CTR Scheme are somewhat limited. However, in the light of challenges to local CTR scheme consultations elsewhere, the question about alternative funding arrangements does still need to be asked of the public.

30 Thus, whilst it is not the preferred solution, it is recommend that the following questions are posed for completeness. Were any of these options to be supported and implemented, the impact would affect all residents in the District..

- Should Council Tax be increased for all Council *Taxpayers (beyond that already planned in the 10-year budget)* to fund the CTR scheme?
- Should Council reserves be used up to fund the scheme?
- Should there be further cuts to Council services (over and above those already required in the 10-year budget) to fund the scheme?

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Consultation Process

- 31 All of the Kent district councils are currently reporting similarly to their Members to seek authority to proceed in the way outlined within this report.
- 32 Prior to the implementation of any change to CTRS, authorities are required to consult with the public. There have been a number of legal challenges to CTRS consultations and it should be noted that a recent judgement handed down by the Supreme Court has defined what is meant by ‘good consultation’.
- 33 The guiding principles which have been established through case-law for fair consultation are as follows:
- The consultation must be carried out at a stage when proposals are still at a formative stage;
 - Sufficient information on the reasons for the decision must be provided to permit the consultees to carry out intelligent consideration of the issues and to respond;
 - Adequate time must be given for consideration and responses to be made; and
 - The results of the consultation must be properly taken into account in finalising any decision.
- 34 The consultant has been working with the districts in order to prepare robust and consistent consultation material that can be individually ‘branded’ by each district within Kent. Each district must consult on its own scheme and ultimately make its own decisions about the ‘final’ scheme following the consultation.
- 35 All Kent districts are intending to go out to consultation at around the same time. The project timetable agreed by all Kent district councils at the start of the review anticipates consultation commencing in June and allowing 12 weeks for members of the public and other relevant stakeholders to comment.
- 36 The draft consultation documentation is shown at Appendix B. It is recommended that delegated authority be given to the Chief Finance Officer to finalise the consultation materials in consultation with the Leader and **Finance Portfolio Holder** taking on board any thoughts or observations Members may have.
- 37 It is anticipated that the consultation will be primarily web-site based, but it will be important to write to all claimants to draw their attention to the consultation and encourage them to participate by providing hard copy documents as appropriate. Additionally, it will be important to involve stakeholder groups such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, local debt advice

agencies, registered social landlords and other organisations with a significant interest, to obtain their views.

- 38 There is also a duty to consult with the major precepting authorities (County Council, Fire and Police) who are statutory consultees. This has already commenced and will continue throughout the project. At the time of writing, all major precepting authorities have advised that they are content with the proposals so far.

Key Implications

Financial

The cost of consultancy has been shared by all Kent authorities. Sevenoaks District Council's share of this cost is under £500.

It is anticipated that there will be some direct costs associated with the consultation process which will be contained within the revenue budget.

The cost of awards made under CTRS impact on the declared taxbase and thereby the council tax yield. If the cost of awards were to be reduced, this would mean that the Council's taxbase could increase and overall council tax income could increase. Any increase to council tax income is shared through the Collection Fund with major preceptors.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

The Council has a statutory duty to consult on a proposed scheme, case-law has determined the guiding principles for fair consultation which we will follow.

Regard needs to be made to the rules around consultation laid out through the Supreme Court Ruling in the case of R (on the application of Moseley) v London Borough of Haringey (2014) and in particular, the need to set out alternative choices within the consultation.

If consultation is not carried out appropriately, there is a risk of challenge once a decision is taken.

Whilst all Kent Councils are working towards a common framework, ultimately individual schemes could be different (as they are currently).

Equality Assessment

At this stage of the process, the decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. However, an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) is at Appendix C.

Prior to a final decision being taken by the Cabinet, a full EQIA will be prepared.

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Conclusions

As outlined within the report, Kent district councils are working together in order to achieve a common framework in respect of the review of the local CTR schemes.

Each district council needs to individually agree the terms for consultation. If any significant issues arise through the 'group approach', Cabinet will be updated.

Appendices

Appendix A - Options considered by Kent Finance Officers' Group

Appendix B - Draft Consultation Document

Appendix C - Equalities Impact Assessment

Background Papers:

None

Adrian Rowbotham
Chief Finance Officer

**Review of Council Tax Reduction Scheme
Options Considered by Kent Finance Officers' Group**

	Option	Commentary/Context	Recommended for consultation?
1	Maintain current scheme (no change)	Does not meet objective of cost savings. In addition, there are changes in HB coming which would mean the CTR and Pension Age CTR / HB schemes would diverge.	✗
2	Increase the level of support available to Working Age claimants to previous Council Tax Benefit Levels (up to 100% for all applicants)	Would be easier to administer and collect but severely exacerbates funding issues. Does not meet objective of cost savings and there may be divergence with HB system as above unless this is addressed. Over 70 authorities nationally still allow up to 100% support for working age claimants. Major preceptors would not support this option.	✗
3	Total Income Discount (Banded) Scheme	Calculate total income of applicant and partner (where applicable) and put in an income 'band'. Bands to be determined. Would make it simpler from claimants point of view, and there could be less ongoing changes to entitlement. Currently no authority has a similar scheme in operation. Would require additional information to be gathered from claimants. Would need to pay for software changes (could be expensive).	✗
4	Passported and Income Discount (Banded) Scheme	Identical to the previous scheme, however any applicant who receives a 'passported' benefit from DWP will automatically be placed in most generous band, cutting down on administration. Only one scheme like this in operation nationally. Relatively simple to understand. However as a high proportion of claimants would receive a passported benefit so automatically default to a single band the attractions of this scheme are diluted.	✗
5	Simplified Means Test leading to a Discount Band	As current system but translate means test into a discount band. Thus if claimant were to change their earnings they may remain in the same band and changes to entitlement would not be needed. Potential to reduce some administration costs. Unclear whether software can be adapted. If it can, likely to be costly. No other council running this scheme.	✗

	Option	Commentary/Context	Recommended for consultation?
6	Total Household Income scheme	<p>Include all non-dependant (e.g. adult child) income in means test based on ethos that the whole household should contribute towards Council Tax. One authority has implemented a similar scheme.</p> <p>More complicated to administer as details of all household incomes would need to be collected. Software currently would not allow for this information to be entered automatically and so this would become a manual process. Thus more administration for staff.</p> <p>However potential for more income to be included in the means test - and thus likely to deliver savings within total scheme cost.</p>	X
7	Retain Current Scheme but make the following changes:		.
a	Increase the minimum % payable	<p>SDC currently requires working age claimants to pay a minimum of 18.5% towards council tax.</p> <p>Level of contribution varies significantly over the country. 76 councils having a nil contribution rate with 52 schemes having rates over 20%. Medway Council will be highest in Kent at 35% for 2016/17.</p> <p>Evidence there is a “tipping point” somewhere between 20% and 25% after which collection rates are affected significantly. ‘Tipping point’ severely affects applicants on low or fixed incomes particularly single persons and couples with no dependants. Increasing the minimum % that a working age claimant needs to pay beyond a “tipping point” could be counter-productive and unrealistic.</p> <p>Consider option of increasing minimum % to 20-25%</p>	✓
b	Introduce maximum Council Tax band level within scheme	<p>Any claimant living in a property with a higher Band that is set within the scheme would be limited to that band as far as any CTR support is concerned. For example, if maximum level is set at Band D, a claimant from house banded E, F, G or H would be limited in support they receive to equivalent of Band D. A number of authorities have adopted this option with the banding that is used ranging from a band D to as low as a band A. Within Kent, Band D would seem more appropriate as making this too low could disadvantage larger families.</p> <p>Consider option of introducing a maximum band cap at Band D</p>	✓

	Option	Commentary/Context	Recommended for consultation?
c	Remove Second Adult Rebate	<p>A taxpayer can presently apply for up to 25% reduction on their liability when an adult moves into their home who is on a low income. The applicant would lose their single person discount but could apply for this reduction instead. The reduction is assessed on the income of the second adult and not that of the taxpayer who could have any level of income or capital.</p> <p>This has been removed in a number of authorities across the country and in East Kent. There is a limited number of cases in SDC so impact small.</p> <p>Consider option of removing Second Adult Rebate</p>	✓
d	Reduce Capital limit	<p>Currently claimants are allowed to have capital (excluding property) of up to £16,000 and still be eligible to claim. This limit could be reduced and it is suggested that this should be reduced to £6,000 or roughly 4 years' worth of council tax. Used in a number of schemes around the country and is relatively simple to administer and is compliant with the system. Will have the effect of removing the entitlement of some claimants.</p> <p>Consider option of reducing capital limit to £6,000</p>	✓
e	Include currently disregarded incomes in calculation of total income	<p>Certain incomes are currently disregarded in full when calculating entitlement for CTR. These include Child Benefit, Child Maintenance, Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments. Child Benefit and Child Maintenance were included (i.e. were not disregarded) within Council Tax Benefit Schemes until as recently as 2009. Nationally twenty two schemes have reverted to including this income within the assessment.</p> <p>Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Personal Independence Payments (PIP). These incomes are currently considered when calculating discretionary housing payments but not included within the calculation of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support. There has however been recent controversy at a national level in respect of the government's proposal to curb PIP in order to deliver savings, and the proposal has been withdrawn. Could also impact on vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Consider option of including child benefit and child maintenance payments in the assessment of income</p>	✓

	Option	Commentary/Context	Recommended for consultation?
f	Introduce changes to non-dependant charges	<p>Introduce a standard charge for non-dependants who live in a property. Currently, non-dependant deductions can vary from £0.00 to £11.45 depending on level of income. A standard charge would be easier to administer and could contribute to savings within the scheme. Suggestion from group is £10 per week.</p> <p>Consider option of introducing a standard of £10 per week for non-dependant deduction</p>	✓
g	Introduce Minimum income floor for self-employed claimants	<p>Currently self-employed claimants are asked to declare their own level of income, and it is not unheard of for it to be declared as nil (or close to nil) after taking into account expenses. Claims are difficult to administer and challenging self-declared income levels can be protracted and time consuming.</p> <p>The Universal Credit assessment criteria includes a clause whereby a self-employed claimant is allowed to declare nil income in their first year of operation and then after that initial period to establish the business they are then assessed at either their declared income or at a minimum income floor calculated at 35 hours per week times the living wage. It may be necessary to consider an alternative for people who are unable to work full time (primarily single parents with young children).</p> <p>Consider introducing a minimum income floor for self-employed claimants (after a start-up period of say one year) based upon the living wage at 35 hours per week for full time or 16 hours a week for part-time workers</p>	✓

	Option	Commentary/Context	Recommended for consultation?
h	Align Scheme with HB and Pension Age CTR changes	<p>Central Government has announced significant changes to HB including the removal of certain premiums, a limitation on the number of dependants that can be included in the calculation, and the limiting of backdating.</p> <p>If we are to retain a scheme similar to the current one, it will be important to ensure it is aligned with HB as far as possible to aid understanding as well as efficiency of processing. These changes will form part of the prescribed requirements for the Pension Age CTR scheme.</p> <p>Consider option of aligning regulations of ‘base’ CTR scheme with HB and (prescribed) Pension Age CTR scheme</p>	✓
i	Change income tapers to incentivise work	<p>The current taper for assessing CTR claims is 20%, consistent with the previous CTB scheme. Changing this would affect all claimants and would be similar to increasing the minimum % payable.</p> <p>Would also mean changing the software to accommodate this which could be costly</p>	✗

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Sevenoaks District Council

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 Consultation Background Information

This consultation opens dd/mmm/yyyy and closes on dd/mmm/yyyy.

We are considering making changes to the Council Tax Reduction scheme and would like your views to help us make a decision.

This is a complex issue. We would like you to read the following background information before giving your views.

Background information

What is Council Tax Reduction?

Council Tax Reduction is a Council Tax discount for eligible people on low incomes. Currently, the maximum discount is 81.5% for working age households and 100% for pensioner age households.

Why is a change to the Council Tax Reduction scheme being considered?

Prior to April 2013, eligible people on low incomes could apply for Council Tax Benefit and receive up to 100% benefit. The Council received full funding from the Government to cover the costs of the benefits paid out.

Changes introduced by Central Government abolished Council Tax Benefit from 1 April 2013 and made local Councils responsible for setting up their own local Council Tax Reduction schemes for **working age people**. The Government also reduced the amount of funding to pay for the schemes.

Since then, this funding has been reducing each year so there is now less money available to pay for the Council Tax Reduction scheme. The Council is expecting to see continued reductions in Government funding. It therefore needs to consider how it will deal with this and whether the current scheme should be changed to meet the impact of the gap in funding.

Who will this affect?

Working age households in the District who currently receive or who will apply for Council Tax Reduction.

Pension age households will not be affected because the amount of discount they receive is regulated by Central Government. However, Councils still have to fund the Pension Age Scheme from their Government funding.

What is the timetable?

The Council must have the 2017-18 Council Tax Reduction scheme approved by 31 January 2017 to commence on 1 April 2017 and must consult on any changes to the scheme.

What other consultation is undertaken?

The law says that we must include the major preceptors - Kent County Council, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and Kent Police and Crime Commissioner - in an initial consultation about the proposed changes. The proposals set out in this consultation take account of their views.

How much does the Council Tax Reduction Scheme cost?

The estimated gross cost of the Council Tax Reduction scheme for 2016-17 is approximately £5.68 million. The Council's share of this cost is around 12% in line with the split of the Council Tax share with Kent County Council, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.

What are the Council Tax Reduction scheme options being considered?

There are fourteen options being considered for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18, which would reduce the cost of the scheme. The Council is looking to introduce some of these options within the new scheme (working age scheme only).

These options are described in the consultation questionnaire (below) where you will have the opportunity to give your views. The potential impact and savings from the respective options are summarised in the table below:

Council Tax Reduction scheme options being considered

There are fourteen proposed changes being considered for the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme from 1st April 2017:

Option 1

Reduce the maximum level of support for working age from 81.5% to 80%

The Council currently requires all working age claimants to make a minimum payment of 18.5% towards their Council Tax. This would increase to 20%. Reducing the maximum level of support available is a simple change to the scheme which is easily understood. The Council is conscious that any minimum payment must be affordable given the household's circumstances. The Council is minded that if this change is introduced, there would be a need to protect the most vulnerable household through the introduction of a targeted exceptional hardship scheme

The benefits of this are:

- It is a simple alteration to the scheme which is easy to understand.
- It is fair because everyone shares the increase

The drawback of doing this is:

- All working age households receiving Council Tax Reduction will be required to pay more.

Option 2

Removing the family premium for all new working age claimants

The removal of family premium from 1st April 2017 for new claims will bring the Council Tax Reduction scheme in line with Housing Benefit. The family premium is part of how we assess the 'needs' of any claimant, which is compared with their income. Family Premium is normally given when a claimant has at least one dependant child living with them. Removing the family premium will mean that when we assess a claimant's needs it would not include the family premium (currently £17.45 per week). This change would **not** affect those on Universal Credit, Income Support, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance or Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance.

The benefit of this is:

It brings the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in line with Housing Benefit changes proposed by Central Government;

The drawbacks of doing this are:

- New working age residents may see a reduction in the amount of support they received.
- Some households with children will pay more

Option 3

Reducing backdating of new claims to 1 month

Currently claims for Council Tax Reduction from working age claimants can be backdated for up to 6 months where an applicant shows they could not claim at an earlier time. Central Government has reduced the period for Housing Benefit claims to 1 month. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme be aligned with the changes for Housing Benefit.

The benefit of this is:

- It is a simple alteration to the scheme which is easy to understand when claiming Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.

The drawback of this is:

- New working age residents may see a reduction in the amount of support they received if they are unable to claim on time.

Option 4

Using a set income for self-employed earners after 1 year's self-employment In order to align Council Tax Reduction with Universal Credit, the Council proposes to use a minimum level of income for those who are self-employed. This would be in line with the National Living Wage for 35 hours worked per week. Any income above this amount would be taken into account based on the actual amount earned. The income would not apply for a designated start-up period of one year from the start of the business. Variations would apply to part-time workers.

The benefits of this are:

- The treatment of income for self-employed claimants for Council Tax Reduction will be brought broadly into line with Universal Credit.
- It should encourage self-employed working age applicants to expand their business
-

The drawback of this is:

- Where a working age claimant is self-employed and continues to run a business where their income is below the minimum living wage level, the Council will assume they earn at least the minimum level (based on a 35-hour week, regardless of the hours they work).

Option 5

Reducing the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Council Tax Reduction to 4 weeks

Within the current scheme, applicants can be temporarily absent from their homes without it affecting the Council Tax Reduction. This replicated the rule within Housing Benefit. Housing Benefit has been changed so that if a person is absent from Great Britain for a period of more than 4 weeks, their benefit will cease. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction scheme is amended to reflect the changes in Housing Benefit. There will be exceptions for certain occupations.

The benefits of the Council this are:

- The treatment of temporary absence will be brought into line with Housing Benefit
- It is seen as fair
- There are exceptions for certain occupations.

The drawback of this is:

- If a person is absent from Great Britain for a period which is likely to exceed 4 weeks, their Council Tax Reduction will cease from when they leave the Country. They will need to re-apply on return

Option 6

Reduce the capital limit from £16,000 to £6,000

At present, residents with savings, capital and investments of more than £16,000 are not entitled to any Council Tax Reduction. Under the proposed change; this limit would be reduced to £6,000.

The benefits of this are:

- Only those working age residents with at least £6000 in savings will be affected.
- There is a low risk to causing any hardship

The drawback of this is:

- Where a working age resident has in excess of £6,000 in savings, no reduction whatsoever will be payable.

Option 7

To introduce a standard level of non dependant deduction of £xx for all claimants who have non dependents resident with them
 Within the current scheme a deduction is made from Council Tax Reduction for people other than the applicant's partner who are 18 years old or over, that person would be expected to contribute towards payment of Council Tax. At present the weekly deductions range from £0.00 to £11.45 per week according to weekly income. The deductions would be replaced by £XX.

The benefits of doing this are:

- It is simple to understand compared to current rules
- Some households may see an increase in awards

The drawback of this is:

- The household may receive less Council Tax Reduction than at present

Option 8

To take any Child Maintenance paid to a claimant or partner into account in full in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction;
 Currently any payments of Child Maintenance paid to either an applicant or their partner does not count when working out their income for Council Tax Reduction. This proposal would allow the Council to include any Child Maintenance in the calculation.

The benefit of this is:

- Some families receive high levels of child maintenance that are not taken into account

The drawbacks of this are:

- It may discourage payments of child maintenance
- Some families will receive less Council Tax Reduction

Option 9

To take any Child Benefit paid to a claimant or partner into account in full in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction;
 Currently any payments of Child Benefit paid to either a claimant or their partner does not count when working out their income for Council

Tax Reduction. This proposal would allow the Council to include any Child Benefit in the calculation.

The benefit of this is:

- Some families receive relatively high levels of Child Benefit that are not taken into account.

The drawback of this is:

- Some families will receive less Council Tax Reduction

Option 10

To restrict the maximum level of Council Tax Reduction payable to the equivalent of a Band D charge

The current Council Tax Reduction scheme uses the full amount of Council Tax charge irrespective of the band of the property. There are eight Council Tax Bands A to H with Band D being the national average. It is proposed that where an applicant lives in a property which is Band E, F, G or H then the Council Tax Reduction will be calculated on the basis of a Band D charge.

The benefit of this is:

It can be seen as a fairer method of providing support with those claimants living in higher banded properties and receiving Council Tax Reduction having to pay more

The drawbacks of this are:

- All working age claimants living in premises with a Council Tax band of higher than Band D will have their Council Tax Reduction restricted
- Reductions in awards may affect families living in larger homes

Option 11

Removal of Second Adult Reduction from the scheme.

The current Council Tax Reduction scheme can grant a reduction up to 25% in certain cases where the income of a 'second adult' (not the applicant's partner) who resides with the applicant is unemployed or has a low income.

The benefit of this is:

- It removes an element of the current scheme where the reduction bears no relationship to the income of the claimant

The drawback of this is:

- A small number of people who currently receive Second Adult Reduction will receive less support

Option 12

To remove the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the calculation of the current scheme for new Employment and Support

Allowance applicants.

From April 2017, all new applicants of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) who fall within the Work Related Activity Group will no longer receive the component in either their ESA or within the calculation of Housing Benefit. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction scheme is amended to reflect the changes.

The benefits of the Council doing this are:

- The treatment of ESA will be brought into line with Housing Benefit
- It avoids additional costs to the Council Tax Reduction scheme.
- Persons receiving ESA will not experience any reduction in Council Tax Reduction.

There is no drawback

Option 13

To limit the number of dependant children within the calculation for Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of two.

Within the current scheme, claimants who have children are awarded a dependant's addition of £66.90 per child within their applicable amounts. There is no limit to the number of dependant's additions that can be awarded. From April 2017 Central Government will be limiting dependant's additions in Universal Credit, Housing Benefit and Tax Credits to a maximum of two. This will only affect households who have a third or subsequent child on or after 1st April 2017. It is proposed that the Council's Council Tax Reduction scheme is amended to reflect the changes in Housing Benefit and Central Government Benefits. There will be exceptions where: there are multiple births after 1st April 2017 (and the household is not already at their maximum of two dependants within the calculation); adopted children or where households merge.

The benefits of the Council doing this are:

- Council Tax Reduction will be brought into line with Housing Benefit, Universal Credit and Tax Credits
- It is simple and administratively easy

The drawbacks of doing this are:

- Claimants who have a third or subsequent child after 1st April 2017 (and are not excepted from the rules) may receive less Council Tax reduction than a claimant who has more children born before 1st April 2017

Option 14

To remove entitlement to Council Tax Reduction for a claimant classified as a 'Person from Abroad' or subject to Immigration Control. This change would bring into line the Council Tax Reduction schemes for both working age and pensioners.

The benefits of the Council doing this are:

- It is a simple alteration to the scheme which is easy to understand
- It is seen as fair

The drawbacks of doing this are:

- A small number of people who currently receive Council Tax Reduction will no longer receive any financial support

Option 15

To introduce a scheme, in addition to Council Tax Reduction, to help applicants suffering exceptional financial hardship

The option would introduce a scheme whereby, individual cases would be looked at on their own merit. This would:

- Provide greater flexibility to the Council to help those that need it most.
- Enable a safety net for those households suffering exceptional financial hardship

The benefit of this is:

- It is a scheme that can be adapted to meet individual circumstances

The drawbacks of doing this are:

There will be some additional costs to the scheme

These are described in the consultation questionnaire (below) and the potential savings from the proposed changes are summarised in the table below:

Option Description	Estimated number of claimants affected	Estimated saving to the Council	Estimated saving to Kent CC, Police and Fire	Estimated total saving	Estimated weekly loss to household £
Option 1 To reduce the maximum level of support for working age from 82.5% to 80%	3,174 people	£8,585	£41,913	£50,498	£0.31
Option 2 To remove Family Premium for new claimants	163 people	£5,029	£24,552	£29,581	£3.49
Option 3 To reduce backdating to 1 month	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal

Option 4 To use a minimum level of income for self-employed earners after 1 year self-employment	307 people	£41,815	£204,156	£245,971	£15.41
Option 5 To reduce the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and receive Council Tax Reduction to 4 weeks	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal
Option 6 To reduce the capital limit from £16,000 to £6,000	58 people	£7,510	£36,669	£44,179	£14.65
Option 7 To introduce a standard level of non dependant deduction of £10 for claimants	289 people	£12,708	£62,043	£74,751	£4.97
Option 8 To include Child Maintenance in assessments for Council Tax Reduction	136 people	£8,519	£41,591	£50,110	£7.09
Option 9 To include Child Benefit in assessments for Council Tax Reduction	593 people	£31,729	£154,910	£186,639	£6.05
Option 10 To restrict the maximum level of Council Tax Reduction payable to a Band D charge	238 people	£13,578	£66,293	£79,871	£6.45
Option 11 To remove Second Adult Reduction	280 people	£2,252	£10,997	£13,249	£0.91

<p>Option 12 To remove the award of a Work Related Activity Component for all claimants who claim Employment and Support Allowance on or after 1st April 2017</p>	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal
<p>Option 13 To limit the number of dependant children within the calculation for Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of two.</p>	31 people	£776	£3,787	£4,563	£2.83
<p>Option 14 To remove entitlement to Council Tax Reduction for a claimant classified as a 'Person from Abroad' or subject to Immigration Control</p>	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal
<p>Option 15 To introduce a scheme to help claimants suffering exceptional financial hardship (The protection scheme will add additional costs to the scheme but it will be designed to protect the most vulnerable who are experiencing exceptional financial hardship)</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

Alternatives to reducing the amount of help provided by the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

We have also thought about other ways to make the spending cuts we need to make and maintain the amount of financial support provided by the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which is currently in place. These have not been completely rejected and you are asked about them in the Questionnaire, but at the moment we do not think we should implement them for the reasons given under each sub-heading below.

We have considered:

1 Increasing the Level of Council Tax

Increasing the level of Council Tax to keep the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme would mean all residents in the District paying

more. The Council would need to hold a local referendum to ask residents to vote whether or not they would support such an increase.

2 Reduce Funding Available for Other Council Services

If we decide to keep the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme this will mean, there is less money available to deliver all the other services provided by the Council; or

3 Using the Council’s savings

Using our savings to protect the Council Tax Reduction scheme could be a short-term option. Once used, however, they will be gone and no longer available to support and invest in other Council services.

The Council also considered whether to consult on the inclusion of certain disability benefits, currently disregarded assessments of Council Tax Reduction, but did not feel this was appropriate.

Conclusion

The Council has to consider where savings will come from are therefore proposing some changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. No final decisions have been made yet. The questionnaire seeks your views and suggestions to help us design the scheme for 2017/18.

How to Have Your Say

There is an online questionnaire. This is our preferred method for your response - go to: xxx.

Or if you have evidence that you wish to attach, which you can't do on the questionnaire, please email: xxx .

Or write to xxx.

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Next steps....

Progress reports on the consultation will be added to our website: XXXX

You may submit further evidence, ideas or comments by email (XXX)

The consultation closes on dd/mmm/yyyy.

We will listen carefully to what residents tell us and take the responses into consideration when making a final decision on the 2017/18 scheme.

Following the decision, the full results from the consultation will be available on the Council's website.

The new scheme will start on **1 April 2017**. The Council will consider the impact of the scheme annually and consult again if it thinks further changes need to be made.

**Equality Impact Assessment
Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

Authority:	Sevenoaks District Council
Date EqIA commenced:	23 May 2016
Date first stage EqIA finalised for pre-consultation decision:	24 May 2016
Date second stage EqIA finalised after consultation closed, prior to final decision being taken:	To be completed
Job titles of officers involved in completing the EqIA:	Chief Finance Officer Head of Transformation and Strategy Head of Revenues & Benefits West Kent Equalities Officer

Summary of decision to be made

Since 1 April 2013, the Council has maintained a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The Council has the ability to determine the level of reduction given to working age applicants only. The scheme for pension age applicants is determined by Central Government.

We have decided to complete a full review of the scheme. The objectives of the review are to:

- Accurately target support to those working age claimants who most need it.
- Align the scheme with proposed changes to Housing Benefit and introduction of Universal Credit.
- Address potential shortfalls in funding due to the continued reduction in Central Government grants.
- Maintain a common approach to the design of local schemes across Kent.

Scope of this equality impact assessment

1. Review of the current scheme, introduced on 1 April 2013.
2. Proposed changes to the scheme from 1 April 2017.

How is the decision relevant to the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty?

The need to ensure that the scheme is not unlawfully discriminatory is relevant to the first aim of the duty to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

The need to consider how we can take steps to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics and whether people with disabilities may need to be treated more favourably, in how the scheme is designed, is relevant to the second aim of the duty to advance equality of opportunity.

The proposed service changes could also be relevant to fostering good relations with regard to maintaining the confidence and trust in the local authority by people with protected characteristics who may use our services.

Review of the current scheme, introduced on 1 April 2013

The current scheme requires all working age claimants to pay 18.5% of their council tax liability. Transitional funding meant claimants were only required to pay 8.5% in the first year of the scheme.

The current scheme was subject to a comprehensive equality impact assessment in 2012. That assessment identified that our Council Tax Reduction Scheme had the potential to have a negative impact on working age people with disabilities, carers, women and younger age groups. To mitigate these potential impacts it was agreed that we would continue to treat people with disabilities, carers and households with young children more favourably by disregarding some income, giving them a higher council tax reduction. The impact on working age groups was as a result of the Government protecting pension age people from any changes. However, transitional funding was intended to reduce the extent of the impacts in the first year of the scheme.

The equality impact assessment was reviewed by Full Council in October 2014 and found that the impact of the 18.5% reduction on people with disabilities had not altered significantly, that the impact on carers was more significant than initially anticipated and that the impact on females was less significant than initially anticipated. The scheme continues to disregard some income for people with

Equality Impact Assessment
Council Tax Reduction Scheme

disabilities, carers and families with children, resulting in a higher council tax reduction. No further mitigating actions were identified.

Current claimant data is provided in Annex 1. Findings from the data are summarised below.

Disability

Working age people with disabilities make up a high proportion of the working age caseload at 21%. Working age people with disabilities receive more per week, than working age people without disabilities, on average.

Carers

There is a roughly equivalent proportion working age claimants with a carer in the household, than there are carers in the population overall. Working age claimants with a carer in the household receive more per week, on average, than working age claimants without a carer in the household.

Age

Those aged 18-24 make up a lower proportion of the caseload than the population overall. Those aged 25-34 make up a higher proportion of the caseload than the population overall. Other age groups broadly reflect the overall population. Those aged 55-64 currently receive the highest weekly amount, on average. Those aged 18-24 currently receive the lowest weekly amount, on average.

Sex

Females make up a high proportion of the caseload at 71%. Although, there is a small difference between the average amounts females and males receive per week, this is due to factors relating to circumstances which directly affect the calculation of council tax reduction, and is not linked to a claimant's sex.

Race

This information is not collected from claimants as it is not relevant to the calculation of council tax reduction. No new data is available, following the consultation in 2012.

Other protected characteristics

We do not collect information about the following characteristics from claimants as it is not relevant to the calculation of council tax reductions:

- Religion of belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy or maternity

Proposed changes to the scheme from 1 April 2017

There are eight recommendations being presented for consultation. Current claimant data, for each of the recommendations, where available, is provided in Annex 1. Where an option applies to new claimants, we have provided data for current claimants as an indication of the possible impacts as it is not possible to predict who may apply after 1 April 2017. Findings from the data can be summarised as follows:

Disability

There is a potential impact on people of working age with a disability of the following recommendations:

- Recommendation (b)(i): increasing the minimum contribution rate for working age claimants to 20% or (up to) 25% (would affect all working age claimants, of which 21% have a disability).
- Recommendation (b)(iii): removing second adult rebate (26% of working age claimants in this category have a disability).

Carers

There is a potential impact on people of working age with a carer in the household of the following recommendations:

- Recommendation (b)(i): increasing the minimum contribution rate for working age claimants to 20% or (up to) 25% (would affect all working age claimants, of which 11% have a carer in the household).
- Recommendation (b)(ii): introducing a band cap at a band D (16% of working age claimants in this category have a carer in the household).
- Recommendation (b)(iii): removing second adult rebate (19% of working age claimants in this category have a carer in the household).
- Recommendation (b)(vii): aligning regulations of the current council tax reduction scheme with housing benefit and (prescribed) pension age council tax reduction scheme (13% of working age claimants who receive non-dependent deductions have a carer in the household).

Age

As claimants of pension age are protected, there is a potential impact on other age groups, of the following recommendations:

- Recommendation (b)(i): increasing the minimum contribution rate for working age claimants to 20% or (up to) 25% (would affect all working age claimants).
- Recommendation (b)(ii): introducing a band cap at a band D (34% of claimants in this category are aged 45-54 and 26% are aged 55-64).
- Recommendation (b)(iii): removing second adult rebate (45% of claimants in this category are aged 45-54 and 36% are aged 55-64).
- Recommendation (b)(iv): reducing the capital limit to £6000 (31% of claimants in this category are aged 45-54 and 38% are aged 55-64).
- Recommendation (b)(v): including child benefit and child maintenance in the assessment of income (40% of claimants with child maintenance are aged 35-44; 32% of claimants with child benefit are aged 25-34 and 37% are aged 35-44).
- Recommendation (b)(vi): introducing a minimum income floor for self-employed claimants (37% of claimants in this category are aged 35-44).
- Recommendation (b)(vii): aligning regulations of the current council tax reduction scheme with housing benefit and (prescribed) pension age council tax reduction scheme:
 - 44% of current claimants who receive family premium in this category are aged 35-44 and 32% are aged 45-54, however the proposal would apply to new claims only.
 - 48% of current claimants who receive non-dependent deductions are aged 45-54 and 28% are aged 55-64, however the proposal would apply to new claims only.

Equality Impact Assessment
Council Tax Reduction Scheme

- 56% of current claimants who receive awards for over two dependents are aged 35-44, however, the proposal would only apply to claimants who have a subsequent or third child after 1 April 2017.

Sex

There is a potential impact on working age males and females of the following recommendations:

- Recommendation (b)(i): increasing the minimum contribution rate for working age claimants to 20% or (up to) 25% (would affect all working age claimants, of which 71% are female and 29% are male).
- Recommendation (b)(iii): removing second adult rebate (86% of working age claimants in this category are female).
- Recommendation (b)(iv): reducing the capital limit to £6000 (41% of working age claimants in this category are male).
- Recommendation (b)(v): including child benefit and child maintenance in the assessment of income (97% of working age claimants with child maintenance are female; 84% of working age claimants with child benefit are female).
- Recommendation (b)(vi): introducing a minimum income floor for self-employed claimants (36% of working age claimants in this category are male).
- Recommendation (b)(vii): aligning regulations of the current council tax reduction scheme with housing benefit and (prescribed) pension age council tax reduction scheme:
 - 83% of current claimants who receive family premium are female, however the proposal would apply to new claims only
 - 80% of current working age claimants who receive non-dependent deductions are female, however the proposal would apply to new claims only
 - 74% of working age claimants who receive awards for over two dependents are female, however, the proposal would only apply to claimants who have a subsequent or third child after 1 April 2017).

Race

This information is not collected from claimants as it is not relevant to the calculation of council tax reduction. The Census (2011) shows that people from Minority Ethnic backgrounds are more likely to be economically active and less likely to be self-employed, than people from a White background. We have no evidence to indicate that working age people with different ethnic backgrounds would be affected differently. However, we will ask people to identify their ethnic group, when responding to the consultation.

Armed Forces Community

This is considered in this equality impact assessment as part of the commitments within the Community Covenant. Armed forces personnel deployed on operations overseas, who normally pay council tax, benefit from a tax-free payment on the cost of council tax paid directly by the Ministry of Defence. Following the announcement by the Chancellor in his 2012 Budget statement, Council Tax Relief will be worth just under £600 (based upon 2012/13 council tax) for an average six-month deployment based on the average Council Tax per dwelling in England. This will continue to be paid at a flat rate to all eligible personnel. More information is available at www.mod.uk. We also disregard income from war disablement pensions, providing eligible claimants with a higher council tax reduction.

Other protected characteristics

We do not collect information about the following characteristics from claimants as it is not relevant to the calculation of council tax reductions:

- Religion of belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy or maternity

Recommendation (b)(vii) to align the regulations of the current council tax reduction scheme with housing benefit and (prescribed) pension age council tax reduction scheme (which includes limiting the number of dependents to two) would affect any female claimants who are pregnant before 1 April 2017. Otherwise, there is no evidence to indicate that working age people with these protected characteristics would be affected differently to claimants overall.

We have not provided a breakdown of claimants with protected characteristics for recommendations that affect a minimal number of claimants overall. These relate to aspects of aligning the regulations of the current council tax reduction scheme with housing benefit and (prescribed) pension age council tax reduction scheme (recommendation (vii) and include:

- Reducing backdating to one month.
- Reducing the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and receive Council Tax Reduction to 4 weeks.
- Remove the award of a Work Related Activity Component
- Remove entitlement to Council Tax Reduction for a claimant classified as ‘Person from Abroad’ or subject to Immigration control.

Summary of initial findings prior to consultation

1. Review of the current scheme, introduced on 1 April 2013

All working age claimants, including those with protected characteristics, have received a reduction in their benefit amount. Pension age claimants, who also have protected characteristics, have not received a reduction as they are protected from any changes by Central Government. For example, 37% of claimants of pension age have a disability, 3% are carers and 61% are female.

The data shows that we currently provide higher reductions to working age people with disabilities and carers. There is no evidence to suggest that this is insufficient to mitigate the impacts of the scheme overall. The calculation of the reduction amount is not related to a claimant’s sex or age (with the exception of those of pension age who are protected). Any differences between the average weekly amounts received by males, females and working age groups is likely to be as a result of other factors. The analysis has not taken account of any council tax increases year on year so it is not possible to make comparisons between amounts across years.

2. Proposed changes to the scheme from 1 April 2017

A summary of the potential impact of each of the consultation options on the protected characteristics, identified from claimant data and other considerations, is provided in the table below. All options could impact on working age claimants with

Equality Impact Assessment
Council Tax Reduction Scheme

one or more of the protected characteristics of disability, age, sex or race. The extent of these impacts will be considered further following the consultation.

Recommendations (paragraph b)	Protected characteristic (potential for impact identified from Stage 1 of the EqlA)			
	Disability (inc. carers)	Age	Sex	Race
Increasing minimum contribution rate for working age claimants to 20% or (up to) 25%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Introducing a band cap at a band D	Yes	Yes		
Removing second adult rebate	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Reducing the capital limit		Yes	Yes	
Including child benefit/maintenance		Yes	Yes	
Introducing a minimum income floor		Yes	Yes	
Aligning the regulations with housing benefit.	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Actions to mitigate any identified impacts

The possible introduction of an exceptional hardship scheme has been included as an option for consultation. The potential impact on working age claimants with protected characteristics will be taken into account, together with the consultation findings, when deciding which options will be taken forward. The need for any additional mitigating actions will be identified at that stage.

It is possible that individual claimants may be affected by more than one of the options presented for consultation. We will carry out data modelling to identify categories of claimants who may be affected by any options taken forward.

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Annex 1 - Current claimant data

Population data - working age (Census 2011)	Disability (16-64)	Carer (16-64)	Female (18-24)	Male (18-24)	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number	6746	8811	33,142	34,492	7519	11497	16114	17114	15390
Proportion (of working age)	10%	12%	51%	49%	11%	17%	24%	25%	23%
Census table	DC3201EW	LC3304EW	LC1117EW		QS103EW				

Current Scheme (2016/17)

All claimants

All claimants	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male
Number of claimants	6019	1735	4284	429	5590	4000	2019
Proportion of claimants		29%	71%	7%	93%	66%	34%
Average benefit paid (per week)	£18.07	£19.53	£17.47	£20.41	£17.89	£17.71	£18.77
Differences between groups		£2.06		£2.52		-£1.06	

Pensioner claimants

Pensioner claimants	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male
Number of claimants	2845	1057	1788	85	2760	1744	1101
Proportion of claimants		37%	63%	3%	97%	61%	39%
Average benefit paid (per week)	£19.73	£20.52	£19.26	£23.78	£19.60	£19.53	£20.04
Differences between groups		£1.26		£4.18		-£0.51	

Working Age Claimants pay 18.5% of their liability

Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claimants	3174	678	2496	344	2830	2256	919	137	722	836	850	629
Proportion of claimants		21%	79%	11%	89%	71%	29%	4%	23%	26%	27%	20%
Average benefit paid (per week)	£16.58	£17.99	£16.20	£19.58	£16.21	£16.30	£17.26	£15.76	£15.80	£16.61	£17.00	£17.04
Differences between groups		£1.79		£3.37		-£0.96		£1.28				

Proposed changes (2017/18)

Report recommendation	b(i)
Options considered by Kent Finance Officers' Group	7a
Consultation option	1
Applies to existing claimants	

Claimants pay 20% of their liability (predicted based on current data)

Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claimants	3174	678	2496	344	2830	2256	919	137	722	836	850	629
Proportion of claimants		21%	79%	11%	89%	71%	29%	4%	23%	26%	27%	20%
Average benefit paid (per week)	£16.27	£17.66	£15.90	£19.22	£15.91	£16.00	£16.94	£15.47	£15.51	£16.30	£16.69	£16.73
Differences between groups		£1.76		£3.31		-£0.94				£1.26		

Claimants pay 25% of their liability (predicted based on current data)

Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claimants	3174	678	2496	344	2830	2256	918	137	722	836	850	629
Proportion of claimants		21%	79%	11%	89%	71%	29%	4%	23%	26%	27%	20%
Average benefit paid (per week)	£15.26	£16.56	£14.91	£18.02	£14.92	£15.00	£15.88	£14.50	£14.54	£15.29	£15.64	£15.68
Differences between groups		£1.65		£3.10		-£0.88				£1.18		

Report recommendation	b(ii)
Options considered by Kent Finance Officers' Group	7b
Consultation option	10
Applies to existing claimants	

Awards with liability over band D

Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claimants (above band D)	238	41	197	37	201	167	71	2	23	69	82	62
Proportion of claimants	4%	17%	83%	16%	84%	70%	30%	1%	10%	29%	34%	26%
Average benefit paid (per week)	£22.80	£26.88	£21.95	£25.69	£22.27	£22.16	£24.29	£25.48	£21.03	£22.27	£22.95	£23.76
Differences between groups		£4.93		£3.42		-£2.13				£4.45		

Report recommendation	b(iii)
Options considered by Kent Finance Officers' Group	7c
Consultation option	11
Applies to existing claimants	

Awards of second adult rebate - data is for current claims

Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claims with 2AR	176	45	131	33	143	151	25	0	3	31	79	63
Proportion of claimants	3%	26%	74%	19%	81%	86%	14%	0%	2%	18%	45%	36%
Average benefit paid (per week)	£17.63	£22.45	£15.98	£23.01	£16.39	£17.84	£16.39	£0.00	£13.82	£16.99	£18.96	£16.47
Differences between groups		£6.47		£6.62		£1.45				£2.49		

Report recommendation	b(iv)
Options considered by Kent Finance Officers' Group	7d
Consultation option	6
Applies to existing claimants	

Awards with capital over £6000

Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claimants	58	11	47	6	52	34	24	0	7	11	18	22
Proportion of claimants	1%	19%	81%	10%	90%	59%	41%	0%	12%	19%	31%	38%
Average benefit paid (per week)	£14.80	£17.71	£14.12	£17.42	£14.50	£14.51	£15.21	£0.00	£12.52	£15.81	£15.48	£14.47
Differences between groups		£3.59		£2.92		-£0.70				£3.29		

Report recommendation	b(v)
Options considered by Kent Finance Officers' Group	7e
Consultation option	8
Applies to existing claimants	

Awards with child maintenance

Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claims with Child Maintenance	136	2	134	9	127	132	4	5	35	54	39	3
Proportion of claimants	2%	1%	99%	7%	93%	97%	3%	4%	26%	40%	29%	2%
Average benefit paid (per week)	£11.39	£9.12	£11.42	£11.31	£11.39	£11.26	£15.68	£9.34	£11.08	£11.87	£11.44	£9.07
Differences between groups		-£2.30		-£0.08		-£4.42		£2.80				

Report recommendation	b(v)
Options considered by Kent Finance Officers' Group	7e
Consultation option	9
Applies to existing claimants	

Awards with child benefit

Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claims with Child Benefit	593	0	593	1	592	498	95	26	189	221	137	20
Proportion of claimants	10%	0%	100%	0%	100%	84%	16%	4%	32%	37%	23%	3%
Average benefit paid (per week)	£11.65	£0.00	£11.65	£11.77	£11.65	£11.22	£13.86	£9.61	£10.86	£11.95	£12.15	£14.83
Differences between groups		-£11.65		£0.12		-£2.64		£5.22				

Report recommendation	b(vi)
Options considered by Kent Finance Officers' Group	7g
Consultation option	4
Applies to existing claimants	

Awards with self employed income under 1 year

Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claims with self employed income for more than 1 year	304	12	292	14	290	196	108	6	59	113	85	41
Proportion of claimants	5%	4%	96%	5%	95%	64%	36%	2%	19%	37%	28%	13%
Average benefit paid (per week)	£16.77	£19.12	£16.67	£19.24	£16.65	£16.16	£17.88	£14.19	£17.05	£17.82	£16.03	£15.35
Differences between groups		£2.45		£2.59		-£1.72		£3.63				

Report recommendation	b(vii)
Options considered by Kent Finance Officers' Group	7h
Consultation option	2
Applies to new claimants from 1st April 2017	

Awards with family premium (will apply to new claims only - data is for current claims)

Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claimants	554	0	554	1	553	459	95	4	102	246	178	24
Proportion of claimants	9%	0%	100%	0%	100%	83%	17%	1%	18%	44%	32%	4%
Average benefit paid (per week)	£14.34	£0.00	£14.34	£16.94	£14.33	£13.50	£18.35	£10.39	£13.19	£14.52	£14.53	£16.57
Differences between groups		-£14.34		£2.61		-£4.85		£6.18				

Report recommendation	b(vii)
Options considered by Kent Finance Officers' Group	7h
Consultation option	3
Applications made after 1st April 2017	

Awards with back-dating

minimal

Report recommendation	b(vii)
Options considered by Kent Finance Officers' Group	7h
Consultation option	5
Applies to existing claimants	

Awards where temporary absence have been used minimal

Report recommendation	b(vii)
Options considered by Kent Finance Officers' Group	7f
Consultation option	7
Applies to existing claimants	

Awards with non-dependant deductions - data is for current claims

Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claims with non-dependant ded	210	11	199	27	183	167	43	0	2	48	101	59
Proportion of claimants	3%	5%	95%	13%	87%	80%	20%	0%	1%	23%	48%	28%
Average benefit paid (per week)	£14.70	£18.43	£14.50	£17.14	£14.35	£14.24	£16.53	£0.00	£14.82	£13.97	£14.34	£15.92
Differences between groups		£3.93		£2.79		-£2.29		£1.95				

Report recommendation	b(vii)
Options considered by Kent Finance Officers' Group	7h
Consultation option	12
Applies to new claimants from 1st April 2017	

Awards with a Work Related Activity Component (will apply to new claims only) minimal

Report recommendation	b(vii)
Options considered by Kent Finance Officers' Group	7h
Consultation option	13

Applies to claimants who have a third or subsequent child after 1st April 2017

Awards with over 2 dependants (will only apply to claimants who have a third or subsequent child after 1st April 2017 - data is for current claims)

Working Age	All Claimants	Disability	No Disability	Carer	Non Carer	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Number of claims with over 2 dependants	34	0	34	0	34	25	9	0	7	19	8	0
Proportion of claimants	1%	0%	100%	0%	100%	74%	26%	0%	21%	56%	24%	0%
Average benefit paid (per week)	£14.03	£0.00	£14.03	£0.00	£14.03	£13.26	£16.18	£0.00	£12.23	£14.48	£14.54	£0.00
Differences between groups		-£14.03		-£14.03		-£2.92		£14.54				

Report recommendation	b(vii)
Options considered by Kent Finance Officers' Group	7h
Consultation option	14
Applies to existing claimants	

Claimants classified as 'Person from Abroad' or subject to Immigration Control. minimal

Report recommendation	c
Options considered by Kent Finance Officers' Group	n/a
Consultation option	15
Applies to new and existing claimants	

Exceptional Hardship no data currently available

Agenda Item 5

	Protected characteristic (potential for impact identified from claimant data)			
Consultation option	Disability	Age	Sex	Race
1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2		Yes	Yes	
3				
4		Yes		
5				
6	Yes	Yes	Yes	
7	Yes	Yes	Yes	
8		Yes	Yes	
9	Yes	Yes		
10		Yes		
11		Yes	Yes	
12	Yes	Yes	Yes	
13	Yes	Yes	Yes	
14				

Item 5 - Provisional Outturn 2015/16

The attached report was considered by the Finance Advisory Committee on 24 May 2016, and the relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of this agenda.

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PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2015/16

Cabinet - 9 June 2016

Report of: Chief Finance Officer

Status: For recommendation to Cabinet

Also considered by: Finance Advisory Committee - 24 May 2016

Key Decision: No

This report supports the Key Aim of Effective Management of Council Resources

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Searles

Contact Officer Head of Finance - Helen Martin ext 7483

Recommendation to Finance Advisory Committee: That

- (a) the outturn report for 2015/16 be noted;
- (b) the recommendations below to Cabinet, be endorsed.

Recommendation to Cabinet: It be RESOLVED that:

- (a) Funding for the Otford Palace Tower be taken from the Budget Stabilisation Fund and not from the General Fund Reserve.

Introduction

- 1 Provisional Financial Outturn figures for 201/16 are attached at Appendix A. These results will be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 9 June 2016.
- 2 A favourable variance of £30,000 has been achieved. A summary of this variance, which represents is 0.2% of the net service expenditure budget, is given as Appendix A.
- 3 It was approved by Cabinet on 4 February 2016 that any favourable variances achieved on the 2015/16 budget be put into the Budget Stabilisation Reserve.
- 4 Revenue carry forward requests were considered at the previous meeting of this Advisory Committee and were approved by Cabinet.
- 5 A provisional amount of £150,000 has been included for retained business rates. This figure is still provisional as the information from the Valuation

Agenda Item 6

Office was not received early enough to allow the Collection Fund accounts to be completed in time for this meeting. Cabinet (21 April 2016) agreed that additional income arising in 2015/16 from business rate retention could be transferred to a Corporate Projects Reserve.

- 6 Main reasons for the year end variances are given in the following paragraphs and detailed explanations are provided as Appendix B.

High Level Analysis of Variances

- 7 Property Investment Strategy Income was a new source of income in 2015/16 and represented income derived from the acquisition of commercial property in Sevenoaks and Swanley. A total of £422,000 was received which included income from early surrender of one of the leases.
- 8 Revenues and Benefits - within Finance, additional resources were used to help address the Benefits workload and to be pro-active in contacting Council Tax support customers. The funding of that additional cost was shared with Dartford.
- 9 Income from Car Parks, On Street Parking and Planning exceeded Budget. There was a surplus on the On Street Parking budget and this can only be spent on permitted purposes within the Traffic Management Act 2004. As agreed by Cabinet on 5 February 2015, this surplus had been transferred to the On Street Parking Reserve.
- 10 Pay costs were slightly below budget due to the pay award for the year being below budget, vacant posts being higher than expected and tight control over overtime costs.
- 11 The surplus on the Direct Services Trading account was £149,000 better than expected due to additional income, savings on fuel and staffing costs.

Funding from Reserves - Otford Palace -

- 12 Cabinet (20th July 2015) recommended to Council that a sum of £130,699 from the General Fund Reserve be approved for stabilisation works at the Otford Palace Tower. It is now recommended that the funding for this project is taken from the Budget Stabilisation Reserve. This will enable the General Fund Reserve to remain at £1,500,000 which is considered a prudent level relative to our net service expenditure.

Key Implications

Financial

There are no financial implications arising from this report

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

Under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, the section 151 officer has statutory duties in relation to the financial administration and stewardship of the authority.

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

- 13 Both Members and Officers were fully aware that 2015/16 would be an extremely challenging year. However, in the light of the financial pressures arising during the year, it is pleasing to report to Members a positive year end position.
- 14 The outturn position could not have been achieved without the commitment and hard work for both Members and Officers.
- 15 The 2016/17 budget includes savings totalling £0.487m. Achieving this continuing level of savings whilst managing the financial risks will require continued close and proactive financial management during 2016/17.

Risk Assessment Statement

- 16 These results are still provisional and may change due to issues arising from the closure of the Council's accounts, which will be completed by 30 June 2016.

Appendices

Appendix A - Outturn Summary

Appendix B - Explanation of variances (to follow)

Background Papers

See appendices

Contact Officer(s):

Helen Martin Ext. 7483

Adrian Rowbotham Ext. 7153

**Adrian Rowbotham
Chief Finance Officer**

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APPENDIX A

2. Overall Summary

March 2016 - Provisional Outturn as at 13/05/16

	Period	Period	Period	Period	Y-T-D	Y-T-D	Y-T-D	Y-T-D	Annual	Annual	Annual	2014/15
	Budget	Actual	Variance	Variance	Budget	Actual	Variance	Variance	Budget	Forecast (including Accruals)	Variance	Actual
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%	£'000	£'000	£'000	%	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Communities and Business	- 5	57	- 62	1165	1,036	1007	29	3	1,036	1,036	-	839
Corporate Support	336	243	93	28	3,314	3109	205	6	3,314	3,258	56	3,247
Environmental and Operational Services	150	409	- 259	-173	2,464	2719	- 255	- 10	2,464	2,735	- 271	2,536
Financial Services	1,132	800	332	29	5,113	5057	56	1	5,113	5,044	69	4,847
Housing	- 59	- 42	- 17	29	730	743	- 13	- 2	730	739	- 8	725
Legal and Governance	35	- 42	77	221	629	621	8	1	629	677	- 48	541
Planning Services	110	256	- 146	-133	1,284	1208	76	6	1,284	1,185	99	1,060
NET EXPENDITURE (1)	1,698	1,680	18	1	14,569	14,464	105	1	14,569	14,672	- 103	13,795
<i>Adjustments to reconcile to amount to be met from Reserves</i>												
Direct Services Trading Accounts	- 0	12	- 13	-2867	- 84	-233	149	177	- 84	- 216	132	- 192
Capital charges outside General Fund	- 5	- 5	0	1	- 63	-63	- 0	- 0	- 63	- 63	-	- 60
Support Services outside General Fund	- 15	- 68	52	339	- 169	-222	54	32	- 169	- 169	-	- 168
Redundancy Costs - all	-	29	- 29	-	-	97	- 97	-	-	-	-	31
NET EXPENDITURE (2)	1,677	1,648	29	2	14,253	14,043	210	1	14,253	14,224	29	13,406
Revenue Support Grant (incl. CT Support)	- 126	- 126	-	0	- 1,516	- 1,516	-	-	- 1,516	- 1,516	-	- 2,232
Retained Business Rates	- 161	- 161	-	0	- 1,934	- 2,084	150	8	- 1,934	- 2,084	150	- 1,898
New Homes Bonus	- 152	- 152	-	0	- 1,818	- 1,825	7	0	- 1,818	- 1,825	7	- 1,396
Council Tax Requirement - SDC	- 775	- 775	-	0	- 9,298	- 9,298	-	-	- 9,298	- 9,298	-	- 9,010
Property Investment Strategy Income	-	- 3	3	-	-	- 422	422	-	-	- 383	383	-
NET EXPENDITURE (3)	463	432	31	7	- 313	- 1,102	789	- 252	- 313	- 882	569	- 1,129
<i>Summary including investment income</i>												
<i>Net Expenditure</i>	463	432	31	7	- 313	- 1,102	789	- 252	- 313	- 882	569	- 1,129
<i>Interest and Investment Income (net)</i>	- 26	- 24	- 2	6	- 301	-259	- 42	- 14	- 301	- 259	- 42	- 227
OVERALL TOTAL	437	407	30	7	- 614	- 1,361	747	- 122	- 614	- 1,140	526	- 1,357
Planned Appropriation (from)/to Reserves					614	614	-	0	614	614	-	-
Additional Appropriation to Budget Stabilisation Reserve (Re: Property Investment)					-	422	- 422	-	-	383	- 383	-
Transfer to Carry Forward Reserve/Provision Agreed by Cabinet 21 April 2016					-	145	- 145	-	-	-	-	-
Agreed Transfer to Corporate Projects Reserve (Re: Business Rates)					-	150	- 150	-	-	150	- 150	-
<i>Favourable Variance</i>					-	-30	30		-	6	- 6	- 1,357

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2014-15 Provisional outturn including all sundry creditors

	Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Actual Outturn	Difference between Budget and Final Outturn	Explanation for year end variances greater than £10k (<i>starred items</i>)	Difference between your forecast and final outturn	Explanation for large differences between forecast outturn and actual outturn (<i>starred items</i>)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000	
Communities and Business							
All Weather Pitch	-2	-2	-5	3		3	
Business Area Improvement Fund	0	0	0	0		0	
Community Safety	173	173	172	0		0	
Community Development Service Provisions	-5	-5	-4	-1		-1	
The Community Plan	49	49	48	1		1	
Dunton Green Project	0	0	0	0		0	
Economic Development	49	49	49	-0		-0	
Economic Development Property	223	223	223	0		0	
Grants to Organisations	184	184	184	0		0	
Health Improvements	34	34	34	0		0	
Healthy Living Centre	0	0	0	0		0	
Leisure Contract	227	227	207	19	* Carry forward approved by Cabinet 21/04/16.	19	* Carry forward approved by Cabinet 21/04/16.
Leisure Development	20	20	20	0		0	
Partnership - Home Office	0	0	0	-0		-0	
Administrative Expenses - Communities & Business	14	14	13	1		1	
Tourism	31	31	31	0		0	
Choosing Health WK PCT	0	0	0	-0		-0	
Community Sports Activation Fund	0	0	0	-0		-0	
Fall Prevention	0	0	0	0		0	
Repair & Renew Flood Support Scheme	0	0	-1	1		1	
PCT Health Checks	0	0	0	0		0	
New Ash Green	0	0	0	0		0	
PCT Initiatives	0	0	0	-0		-0	
Sportivate Inclusive Archery Project	0	0	-0	0		0	
Troubled Families Project	0	0	0	-0		-0	
West Kent Partnership	0	0	-0	0		0	
West Kent Partnership Business Support	0	0	0	0		0	
Youth	38	38	36	3		3	
	<u>1,036</u>	<u>1,036</u>	<u>1,007</u>	<u>29</u>		<u>29</u>	

2014-15 Provisional outturn including all sundry creditors

	Annual Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Actual Outturn £'000	Difference between Budget and Final Outturn £'000	Explanation for year end variances greater than £10k (<i>starred items</i>)	Difference between your forecast and final outturn £'000	Explanation for large differences between forecast outturn and actual outturn (<i>starred items</i>)
Corporate Support							
Asset Maintenance Argyle Road	69	69	60	8		8	
Asset Maintenance Other Corporate Properties	30	30	17	14	* Resources utilised on other projects	14	* Resources utilised on other projects
Asset Maintenance Hever Road	6	33	27	-21	* Increased asset maintenance costs. (SCIA growth item in 16/17)	6	
Asset Maintenance IT	263	263	263	0		0	
Asset Maintenance Leisure	167	167	135	32	* £32k carry forward approved by Cabinet 21/04/16.	32	* £32k carry forward approved by Cabinet 21/04/16.
Asset Maintenance Support & Salaries	92	92	81	11	* Reduced resource available to carry out asset maintenance work	11	* Reduced resource available to carry out asset maintenance work
Asset Maintenance Sewage Treatment Plants	8	13	3	5		10	
Bus Station	15	13	17	-2		-4	
Corporate Projects	0	10	10	-10		0	
Estates Management - Buildings	-37	-37	-56	19	* Less maintenance expenditure required during the year on buildings combined with reduced resource availability	19	* Less maintenance expenditure required during the year on buildings combined with reduced resource availability
Housing Premises	-1	7	3	-4		4	
Administrative Expenses - Corporate Support	27	27	22	5		5	
Administrative Expenses - Human Resources	14	14	22	-8		-8	
Administrative Expenses - Property	4	6	2	3		5	
Support - Central Offices	430	419	395	35	* Savings delivered in gas and electricity expenditure due to decision to implement LED lighting and to review plant usage.	24	* Savings delivered in gas and electricity expenditure due to decision to implement LED lighting and to review plant usage.
Support - Contact Centre	441	394	399	42	* Underspend on salaries budget due to vacant posts.	-5	
Support - Central Offices - Facilities	247	251	257	-10		-7	
Support - General Admin	265	214	215	50	* £51k overachievement on Print Income	-1	
Support - IT	906	906	871	35	* £13k carry forward re Licensing Hub approved by Cabinet 21/04/16.	35	* £13k carry forward re Licensing Hub approved by Cabinet 21/04/16.
Support - Local Offices	56	56	59	-4		-4	

2014-15 Provisional outturn including all sundry creditors

	Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Actual Outturn	Difference between Budget and Final Outturn	Explanation for year end variances greater than £10k (<i>starred items</i>)	Difference between your forecast and final outturn	Explanation for large differences between forecast outturn and actual outturn (<i>starred items</i>)
Support - Nursery	0	0	3	-3		-3	
Support - Human Resources	272	272	285	-13	* Overspend on central training offset by underspend on overall training budget allocated to service areas	-13	* Overspend on central training offset by underspend on overall training budget allocated to service areas
Support - Property Function	39	39	19	20	* Activity supporting partnerships has been contained within original resources	20	* Activity supporting partnerships has been contained within original resources
Website	0	0	0	0		0	
	<u>3,314</u>	<u>3,258</u>	<u>3,109</u>	<u>205</u>		<u>148</u>	

2014-15 Provisional outturn including all sundry creditors

	Annual Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Actual Outturn £'000	Difference between Budget and Final Outturn £'000	Explanation for year end variances greater than £10k (<i>starred items</i>)	Difference between your forecast and final outturn £'000	Explanation for large differences between forecast outturn and actual outturn (<i>starred items</i>)
Environmental and Operational Services							
Asset Maintenance Car Parks	19	37	36	-17	* New overflow at Darenth car park, Westerham completed.	1	
Asset Maintenance CCTV	16	14	17	-0		-2	
Asset Maintenance Countryside	8	4	5	2		-1	
Asset Maintenance Direct Services	37	33	24	12	* Carry forward approved by Cabinet 21/04/16.	8	
Asset Maintenance Playgrounds	14	3	1	14	* Budget only required if any emergency works required. No works planned.	2	
Asset Maintenance Public Toilets	14	5	0	14	* Budget only required if any emergency works required. No works planned.	5	
Building Control Discretionary Work	-9	-9	-8	-1		-1	
Building Control Partnership Members	0	0	0	0		0	
Building Control	-159	-93	-84	-75	* Fee income £38,000 below budget. Budget contained £36,000 income from previous shared management arrangement with T&MBC which could not be realised as full shared working commenced October 2014.	-9	
Car Parks	-1,803	-1,753	-1,735	-67	* NNDR bill £14,000 over budget. Rent for new Blighs Car Park paid. Overall gross income £8,000 over budget.	-17	* NNDR bill £14,000 over budget. Rent for new Blighs Car Park paid. Overall gross income £5,000 over budget.
CCTV	238	256	260	-21	* Budget contained challenging income targets which could not be achieved.	-3	
Fire Protection	34	34	29	4		4	
Dangerous Structures	10	10	8	2		2	
Car Parking - On Street	-467	-467	-467	0		0	
EH Commercial	260	250	258	2		-8	
EH Animal Control	1	18	21	-20	* Income from kennel fees, not recovered from owners collecting stray dogs, was £14,000 below budget. Income for licensing animal establishments £3,000 below budget.	-3	
EH Environmental Protection	362	362	338	24	* Section 106 funding used (Air Quality). Journal done in March	24	* Section 106 funding used. Journal done in March
Emergency	64	64	61	3		3	

2014-15 Provisional outturn including all sundry creditors

	Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Actual Outturn	Difference between Budget and Final Outturn	Explanation for year end variances greater than £10k (<i>starred items</i>)	Difference between your forecast and final outturn	Explanation for large differences between forecast outturn and actual outturn (<i>starred items</i>)
Estates Management - Grounds	98	128	125	-27	* Essential tree maintenance work on ex-housing estate land.	3	
Kent Resource Partnership	0	0	0	0		0	
Land Charges	-104	-104	-94	-10		-10	
Licensing Partnership Hub (Trading)	-4	-4	-4	0		0	
Licensing Partnership Members	0	0	0	-0		-0	
Licensing Regime	-0	-0	-1	1		1	
Markets	-190	-168	-182	-8		14	* Outstanding debt for previous contract and expenditure on rent and cleaning for Swanley market increased costs. This was substantially off-set with additional, above profile, income received for both markets.
Parks and Recreation Grounds	98	113	106	-8		7	
Parks - Rural	103	153	162	-59	* Unbudgeted expenditure incurred at Farningham Woods for felling and coppicing to try and contain infestation of Oriental Chestnut Gall Wasp under direction from the Forestry Commission. The FC has agreed to cover expenditure above £40,000. Some income should be received from timber sales.	-9	
Building Control Partnership Implementation & Project Co	0	0	-0	0		0	
Public Transport Support	0	0	0	0		0	
Refuse Collection	2,415	2,475	2,483	-68	* Income from sale of glass and paper for recycling, £50,000 below profile, due to fall in price paid for material. 3rd quarter recycling credits received. Recycling credit £8000 below profile.	-8	
Administrative Expenses - Building Control	9	9	6	4		4	
Administrative Expenses - Health	26	16	7	19	* Savings on furniture, mobile phones and training. Also covers Licensing Team.	9	
Administrative Expenses - Transport	10	10	5	5		5	
Street Naming	15	-0	-2	17	* Income £11,000 above profile, expenditure £5,000 below profile.	2	
Street Cleansing	1,255	1,255	1,258	-4		-4	
Support - Health and Safety	18	18	16	2		2	

2014-15 Provisional outturn including all sundry creditors

	Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Actual Outturn	Difference between Budget and Final Outturn	Explanation for year end variances greater than £10k (<i>starred items</i>)	Difference between your forecast and final outturn	Explanation for large differences between forecast outturn and actual outturn (<i>starred items</i>)
Support - Direct Services	54	44	41	13	* Expenditure under profile on training which has now been delivered on manual handling and driver CPD. Savings on mobile phones and internal printing costs	3	
Taxis	-22	-32	-29	7		-3	
Public Conveniences	43	53	57	-13	* Unidentified income budget following transfer of conveniences to Parishes.	-3	
Air Quality (Ext Funded)	0	0	0	0		0	
	<u>2,464</u>	<u>2,734</u>	<u>2,719</u>	<u>-255</u>		<u>15</u>	

	Annual Budget £'000	Forecast difference at year end	Forecast Outturn £'000	Actual Outturn £'000	Difference between Budget and Final Outturn £'000	Explanation for Year end variances greater than £10k (<i>starred items</i>)	Difference between your forecast and final outturn £'000	Explanation for large differences between forecast outturn and actual outturn (<i>starred items</i>)
Environmental and Operations - Direct Services								
Refuse	-57	-73	-130	-143	86	* Income £32,000 above profile, mainly on paid bulky items. Expenditure under profile on salaries (only partly offset by agency staff costs) and transport costs including fuel.	13	* Income £32,000 above profile, mainly on paid bulky items. Expenditure under profile on salaries (only partly offset by agency staff costs) and transport costs including fuel.
CDSU	17	-1	16	15	2		1	
Street Cleaning	57	-43	14	11	47	* Expenditure under profile on salaries and transport costs, including fuel.	3	
Trade	-17	-18	-35	-33	16	* Income £33,000 above profile. Expenditure only £17,000 above profile, mainly on disposal charges.	-2	
Workshop	-6	25	19	34	-40	* Income £43,000 below profile principally on transport repairs. Expenditure £24,000 below profile mainly on salaries.	-15	* Income £43,000 below profile principally on transport repairs. Expenditure £24,000 below profile mainly on salaries.
Green Waste	-23	12	-11	-16	-7		5	
Premises Cleaning	-28	-5	-33	-33	5		0	
Cesspools	-16	-6	-22	-22	6		0	
Pest Control	0	0	0	-2	2		2	
Grounds	-8	-12	-20	-21	13	* Expenditure £12,000 below profile, mainly on staffing costs due to new staffing arrangements.	1	
Fleet	0	0	0	-2	2		2	
Depot	0	-10	-10	-17	17	* Expenditure £10,000 below profile, mainly on salary costs.	7	
Emergency	-3	-1	-4	-5	2		1	
	-84	-132	-216	-233	149		17	

2014-15 Provisional outturn including all sundry creditors

	Annual Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Actual Outturn £'000	Difference between Budget and Final Outturn £'000	Explanation for year end variances greater than £10k (<i>starred items</i>)	Difference between your forecast and final outturn £'000	Explanation for large differences between forecast outturn and actual outturn (<i>starred items</i>)
Financial Services							
Action and Development	7	7	2	4		4	
Benefits Admin	791	792	876	-85	* Additional resources to improve performance in respect of the benefits caseload. As a shared service the total cost has been shared with Dartford BC.	-84	* Additional resources to improve performance in respect of the benefits caseload. As a shared service the total cost has been shared with Dartford BC.
Benefits Grants	-659	-659	-659	0		0	
Consultation and Surveys	4	4	3	0		0	
Corporate Management	1,063	1,063	984	78	* Strict control of spending in relation to consultancy and staff salaries has delivered an underspend on corporate management budgets this financial year.	78	* Strict control of spending in relation to consultancy and staff salaries has delivered an underspend on corporate management budgets this financial year.
Corporate Savings	-15	-15	0	-15	* The adverse variance is in relation to savings from vacant posts which were expected to exceed profile at year end.	-15	* The adverse variance is in relation to savings from vacant posts which were expected to exceed profile at year end.
Dartford Partnership Hub (SDC costs)	0	0	0	0		0	
Equalities Legislation	18	14	14	4		0	
External Communications	150	150	143	7		7	
Housing Advances	2	1	1	1		-0	
Local Tax	90	65	98	-8		-33	* Additional resources used to proactively contact Council Tax Support customers. The total cost has been shared with Dartford BC.
Members	418	408	400	18	* Small underspends on various items including training and travel.	8	
Misc. Finance	2,410	2,441	2,452	-41	* Costs associated with development projects are included here.	-11	* Costs associated with development projects are included here.
Dartford Partnership Implementation & Project Costs	0	0	0	0		0	
Performance Improvement	6	6	1	5		5	
Administrative Expenses - Chief Executive	36	16	10	26	* Small underspends on several items including printing and training.	6	
Administrative Expenses - Financial Services	35	41	37	-2		3	
Administrative Expenses - Transformation and Strategy	6	6	6	1		1	
Support - Audit Function	146	146	162	-16	* Change in allocations between Audit, Benefits and Local Tax.	-16	* Change in allocations between Audit, Benefits and Local Tax.
Support - Exchequer and Procurement	135	135	132	4		4	
Support - Finance Function	213	156	139	74	* Work on non finance partnerships has been contained within original resources.	17	* Work on non finance partnerships has been contained within original resources.
Support - General Admin	145	145	138	7		7	
Treasury Management	112	124	118	-6		6	
	5,113	5,044	5,057	56		-13	

2014-15 Provisional outturn including all sundry creditors

	Annual Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Actual Outturn £'000	Difference between Budget and Final Outturn £'000	Explanation for year end variances greater than £10k (<i>starred items</i>)	Difference between your forecast and final outturn £'000	Explanation for large differences between forecast outturn and actual outturn (<i>starred items</i>)
Housing							
Energy Efficiency	25	25	25	0		0	
Gypsy Sites	-30	-30	-33	3		3	
Homeless	79	79	83	-4		-4	
Disabled Facilities Grant Administration	0	0	0	-0		-0	
Housing	438	434	432	6		2	
Housing Initiatives	13	13	5	9		9	
Homelessness Prevention	0	0	-0	0		0	
Housing Energy Retraining Options (HERO)	0	0	-0	0		0	
Private Sector Housing	178	194	204	-26	* Costs associated with temporary staff to support the implementation of the senior management restructure	-10	* Costs associated with temporary staff to support the implementation of the senior management restructure. Overspend will, in part, be met from the Housing Initiatives budget.
Administrative Expenses - Housing	18	14	17	1		-3	
Sevenoaks Switch and Save	0	0	-0	0		0	
Homelessness Funding	0	0	-0	0		0	
Leader Programme	10	10	10	-0		-0	
	730	739	743	-13		-4	

2014-15 Provisional outturn including all sundry creditors

	Annual Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Actual Outturn £'000	Difference between Budget and Final Outturn £'000	Explanation for year end variances greater than £10k (<i>starred items</i>)	Difference between your forecast and final outturn £'000	Explanation for large differences between forecast outturn and actual outturn (<i>starred items</i>)
Legal and Governance							
Civic Expenses	15	15	16	-1		-1	
Democratic Services	134	131	126	8		5	
Elections	73	73	81	-8		-8	
Register of Electors	139	195	162	-22	* The grant received from Government was insufficient to cover the costs of the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration.	33	* The grant received from Government was insufficient to cover the costs of the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration.
Administrative Expenses - Legal and Governance	65	61	58	7		3	
Support - Legal Function	202	202	178	24	* Vacancies in the Legal section.	24	* Vacancies in the Legal section.
	629	677	621	8		56	

2014-15 Provisional outturn including all sundry creditors

	Annual Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Actual Outturn £'000	Difference between Budget and Final Outturn £'000	Explanation for year end variances greater than £10k (<i>starred items</i>)	Difference between your forecast and final outturn £'000	Explanation for large differences between forecast outturn and actual outturn (<i>starred items</i>)
Planning Services							
Conservation	44	42	53	-9		-11	* This is a result of bringing in additional staff to supplement the Conservation function.
Planning Policy	403	411	407	-5		4	
LDF Expenditure	0	0	0	0		0	
Planning - Appeals	193	213	197	-4		16	* Costs in relation to planning appeals were cautiously forecast in relation to expert advice that was not required.
Planning - CIL Administration	0	-10	-0	0		-10	
Planning - Counter	-0	-0	-0	-0		-0	
Planning - Development Management	334	248	251	82	* The year end position reflected a relatively small number of high fee applications, and an underspend on salaries. <i>Carry forward approved by Cabinet 21/04/16.</i>	-3	
Planning - Enforcement	277	248	256	21	* This is the result of a vacant administrative post.	-9	
Foot Halstead	0	-1	1	-1		-2	
Administrative Expenses - Planning Services	34	34	42	-8		-8	
	<u>1,284</u>	<u>1,185</u>	<u>1,208</u>	<u>76</u>		<u>-23</u>	

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