

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEES

- (a) Sevenoaks District Health Inequalities Action Plan (*Minute 15, Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee – 24 October 2013*)

The Health & Communities Manager gave a [presentation](#) introducing the report before the Committee that Members may recall that the Health & Social Care Act 2012 set up a new Public Health Service called Public Health England. At the local level in Kent, responsibility for the public health function had been given to Kent County Council. District Councils in Kent were asked to lead on the production of an action plan which could demonstrate how the County-wide objectives could be delivered locally. The Sevenoaks District Health Inequalities Action Plan set out objectives and actions that would help to reduce health inequalities across the District.

The Chairman of the Health Liaison Board, also a member of the Committee, reported that the Board needed to carry out a lot of work but so much was unknown for the moment. There were a significant number of problems within the District and there was the need to talk about care and security for older people: the lack of suitable buildings for them to move into; and issues such as only receiving 15 minutes of carer time as in the news recently. Whilst at the same time no funding yet overwhelming demand on voluntary organisations.

The Health & Communities Manager stated that there was a lot of on-going work on integrated commissioning, social care linking with health to provide more linked and streamlined services, not as fragmented as before. Members briefly touched on issues such as dementia and the work being done on 'dementia friendly communities' and the strong activity from the voluntary sector.

In response to a question as to how the impact of such a strategy benefitted the district, the Health & Communities Manager advised that evidence was forecasted out of trends based on NHS spending and population growth. It was also asked what the strategy was to engage with the private sector to facilitate the action plan. In response the Chief Officer, Communities and Business, explained that health services were commissioned through the clinical commissioning groups and it was a standards process open to the public or private sector to bid on and the best applicant winning the contract to deliver.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that the Sevenoaks District Health Inequalities Action Plan be agreed and adopted.

- (b) Pest Control Review Outcome (*Minute 25, Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee – 19 November 2013*)

To Follow

(c) Financial Prospects and Review of Service Plans (*Minute 14, Strategy & Performance Advisory Committee – 8 October 2013*)

The Committee considered a report setting out updates to the 2014/15 budget within the existing framework of the 10-year budget and 4-year savings plan. The report considered by the Committee represented the second stage of the budget process and would be presented to all Advisory Committees. The purpose of the report was for the Advisory Committees to advise Cabinet on growth and savings ideas for the Services within their terms of reference and Appendix C to the report contained a list of growth and savings ideas proposed by the Portfolio Holders.

The Head of Finance reported that the Financial Prospects report had shown a shortfall of £667,000 over 10 years. However, by making two changes to assumptions and including the growth and savings proposed by the Portfolio Holders there would be a surplus. It was proposed to place the remaining balance of £70,000 per annum into the Financial Plan reserve which would be able to fund a further year, essentially year 11, 2024/25. If assumptions changed in a negative way, the remaining balance of £70,000 per annum could be used to reduce the need to make additional savings.

The Chairman highlighted the importance of broadband as a growth item as many parts of the District suffered from low broadband speeds. The funding would be used to work with a private provider to develop a proposal for broadband across Sevenoaks.

Members considered the loss of glass recycling at Sainsburys and noted that this may be the start of a trend across a number of supermarkets. A Member suggested that the Council should consider giving residents bins for the collection of glass recycling but acknowledged that the cost of this proposal would have to be thoroughly reviewed.

In response to a question relating to the checks and balances placed on other precepting authorities, the Chairman confirmed that all upper tier authorities (i.e. County and District Councils) faced the same restrictions imposed by Government, the increases that could be imposed by the Police and Fire authorities were also restricted however, Town and Parish Council did not yet face any restrictions.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

2014/15 Budget and Review of Service Plans (*Minute 16, Housing & Community Safety Advisory Committee – 15 October 2013*)

The Chief Finance Officer advised that the purpose of the report was for the Committee to advise Cabinet on growth and savings ideas for the services within its terms of reference. Appendix C to the report contained a list of growth and savings ideas proposed by the Portfolio Holder and these together with any additional suggestions made by the Committee would be considered by Cabinet on 5 December 2013.

The Chairman advised that the Chief Housing Officer had managed to find external funding which had made a saving, but this had been from one off funding. Further savings had been made from staff restructuring within the Licensing Partnership.

A Member wished it recorded that it was an impressive report, and the finance department had responded with alacrity to concerns only raised a few months ago.

Resolved: That the the views on the growth and savings proposals identified by the Portfolio Holder, attached as Appendix C to the report, be agreed.

2014/15 Budget and Review of Service Plans (Minute 17, Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee – 24 October 2013)

The Chief Finance Officer advised that the purpose of the report was for the Committee to advise Cabinet on growth and savings ideas for the services within its terms of reference. Appendix C to the report contained a list of growth and savings ideas proposed by the Portfolio Holder and these together with any additional suggestions made by the Committee would be considered by Cabinet on 5 December 2013.

Some Members expressed grave concern over the loss of a Civil Enforcement Officer; it was mooted that the saving could be found within the Rural Broadband budget. It was agreed that the Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services should be asked to re-examine this proposal and justify the ability to lose an officer without an impact on service. In response to a question concerning the sum to be set aside for the Rural Broadband fund, the Chief Officer, Communities & Business said that this was a 'best guess' of the cost of buying in rural broadband expertise. This was based on an equivalent to the annual salary of a technically qualified person.

Resolved: That the the views on the growth and savings proposals identified by the Portfolio Holder, attached as Appendix C to the report, be agreed, subject to further investigations and justification over losing a Civil Enforcement Officer.

2014/15 Budget and Review of Service Plans (Minute 29, Finance & Resources Advisory Committee – 12 November 2013)

The report was to provide the members of the Committee an opportunity to advise Cabinet and give their views on the potential growth and savings which could be included in the updated 10-year budget. The updated budget would be presented to Council on 18 February 2014.

It was proposed that a remaining balance of £70,000 per year be put into the Financial Plan Reserve to support later years if still present when the budget was set. Alternatively, if the assumptions in the 10-year budget changed then the sum could be put towards addressing any shortfall.

The Advisory Committee considered each of the Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs). Comments were particularly made on the following items.

SCIA #4

The Council was facing increased fees of £11,000 from the number of debit and credit card transactions processed. Transactions had risen by a quarter.

The Chairman was against passing this fee on to residents as it could jeopardise the high number of residents paying Council Tax. Officers regularly renegotiated the fees charged so that the fees would be minimised.

### SCIAs #5 and 12

Different types of skills were sought within the Finance Team due to changes in technology and the importance of having a high level of financial expertise within the Council.

### SCIA #9

The introduction of a Print Studio Assistant, together with the partial reduction in a Print Studio Officer post, was expected to bring a positive impact of £10,000 from increased income.

The Chief Officer Corporate Support advised that the post would increase capacity and allow increased work from external partners, such as town and parish councils. There were indicators the Print Studio had at times been turning orders away due to limited capacity.

### SCIA #10

The Chief Officer Corporate Support informed the Committee that the bulk of savings were through the removal of the need for microfilming and the maintenance of that equipment when compared to scanning.

### Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the growth and savings proposals set out in appendix C of the report be recommended to Cabinet.

2014/15 Budget and Review of Service Plans (Minute 26, Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee – 19 November 2013)

To Follow

- (d) Climate Local Sevenoaks (Minute 24, Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee – 19 November 2013)

To Follow

- e) Proposed Designation of Sevenoaks Weald Conservation Area (Minute 27, Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee – 19 November 2013)

To Follow

f) Treasury Management Mid Year Update (*Minute 28, Finance & Resources Advisory Committee – 12 November 2013*)

The report was the mid-year treasury update to fulfil the requirements of regulations and the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. It provided information on economic activity for the first half of 2013/14 and advised Members of the treasury activity in the same period.

The Principal Accountant noted that the recognised benchmarks for percentage returns on investments were being exceeded. Investment income was on course to exceed the budget of £260,000 by approximately £17,000. Nearly all longer term investments had matured and so investment yields were expected to fall; the existing levels of receipts would not be achievable in 2014/15.

The report provided an update on the Council's investment with Landsbanki Islands hf. £1million had been invested on 25 June 2007 before the bank was placed in receivership. Approximately 54% had already been recovered with the prospect of full recovery by 2018.

Some Members proposed investment in banks outside the UK, particularly those with AAA credit ratings. Risk could be spread by investing smaller sums. A Member indicated that investment over two years, rather than the present limit of one year, might be accepted. The Chairman indicated that the fear of collapsing financial markets had now receded. The Vice-Chairman added that the Council still had a 15% investment limit per foreign country. Members did not feel property funds would be appropriate.

Action 1: The Principal Accountant to investigate possible investments in foreign banks, particularly in AAA credit rated countries, together with the option of investing for periods of up to two years.

Resolved: That Cabinet be asked to approve the Treasury Management Mid-Year Update for 2013/14.