

24 November 2022 at 7.00 pm

Council Chamber, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks

Published: 16.11.22

The meeting will also be livestreamed to YouTube here

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLT1f_F50fvTzxjZk6Zqn6g.



Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee

Membership:

Chairman, Cllr. Fleming; Vice-Chairman, Cllr. Bayley
Cllrs. Abraham, Andrews, Bonin, Clayton, Eyre, Hogarth, McGregor, Nelson, Pett
and Waterton

Agenda

There are no fire drills planned. If the fire alarm is activated, which is a continuous siren with a flashing red light, please leave the building immediately, following the fire exit signs.

	Pages	Contact
Apologies for Absence		
1. Minutes To agree minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Committee held on 4 October 2022, as a correct record.	(Pages 1 - 4)	
2. Declarations of interest Any declarations not already registered.		
3. Actions form previous meeting (if any)		
4. Update from Portfolio Holder		
5. Referral from Cabinet or the Audit Committee (if any)		
6. Budget 2023/24: Review of Service Dashboards and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs)	(Pages 5 - 42)	Alan Mitchell Tel: 01732 227483
7. Work plan	(Pages 43 - 44)	

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 227000 or democratic.services@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

IMPROVEMENT & INNOVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2022 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Bayley

Cllrs. Andrews, Bayley, Bonin, Hogarth, McGregor, Nelson, Pett and Waterton

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Abraham, Clayton and Eyre

12. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee held on 23 June 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

13. Declarations of interest

There were none.

14. Actions from previous meeting

There were none.

15. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder, and Chairman, explained that his update was concerned with developments that were covered more fully in Item 7 - Capital Schemes Programme Update, and thus moved to the next item.

16. Referral from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

17. Leader Programme Closure Report

The Leader Project Officer presented the report on the closure of the LEADER programme. The national programme was due to end this year, and the Council had been managing the closure of the West Kent program. The West Kent programme had been awarded £1.8 million, and had gained £2.7 million in match funding.

He advised the Committee that lessons learned from the LEADER programme would inform how future rural funding systems would be managed locally. This would

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involve a local-led decision making body drawn from the private, public, and the third sector, and a simple application process for smaller projects.

He then gave a presentation on some of the successfully funded projects.

In response to questions, the Strategic Head for Commercial and Property outlined the proposed application process for the future Rural England Prosperity Fund. He advised the Committee that although administration of the fund would be shared across West Kent, the funding the Council received would be ring-fenced for projects in the District.

He further outlined the scrutiny processes for the LEADER programme. All claims were conducted in stages, and evidence was required for each stage. A site visit was also conducted for each scheme to ensure funds were spent appropriately. The Committee discussed the ways in which the LEADER programme was publicised, and the importance of Local Action Groups in advertising and delivering grants.

Resolved: That

- a) the findings of the report and the on-going auditing requirements regarding post-payment monitoring and file retention, be noted;
- b) the 2014 LEADER programme's successful awarding of £1,812,550 of grant funding to rural businesses in West Kent, which in turn leveraged over £4.5m of investment into the sub-region's economy, be noted; and
- c) the Government's awarding of Rural England Prosperity Funding to Sevenoaks District Council, and the Council's plan to apply the good practices learnt from the LEADER Programme and build on its Legacy, be noted.

18. Capital Schemes Programme Update

The Strategic Head for Commercial and Property presented the report and updated the Committee on the Council's Capital Schemes.

The White Oak Leisure Centre car park was completed, and the Council were in the process of finalising management agreements prior to its public opening. The project had hit its key milestones within schedule. The White Oak Residential scheme involved modern methods of construction and further detailed design work would be undertaken.

Further feasibility and design work was being undertaken for Farmstead Drive, with another public consultation envisaged at the end of 2022. Comments from the public consultation in April 2022 were built on to produce the current plan.

The Otford Road development scheme was focused on providing additional employment-use land, following feedback from local agents, Locating Kent, and the Economic Development Team. Work on the feasibility of a business park for small and medium sized enterprises was underway.

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The Committee discussed the availability of amenity spaces within the District and the impact upon these by the Council's Capital Schemes.

Resolved: That the Council's progress in establishing and delivering a 10 year capital schemes programme that would generate new homes, regenerate the District's town centres, improve the public realm and provide new civic amenities, which promote health and well-being, and support the District's economy, be noted.

19. Meeting Point Update Report

The Strategic Head for Commercial and Property presented the report, which updated members on the 27 - 37 High Street development. They heard that construction of the site was on track for completion this year, to be opened in December. A draft business plan was being refined and the Hub Manager had been appointed.

The Committee discussed the Meeting Point and the risk that a business centre may alienate the community from the space. The Meeting Point Hub Manager explained that community support and engagement was a central focus of the development, and that the space was designed to be multifunctional.

Resolved: That the progress in the delivery of the Meeting Point project be noted.

20. Customer Insights Update

The Head of Information & Customer Solutions gave a presentation to update the Committee on the Customer Insights team. The Customer Solutions team had seen a sustained increase in demand for its services without an increase in its resources.

She outlined the AGILE approach the team was taking to provide the best service for this increased demand. It was based around constant feedback and evolution to improve service, and emphasised low code technology that was simple for customers and officers to use.

In response to questions, she assured Members that these projects were not a replacement for the phone line, but aimed to improve the quality of calls, by having more information easily available to both the public and the Customer Solutions team. She further explained that the Council was in the process of transitioning between communication systems, and that the issues Members described with contacting officers would be resolved once that was complete.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

21. Complaints & Local Government Ombudsman letter

The Head of Information & Customer Solutions presented the report, which updated Members on customer complaints and feedback for the year 2021/22. She outlined the three-stage complaints process the Council has, consisting of Stage 1,

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Stage 2, and referring the customer to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO).

The year 2021/22 saw an increase in the number of Stage 1 complaints, which she explained was in line with the increase in customer demand. 83% of these complaints were deemed invalid. She further explained that the lessons learned from the upheld complaints were recorded and internally reported, to address any issues.

There were three Stage 2 complaints in the period, which reflected the Council's aim to resolve as many complaints as possible at Stage 1. The number of complaints to the LGO had increased compared to 2020/21, which she explained was due to customers complaining directly to them. Of the 24 complaints in the period, 5 were investigated, and 2 of those were closed after initial investigations.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

22. Work plan

The Work Plan was noted.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.14 PM

CHAIRMAN

BUDGET 2023/24: SERVICE DASHBOARDS AND SERVICE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (SCIAs)

Improvement and Innovation Advisory Committee - 24 November 2022

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Finance and Trading

Status: For Comment

Also considered by:

- Housing and Health Advisory Committee - 22 November 2022
- People and Places Advisory Committee - 29 November 2022
- Development and Conservation Advisory Committee - 1 December 2022
- Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee - 6 December 2022
- Finance and Investment Advisory Committee - 10 January 2023

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary:

This report sets out updates to the 2023/24 budget within the existing framework of the 10-year budget and savings plan. The report presents growth and savings/additional income proposals that have been identified which need to be considered (if applicable to this Committee), and requests further suggestions from the Advisory Committees, before finalising the budget for 2023/24.

Informed by the latest information from Government and discussions with Cabinet, it is proposed that the Council continues to set a revenue budget that assumes no direct funding from Government through the Revenue Support Grant or New Homes Bonus. This will result in the Council continuing to aim to be financially self-sufficient.

To achieve this aim and to ensure a balanced budget position over the next 10-year period will be challenging largely due to the uncertainties and ongoing financial impacts of national and international events.

No changes have been made to future assumptions at the stage which will be reviewed during the budget process, as usual. However, due to the April 2022 pay award expected to be significantly higher than previous years and an annual savings target of £100,000 already included, an annual budget gap of £735,000 is currently reported.

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The Advisory Committees will comment on the growth and savings/additional income proposals included in the reports, and their recommendations will be considered by Cabinet as part of the process to remove this gap. By addressing these issues, this Council will once again be in a strong financial position that other councils would aspire to.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Matthew Dickins

Contact Officer(s): Adrian Rowbotham, Ext. 7153

Alan Mitchell, Ext. 7483

Recommendation to each Advisory Committee:

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

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

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Council's financial strategy continues to aim for long-term financial health and continues to work towards improving financial sustainability. It has been successful through the use of a number of actions including:
 - implementing efficiency initiatives.
 - significantly reducing the back-office function.
 - improved value for money.
 - maximising external income.
 - the movement of resources away from low priority services.
 - an emphasis on statutory rather than non-statutory services.
- 2 Over this period, the Council has focused on delivering high quality services based on Members' priorities and consultation with residents and stakeholders.
- 3 Using the data sources available to the Council, this report sets out a budget over the 10-year period but recognises that it is likely that more accurate data will become available and current assumptions may need to be updated.

- 4 In setting its budget for 2011/12 onwards, the Council recognised the need to address both the immediate reduction in Government funding as well as the longer-term need to reduce its reliance on reserves. The outcome was a 10-year budget, together with a four-year savings plan, which ensured the Council's finances were placed on a stable footing but that also allowed for flexibility between budget years.
- 5 With the Revenue Support Grant provided by Government having ceased from 2017/18 it is important that the council remains financially self-sufficient by having a financial strategy that is focused on local solutions. These solutions include:
 - continuing to deliver financial savings and service efficiencies.
 - growing the council tax base.
 - generating more income.
- 6 The intention of this report is to provide Members of each Advisory Committee an opportunity to give their views on potential growth and savings/additional income items that could be included in the updated 10-year budget that will be presented to Council on 21 February 2023.
- 7 The 'Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy 2022/23 and Beyond' report has been presented to Cabinet to start the budget setting process for 2023/24.

Financial Strategy

- 8 In order to maintain a viable Council that continues to deliver on its main priorities and the services it provides to its residents, the Council continues to adopt a Financial Strategy that embraces the following principles:
 - Remain financially self-sufficient.
 - Be clear about the Council's future financial prospects, with a ten-year budget as an integral part.
 - Ensure a strategic approach is taken to the management of the Council's finances, Council Tax, and budget setting.
 - Make effective use of reserves and capital receipts.
 - Manage our money carefully, monitor monthly and constantly strive for better value from our spending.
- 9 A summary of the Financial Strategy can be found at **Appendix H**.

Review of the 10-year Budget Process

- 10 An audit of the 10-year budget process was completed by Mazars (working for Internal Audit) in 2021 and their findings were that the Council has adequate, effective and reliable controls in place over budget setting and long-term financial planning.

Financial Self-Sufficiency

- 11 The Council's Corporate Plan 2013-2018 set out an ambition for the Council to become financially self-sufficient which was achieved in 2016/17. The current Council Plan aims to continue with this approach. This means that the Council no longer requires direct funding from Government, through Revenue Support Grant or New Homes Bonus, to deliver its services.
- 12 This approach was adopted in response to the financial challenges the Country was faced with in bringing its public spending down to ensure it was able to live within its means. In practice this has seen Government funding to local authorities dramatically reduced since 2010/11 with Sevenoaks District Council receiving no Revenue Support Grant from 2017/18.
- 13 The decision to become financially self-sufficient is intended to give the Council greater control over its services, reducing the potential for decision making to be influenced by the level of funding provided by government to local authorities.
- 14 The Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge in December 2021 commented that 'Sevenoaks District Council takes a long-term view of financial planning with a focus on self-sufficiency. The council's 10-year budget is innovative, an example for the sector and supports long-term decision making. This extended financial framework provides an excellent platform which has supported effective budget management and planned, long-term, decision making.'
- 15 With the Council receiving no Revenue Support Grant from 2017/18 and New Homes Bonus reducing from 2018/19, this approach remains appropriate. The attached 10-year budget assumes no Revenue Support Grant or New Homes Bonus. Any funding received from these sources will be put into the Financial Plan Reserve which can be used to support the 10-year budget.
- 16 Cabinet are keen to remain financially self-sufficient which has served the Council well and ensured it is one of the most financially stable local authorities in the country. In the 2020/21 budget, a new target was set to replace reliance on Business Rates income over the coming years. However, due to the impact of Covid-19, inflationary increases and the greater uncertainty as Government reviews have been deferred, this remains a future aim. This ambition will allow this Council to move ahead in the knowledge that this council has the financial resources to provide the services that the district's residents need into the future.

Service Dashboards

- 17 The intention of service dashboards is to provide Members with improved information during the budget setting process to provide context and inform any growth and savings/additional income ideas that Members may put forward.

- 18 The Service Dashboards cover a summary of the services provided, objectives, achievements and opportunities, challenges and risks and performance.
- 19 **Appendix A** contains the Service Dashboard for this Advisory Committee. **Appendix A1** contains the Performance Indicators and **Appendix B** contains the budget for those services.

Savings Plan

- 20 **Appendix C** to this report sets out a summary of the savings/additional income and growth items approved by Council since the 10-year budget strategy was first used in 2011/12, which have allowed the Council to deliver a 10-year balanced budget.
- 21 The savings plan requires a total of over £8.6 million to be saved between 2011/12 and 2022/23 which is an average saving of £721,000 per annum.

Current 10-year Budget Position

- 22 The 10-year budget set out in **Appendix D** has been updated from the version agreed by Council on 22 February 2022 by rolling it forward one year.
- 23 No changes have been made to future assumptions at the stage. However, due to the April 2022 pay award expected to be higher than previous years and an annual savings target of £100,000 already included, an annual budget gap of £735,000 is currently included.
- 24 The National Employers for local government services have made a final offer for 2022/23 of £1,925 per person. This equates to an average increase of 5.8% in the Council's staff costs against a figure of 2% in the ten year budget. In cash terms, this is estimated to be £600,000 above the budgeted assumption. A response from the unions is awaited. It should be recognised that the current cost of living crisis has had a severe effect on colleagues on lower salary grades.
- 25 Cabinet on 20 September 2022 agreed that in the interests of prudent financial management this be considered as two costs: the mid-year 2022/23 expense and the separate ongoing commitment in future years.
- 26 First, offsetting the increase in staff costs in 2022/23 with any net surplus that may arise from our membership of the Kent and Medway Business Rates Pool - based on previous years, this is estimated to be £250,000. Second, drawing the balance from the Budget Stabilisation Reserve. Both steps are consistent with the principles which govern the use of the funds since, in the case of the former, the receipts are ordinarily treated as a windfall and therefore committed to reserves to meet future expenditure and, with the latter, the Budget Stabilisation Reserve's purpose is to assist in smoothing out peaks and troughs over the course of the ten year budget period. Furthermore, to ensure there is no long term impact on the Budget

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Stabilisation Reserve, a corresponding savings or income be identified as part of the 2023/24 Budget which can replenish the Reserve over the course of the ten year budget - in other words, committing to reserves an anticipated £35,000 per year.

- 27 For the future expenditure (i.e. 2023/24 onwards), this will be addressed through the budget setting process, adopting the same approach which has seen the authority successfully meet other financial challenges.
- 28 The following table shows the current budget gap for 2023/24:

2023/24 Budget Gap	£000
Net savings assumption	100
Pay award April 2022 estimate	600
Reimburse Budget Stabilisation Reserve for 2022/23 impact of April 2022 pay award estimate	35
Total	735

Proposed Growth and Savings/Additional Income Items

- 29 Growth items are items that are in addition to non-service issues and risks, such as grant settlements, impacts of economic change and other pressures highlighted in the 'Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy 2023/24 and Beyond' report considered by Cabinet on 10 November 2022.
- 30 A number of growth and savings/additional income items will be proposed at the Advisory Committees with the aim of helping to achieve the savings/additional income required to bridge the budget gap.
- 31 The proposed growth and savings/additional income items relating to this Advisory Committee are listed in **Appendix E** (if applicable).
- 32 Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs) contain further details for all proposed growth and savings/additional income items. SCIAs applicable to this Advisory Committee can be found in **Appendix F** (if applicable).
- 33 As previously reported, the options are likely to cover a number of areas including:
- Service efficiencies
 - Additional income
 - Re-prioritisation of reserves including use of the Budget Stabilisation Reserve.

- 34 It should be recognised that it is not usual to use the Budget Stabilisation Reserve to fix a problem of this size but noting the potential level of variations and complexities that are likely to arise during the budget process, more time may be required to find a longer term solution.
- 35 When looking at prospects for year 11 onwards, there is still likely to be a need to take further actions as these years come into the rolling 10-year period.

Role of the Advisory Committees

- 36 A training session on the budget process was provided to Members in 2019. If Members require any further training or require any additional details on the content of this report and appendices, please contact Adrian Rowbotham or Alan Mitchell prior to the meeting.
- 37 Views of the Advisory Committees on the growth and savings/additional income items proposed together with any additional suggestions will be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 12 January 2023.

Process and Timetable

- 38 This report is the second stage of the budget process as shown in the Budget Setting Timetable (**Appendix G**).
- 39 A Budget Update report will be presented to Cabinet in on 12 January 2023 to provide details of progress made before the Budget Setting report is presented to Cabinet on 9 February 2023.

Key Implications

Financial

All financial implications are covered elsewhere in this report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications.

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

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

A separate Risks and Assumptions report will be presented to the Finance and Investment Advisory Committee and Cabinet.

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Equality Assessment

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups.

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

Net Zero Implications

Members are reminded of the Council's stated ambition to be Net Zero with regards to carbon emissions by 2030.

Individual net zero implication assessments have been completed for all Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs).

Conclusions

The Financial Strategy and 10-year budget process have ensured that the Council follows a logical and well considered process and approach in dealing with the many difficult challenges that it has faced. They have also helped to ensure that the Council is well placed in dealing with more immediate and longer-term challenges.

By becoming financially self-sufficient at an early stage, this Council has become much more in control of its own destiny.

The attached 10-year budget shows that this Council is aiming to continue to be financially stable going into the future with a level of assurance that any council would aspire to. However, with a range of issues nationally and internationally impacting the council's finances to an unknown extent at this point in time, this is the most challenging budget process this Council has faced for many years.

The Council aims to continue to provide value for money services to a high standard ensuring that the decisions made lead to an achievable 10-year budget. Members will need to consider the impact on service quality, staff and well-being.

Members' consideration and scrutiny of the relevant services is an essential and key element in the budget process. If the net total of growth and savings/additional income proposals identified by the Advisory Committees and approved by Cabinet does not reach the £735,000 target currently identified,

additional savings will be required that may result in service changes, to ensure a balanced budget position.

Appendices

Appendix A - Service Dashboards relating to this Advisory Committee

Appendix Ai - Performance Indicators

Appendix B - 2021/22 Budget by Service relating to this Advisory Committee

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

Appendix D - 10-year budget

Appendix E - New growth and savings/additional income items proposed relating to this Advisory Committee (if applicable)

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

Appendix G - Budget Setting Timetable

Appendix H - Financial Strategy

Background Papers

Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy 2023/24 and Beyond - Cabinet 10
November 2022

Adrian Rowbotham

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Finance & Trading

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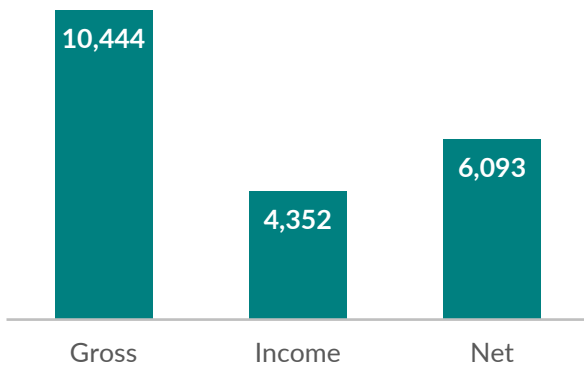
Service Dashboard

Portfolio for Improvement & Innovation

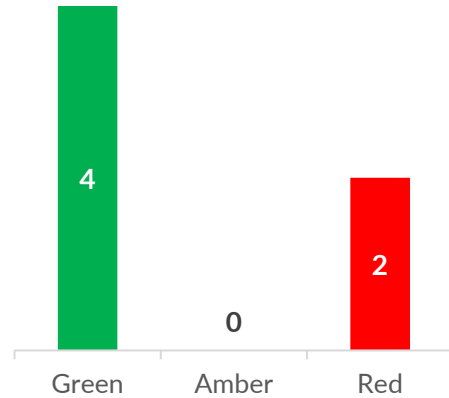
The services we provide

Policy, performance, communications, customer service, business transformation, special projects, digital, workforce, economic development & regeneration, equalities, members, wellbeing

Revenue Budget (£000)



Performance



Service contribution

Statutory service



Income generating



Working in partnership



Council Plan

Wellbeing ✓

Environment ✗

Economy ✓

Housing ✓

Community Safety ✗

Health ✗

Achievements & Opportunities

- Providing a Covid secure workplace and introduced hybrid working to retain an engaged workforce, delivering services throughout the pandemic
- Continuing to grow the Customer Solutions model & introduction of the Customer Insights team
- White Oak Leisure Centre opened and outperforming its membership targets
- Re-development of 11-13 High Street, Meeting Point and preparation for the opening of the Business Hub
- Secured £1.5m funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural Prosperity Fund for the next 3 years




Challenges & Risks


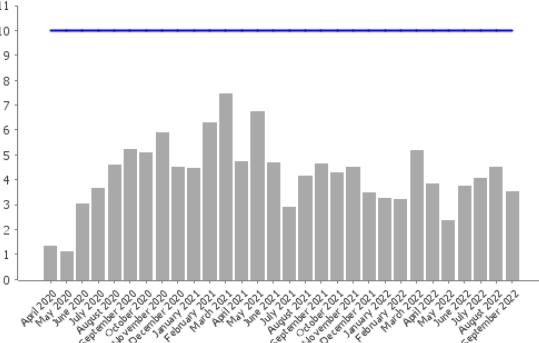

- Recruitment and retention of staff.
- Retaining the Council's Investors in People Accreditation
- To continue to develop the use of technology and the customer solutions model to improve the customer experience
- The impact of Government borrowing rules and economic conditions on the Council's Property Investment strategy.
- Viability concerns for construction projects in light of the impact of high inflation and economic & labour market conditions on workforce and materials.

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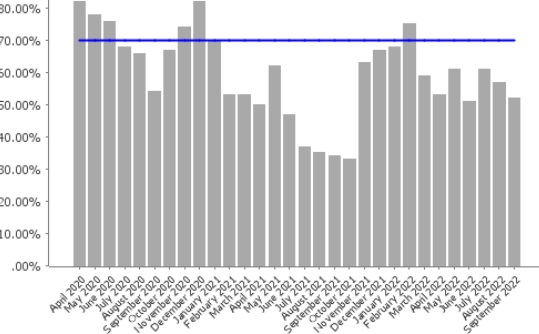


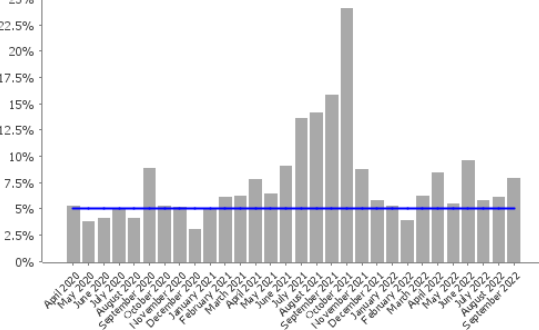

Performance Report – Improvement & Innovation Portfolio

Key:

Status	Colour	Details
	Green	At or above target
	Amber	Less than 10% below target
	Red	10% or more below target

Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Year to date Value	Year to date Target	Year to date Status
LPI_BC LC 001	Average number of days to process a land charge search	3.53	10			4.31	10	

Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Year to date Value	Year to date Target	Year to date Status
LPI_CSV 02	Percentage of planning applications submitted and received electronically	96%	80%	✔		95.1%	80%	✔
LPI_HR 001	The average number of working days lost to sickness absence per FTE	3.61	4.50	✔		7.55	9	✔
LPI_HR 002	Number of weeks to recruit from advert to point of offer/acceptance	4	12	✔		4	12	✔

Code	Short Name	Current Value	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Chart	Year to date Value	Year to date Target	Year to date Status
LPI_CS 001	Percentage of phone calls answered within 20 seconds by the Contact Centre	52%	70%			52.5%	70%	
LPI_CS 002	Percentage of phone calls to the Contact Centre abandoned by the caller	7.9%	5%			10.1%	5%	

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Improvement and Innovation Advisory Committee				Appendix B	
Chief Officer	Budget Book Description		2022/23 Exp Budget	2022/23 Inc Budget	2022/23 Approved Net Budget
Revenue			£000	£000	£000
Assistant Chief Executive	ACTDEV	Action and Development	8	0	8
Assistant Chief Executive	CONSURVEY	Consultation and Surveys	4	0	4
Assistant Chief Executive	CORPMGT	Corporate Management	1,285	0	1,285
Assistant Chief Executive	CORPSAVING	Corporate - Other	180	0	180
Assistant Chief Executive	ELECTIONS	Elections	124	0	124
Assistant Chief Executive	EXTCOMMS	External Communications	237	(10)	227
Assistant Chief Executive	PERFIMPS	Performance Improvement	7	(7)	(0)
Assistant Chief Executive	REGELECT	Register of Electors	202	0	202
Assistant Chief Executive	STAFFLEGAL	Administrative Expenses - Legal and Democratic	222	(222)	0
Assistant Chief Executive	STAFFPERFORM	Administrative Expenses - Transformation and Strategy	668	(662)	6
Assistant Chief Executive	SUPPGENADPR	Support - General Admin (Print Shop)	217	(258)	(41)
Customer & Resources	AMFIT	Asset Maintenance IT	302	0	302
Customer & Resources	CIVIC	Civic Expenses	18	0	18
Customer & Resources	CTTEADMIN	Democratic Services	172	0	172
Customer & Resources	LANDCHRG	Land Charges	108	(222)	(114)
Customer & Resources	STAFFIT	Administrative Expenses - Corporate Services	1,843	(1,821)	21
Customer & Resources	STAFFLEGAL	Administrative Expenses - Legal and Democratic	475	(417)	58
Customer & Resources	STAFFPERSDEV	Administrative Expenses - Human Resources	433	(424)	9
Customer & Resources	STNAME	Street Naming	19	(17)	2
Customer & Resources	SUPPCONTACT	Support - Contact Centre	846	0	846
Customer & Resources	SUPPCUSTIN	Support - Customer Insights	211	0	211
Customer & Resources	SUPPIT	Support - IT	1,135	(124)	1,011
Customer & Resources	SUPPPERSDEV	Support - Human Resources	406	(3)	403
Finance & Trading	MEMBERS	Members	483	0	483
Finance & Trading	SUPPGENAD	Support - General Admin	182	0	182
Strategic Head Commercial and Property	ECOMDEV	Economic Development	39	0	39
Strategic Head Commercial and Property	ECONPRO	Economic Development Property	621	(165)	455
			10,444	(4,352)	6,093

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Summary of the Council's Agreed Savings/Additional Income and Growth Items

Appendix C

Year	SCIA No.	Description	2011/12 - 2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	Later Years £000	Total £000
		Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee				
2021/22	-	Car Parking: assumed 25% reduction in 21/22 income improving by 5% per year	823	(206)	(617)	
2022/23	6	Direct Services: Swanley Sunday Market six month trial (reversal of temporary savings item)		94		
		Development and Conservation Advisory Committee				
2022/23	9	Development Management: additional application fee income (reversal of temporary savings item)			25	
		Finance and Investment Advisory Committee				
2020/21	10	Insurance contract renewal (reversal of temporary savings item)		87		
2022/23	7	Internal Audit: audit software upgrade (reversal of temporary growth item)		(16)		
2022/23	-	Health and Social Care Levy (reversal of temporary growth item)		(140)		
		Housing and Health Advisory Committee				
2022/23	1	Housing: Temporary accommodation (reversal of temporary growth item)			(300)	
		Improvement and Innovation Advisory Committee				
2020/21	1	Apprenticeship Levy (reversal of temporary growth item)		(50)		
		People and Places Advisory Committee				
2022/23	-	New White Oak Leisure Centre	235	(19)	(216)	
		Minor movements between years		0	0	
		Total Savings/additional income	(8,646)	181	25	(8,440)
		Total Growth	4,016	(431)	(1,133)	2,452
		Net Savings	(4,630)	(250)	(1,108)	(5,988)

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Ten Year Budget - Revenue

Appendix D

	Budget 2022/23	Plan 2023/24	Plan 2024/25	Plan 2025/26	Plan 2026/27	Plan 2027/28	Plan 2028/29	Plan 2029/30	Plan 2030/31	Plan 2031/32	Plan 2032/33
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Expenditure											
Net Service Expenditure c/f	16,783	17,297	17,565	17,304	17,477	17,680	18,270	18,823	19,368	19,997	20,450
Inflation	510	518	524	513	519	527	537	545	554	564	574
Superannuation Fund deficit	0	100	0	0	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net growth/(savings) (approved in previous yrs)	4	(250)	(686)	(240)	(266)	63	16	0	75	(111)	90
New growth	0	0	0	0	0	100	100	100	100	100	100
New savings/Income	0	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
Net Service Expenditure b/f	17,297	17,565	17,304	17,477	17,680	18,270	18,823	19,368	19,997	20,450	21,114
Financing Sources											
Govt Support: Revenue Support Grant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
: Lower Tier Services Grant	(103)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
: Services Grant	(159)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
: Local Council Tax Support (LCTS)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council Tax	(11,841)	(12,309)	(12,729)	(13,161)	(13,604)	(14,023)	(14,453)	(14,894)	(15,347)	(15,799)	(16,249)
Business Rates Retention	(2,226)	(2,271)	(2,316)	(2,362)	(2,409)	(2,457)	(2,506)	(2,556)	(2,607)	(2,659)	(2,712)
Collection Fund Deficit/(Surplus)	(27)	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Interest Receipts	(188)	(188)	(188)	(188)	(188)	(188)	(188)	(188)	(188)	(188)	(188)
Property Investment Strategy Income	(1,518)	(1,568)	(1,568)	(1,568)	(1,665)	(1,665)	(1,665)	(1,706)	(1,706)	(1,706)	(1,706)
Contributions to/(from) Reserves	(189)	(170)	(607)	176	176	176	176	176	176	176	148
Total Financing	(16,251)	(16,502)	(17,408)	(17,103)	(17,690)	(18,157)	(18,636)	(19,168)	(19,672)	(20,176)	(20,707)
Budget Gap (surplus)/deficit	1,046	1,063	(104)	374	(10)	113	187	200	325	274	407
Contribution to/(from) Stabilisation Reserve	(1,046)	(1,063)	104	(374)	10	(113)	(187)	(200)	(325)	(274)	(407)
Unfunded Budget Gap (surplus)/deficit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Assumptions

Revenue Support Grant:	nil all years
Business Rates Retention:	Business Rates Retention safety-net plus 2% per year
Council Tax:	2% in all years
Council Tax Base:	Increase of 730 Band D equivalent properties p.a. from 23/24, 580 p.a. from 27/28, 530 p.a. from 31/32, 480p.a. from 32/33
Interest Receipts:	£188,000 in all years
Property Investment Strategy:	£1.568m from 23/24. £1.655m from 26/27. £1.706m from 29/30
Pav award:	2% in all years
Other costs:	2.25% in all years
Income:	2.5% in all years except for off-street car parks which are an average of 3.5% per annum from 19/20 - 23/24.

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New Growth and Savings/Additional Income Proposals: Improvement and Innovation Advisory Committee

SCIA Year	No.	Description	Starting Year	Ongoing	2023/24 Impact £000	10-year Budget Impact £000
Growth						
2023/24	3	Apprenticeship Levy	2023/24	Y	55	55
Sub Total					55	55
Savings/Additional Income						
2023/24	2	Reduction of reactive budgets	2023/24	Y	(41)	(410)
2023/24	4	Saving on Service Desk Software	2023/24	Y	(10)	(100)
2023/24	5	Revs & Bens - Remove vacant post	2023/24	Y	(15)	(150)
Sub Total					(66)	(660)
Net (Savings)/Growth Total					(11)	(605)

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SCIA_03_(23/24)

Chief Officer: Lee Banks

Service: Assistant Chief Execs

Activity: Apprenticeship Levy

No. of Staff: N/a

Activity Budget Change	Cost Centre & Account Code of Budget	2023/24 Growth / (Saving) £000	Later Years Comments (ongoing, one-off, etc.)
Apprenticeship Levy	CXCRPMG 58800	55	One-off

A. Reasons for and explanation of proposed change in service

The Apprenticeship Levy continues to be applied by Government at the rate of 0.5% of the overall pay bill. Whilst it was first introduced in 2016, there is uncertainty about the future funding model as the country enters a likely period of recession and the Government develops its policy agenda. It is possible that additional growth will also be required in future year budgets.

B. Key Stakeholders Affected:

None

C. Likely impacts and implications of the change in service (include Risk Analysis)

It is a statutory requirement to pay the apprenticeship levy and it is appropriate that the Council budgets allow for that cost.

D. Risk to Service Objectives (High / Medium / Low)

Low.

E. 2022/23 Budget (£'000)

Operational Cost	55
Income	(0)
Net Cost	55

F. Performance Indicators

N/A

G. Equality Impacts

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups.

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

H. Net Zero Implications

The decisions recommended through this budget proposal have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment.

SCIA_02_(23/24)

Chief Officer: Lee Banks

Service: Assistant Chief Execs

Activity: Corporate Management

No. of Staff: N/a

Activity Budget Change	Cost Centre & Account Code of Budget	2023/24 Growth / (Saving) £000	Later Years Comments (ongoing, one-off, etc.)
Corporate Management	CXCRPMG 60000	(15)	Ongoing
Corporate Management	CXCRPMG 60800	(20)	Ongoing
Legislation	PPEQUAL 68300	(6)	Ongoing

I. Reasons for and explanation of proposed change in service

Budgets reduced as a result of the financial pressures facing the Council. These savings will reduce the flexibility that the Council has in-year to take up opportunities to meet costs that would contribute to service improvement initiatives.

J. Key Stakeholders Affected:

Customers

K. Likely impacts and implications of the change in service (include Risk Analysis)

The risk to maintaining existing service standards is low. However, the ability to take opportunities that arise in-year to invest in improving services would be reduced.

L. Risk to Service Objectives (High / Medium / Low)

Medium. The ability to deliver new initiatives that arise in-year to improve services would be reduced.

M. 2022/23 Budget (£'000)

Operational Cost	68
Income	(0)
Net Cost	68

N. Performance Indicators

N/A

O. Equality Impacts

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups.

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

P. Net Zero Implications

The decisions recommended through this budget proposal have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment.

Chief Officer: Jim Carrington-West

Service: IT Services

Activity: IT Support

No. of Staff: 12.99 FTE

Activity Budget Change	Cost Centre & Account Code of Budget	2023/24 Growth / (Saving) £000	Later Years Comments (ongoing, one-off, etc.)
Service Desk Software	XAXJ 56900 4932	(10)	Ongoing

Q. Reasons for and explanation of proposed change in service

A change in platform for the IT Service Desk software is expected to realise cost savings of £10k per year.

R. Key Stakeholders Affected:

All Council staff.

S. Likely impacts and implications of the change in service (include Risk Analysis)

This is a low risk change with the required functionality expected to be delivered through the low-code platform currently being used to simplify a number of other processes and forms across the Council.

T. Risk to Service Objectives (High / Medium / Low)

Low - No perceived risk to service objectives

U. 2022/23 Budget (£'000)

Operational Cost	1,149
Income	(28)
Net Cost	1,121

V. Performance Indicators

N/A

W. Equality Impacts

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

X. Net Zero Implications

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment

SCIA _05_ (23/24)

Chief Officer: Jim Carrington-West
Service: Benefits (Revs & Bens)

Activity: Relinquished Benefit Officer Post

No. of Staff: 27 Shared service split SDC 16.57/ DBC 10.43

Activity Budget Change	Cost Centre & Account Code of Budget	2023/24 Growth / (Saving) £000	Later Years Comments (ongoing, one-off, etc.)
Benefit Officer Vacancy - relinquished. Recharge to SDC	60404 FSLTHSB	(17)	Ongoing (permanent decrease in staff)

Y. Reasons for and explanation of proposed change in service

Benefit Officer Vacancy - Relinquished from shared service structure and using money from DWP to fund an equivalent FTE Officer.

We currently receive funding from DWP to process VEP alerts & Housing Benefit Award Accuracy (HBAA) work. This is extra work given to us on top our normal work to improve the accuracy of the Housing Benefit claims before they finally migrate across to Universal Credit. The DWP are aiming for the end of 2024 for all of the Working Age Housing Benefit claims to be migrated. The DWP funding was secured in the Spring Budget 2020 for 5 years up to and including 2024-25. DWP cannot provide LAs with a 5-year funding settlement because individual LA allocations may vary over time depending on the volumes of types of work. These volumes will shift over time as the reduction in the HB caseload may affect each LA differently. However, LAs should plan on the basis that funding for mandatory activities will continue for at least 5 years and secure their staff resources accordingly

With this in mind as we have a vacancy & we are receiving funding from DWP it seemed like an opportunity to consider not filling this vacancy but instead using the money to fund an equivalent FTE Officer over the next 2 years at least from a remote processing company eg Meritec. It is becoming very difficult to find experience officers to fill these vacancies & inevitable with HB cases moving across to UC we will need to look at resources anyway.

Z. Key Stakeholders Affected:

none

**AA. Likely impacts and implications of the change in service
(include Risk Analysis)**

Low impact and implication of the change in service

Risks: (1) securing offsite company to carry out the work (2) DWP stopping or not covering the FTE hours

How likely & what impact?: (1) Low - Already work with a company & other companies available (2) Low - this should coincide with reduction in HB claims due to UC migration. Also, the benefit service continues to implement more automation.

BB. Objectives (High / Medium / Low) Risk to Service

Low

CC. 2022/23 Budget (£'000) -
at this level I would expect the budget to reflect the overall budget for the benefits service, not just that specific to this post.

Operational Cost	569,246
Income	(520,954)
Net Cost	48,292

DD. Performance Indicators

LPI HB002 - Ave no of days to process new Applications

LPI HB006 - Ave no of days to process change events

Actual

LPI HB002 17 days

LPI HB006 7 days

Target	LPI HB002 22 days LPI HB006 8 Days
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EE. Equality Impacts

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

FF. Net Zero Implications

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment

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2023/24 Budget Setting Timetable

Stage 1: Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy 2023/24 and Beyond

3 November - Finance & Investment AC

10 November - Cabinet

Stage 2: Review of Service Dashboards and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs)

22 November - Housing and Health AC

24 November - Improvement & Innovation AC

29 November - People & Places AC

1 December - Development & Conservation AC

6 December - Cleaner & Greener AC

10 January - Finance & Investment AC

Stage 3: Budget Update (incl. Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs), feedback from Advisory Committees)

12 January - Cabinet

Stage 4: Budget and Council Tax Setting Meeting (Recommendations to Council)

9 February - Cabinet

Stage 5: Budget and Council Tax Setting Meeting (incl. Council Tax setting)

21 February - Council

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

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Financial Strategy








INTRODUCTION

In the years preceding this Strategy Sevenoaks District Council has proven itself to be highly successful in some of the most austere and challenging times faced by local government. This was only possible because of our award winning financial strategy and the achievement of a self-sufficient balanced budget within our unique 10-year budget framework.

With the cost of living crisis and events around the world, it will be important to have clear plans in place that may require difficult but necessary savings proposals.

Our Financial Strategy enables the Council to deliver its services effectively, in accordance with the priorities set out in the Corporate Strategy. At the same time, it ensures that our spending is prioritised to deliver the promises our Members set out in the **Council Plan themes**:

-  Environment
-  Economy
-  Housing
-  Community Safety
-  Health

OUR FINANCES

Our Vision

Long-term financial health to deliver exceptional services and achieve the promises set out in the Council Plan.

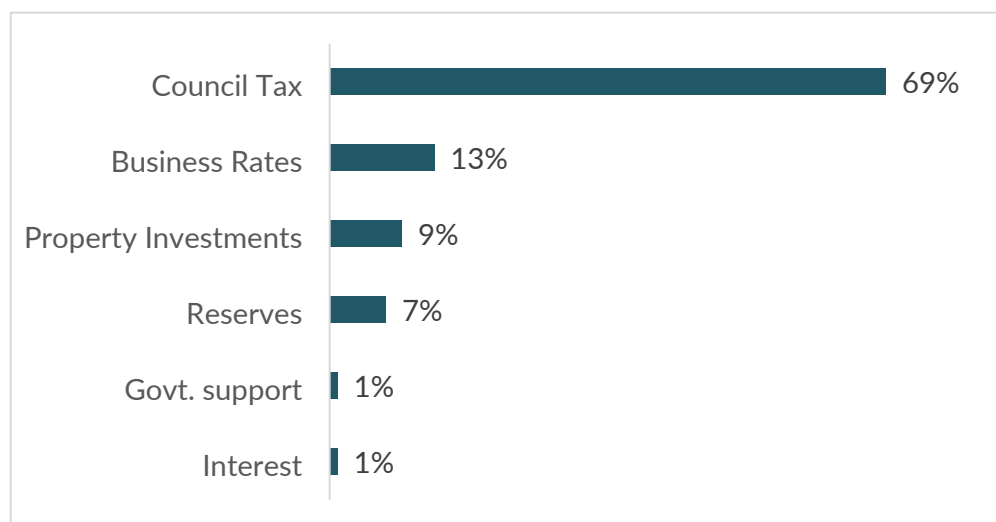
What's important to us:

- Our budget supports the Council's vision and priorities
- Taxpayers and customers receive quality services and value for money
- Innovation, efficiency and cost-effectiveness
- Maximising income from grants and other funding opportunities
- Taking a commercial approach where it will benefit our budgets and our residents and local businesses
- Good quality, risk managed investments to generate more income for local priorities

To be successful, we must:

- Remain financially self-sufficient
- Be clear about the Council's future financial prospects, with a ten-year budget as an integral part
- Ensure a strategic approach is taken to the management of the Council's finances, Council Tax, and budget setting
- Make effective use of reserves and capital receipts
- Manage our money carefully, monitor monthly and constantly strive for better value from our spending

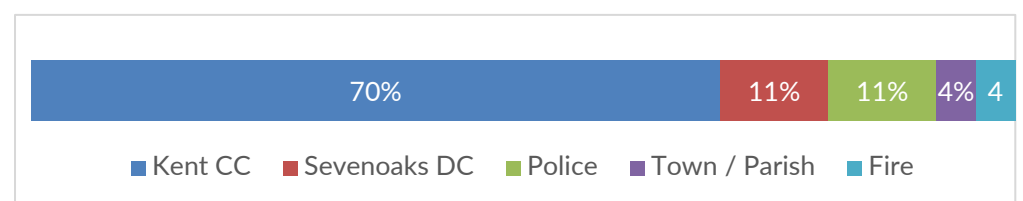
WHERE OUR MONEY COMES FROM



COUNCIL TAX

Sevenoaks District Council collects the Council Tax charge for itself but also for Kent County Council, Kent Fire & Rescue Service, Kent Police & Crime Commissioner and all the local town and parish councils. Each authority sets its own charge that contributes to the total.




Sevenoaks District Council's part of the charge at Band D is £229.86, 11% of the total. Council Tax contributes about £11.8million to District Council services.



WHERE OUR MONEY IS SPENT

In 2022/23 the Council will spend about £17.3million on services for local people

	Cleaner & Greener £5.3m
	Development & Conservation £0.9m
	Housing & Health £1.2m
	People & Places £0.9m

	Finance & Investment £3.2m
	Improvement & Innovation £6.0m
	Other £-0.2m

OUR PRIORITIES | By keeping a focus on our priorities we will deliver our vision

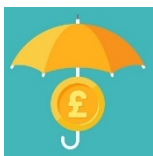
Financial self-sufficiency



No longer relying on direct government funding gives greater certainty to our financial planning. It allows for long-term plans to be developed over our 10-year budget period.

- We will produce high quality financial reports and monitor our budgets every month
- We will address growth items and service pressures annually through the budget planning process
- We will manage inflationary pressures and prudent assumptions about future pressures and keep them under regular review

Savings & reserves



Creating a culture where there is a continuous drive for better value in our spend helps to create savings to balance our budgets. Alongside flexible and effective use of reserves, it allows for sustainable solutions to financial pressures

- We will seek to deliver a minimum of £100,000 in savings annually
- We will regularly review the use of reserves and maintain a minimum balance of 10% of the Net Service Expenditure budget.
- We will make flexible use of the Budget Stabilisation Reserve to increase resilience in the budget setting process

Income & investments



Making best use of the Council's reserves and carefully managed borrowing. Seeking new opportunities for funding from grants and investments is increasingly essential to the Council's financial sustainability.

- We will bid for external funding
- We will adopt a commercial approach where it will be of benefit to our budgets and support the delivery of Council priorities
- We will make investments to bring in income to support the delivery of Council services

Delivering our Financial Strategy

Our Financial Strategy is supported by a number of related strategies and an action plan to help us achieve our vision and to deliver the ambitions set out by Members in the Council Plan.

How we work as a team of officers is critical to the success of the organisation and to help us achieve our aims, the Financial Strategy seeks to unite us all behind the same priorities and approach.

The outcomes we hope to achieve and the measures that will help us to determine whether we have been successful are set out below.



Outcomes and success measures

Financial self-sufficiency					
	Financial plans ensure there are no unplanned reductions to Council services		Overall proportion of Council budgets funded by income from council tax does not increase		A balanced 10-year budget is delivered annually
Savings & Reserves					
	Annual savings exceed the £100,000 target whilst continuing to protect services		The General Fund reserves retains at least 10% of the Net Service Expenditure budget		Specific savings agreed as part of the annual budget process are achieved as planned.
Income & Investments					
	Successful bids for external funding generate new income and opportunities for the Council		Income from paid for services is in accordance with budget costs, is comparable to neighbouring authorities and is considered to provide value for money		Treasury Management, Property and commercial investments exceed expected yield

Improvement and Innovation Advisory Committee Work plan 2022/23 (as at 11/11/2022)

23 February 2023

- Disposals Report
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update

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