

**Formal Response from the Cabinet following matters referred by the Committee
and/or requests from the Performance and Governance Committee**

(a) Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management (Cabinet 08.11.12 Minute 49)

The Portfolio Holder for The Cleaner and Greener Environment introduced a report outlining the refreshed Kent joint Municipal Waste Strategy objectives and policies for 2012/13 to 2020/21. The first Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (KJMWMS) was adopted in 2007 by all 13 Council that comprise the Kent Waste Partnership. The main targets outlined in the 2007 Strategy were actioned one year early in 2011/12 and it was therefore felt appropriate to refresh the Strategy.

Members noted that during the development of the refreshed policies, two Equality Impact Assessments had been taken forward (in February and August 2011) to ensure the public's interests were taken into account. On both occasions the results were satisfactory and full Equality Impact Assessments were not required.

Members considered issues surrounding recycling and the Head of Environmental and Operational Services reported that around 10% of recycling continued to be rejected at the Allington MRF, but this was an improving situation. Leaflets were regularly distributed to residents explaining what waste should be put in recycling. It was important that there was consistency in the messages to residents.

Resolved: That the refreshed Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management strategy objectives and policies 2012/13 – 2020/21 be adopted.

(b) 2013/14 Budget and Review of Service Plans (Cabinet 06.12.12 Minute 38)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Value for Money introduced a report setting out the progress made in preparing the 2013/14 budget and providing Members with an update on key financial information. The Cabinet would make its final recommendation on the budget at its meeting on 7th February 2013, after taking into account any updated information available at that date.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Value for Money reported that a list of growth and savings items resulting in net growth of £160,000 had been presented to the Select Committees who recommend that these items be included in the budget. Uncertainty over two major funding streams remained. Provisional Government Support figures were not expected until 19th December and the Council would need to decide on the level of Council Tax for 2013/14 following the Government's announcement of another freeze grant being offered and a cap being set at 2%.

Due to these uncertainties, a further report will be presented to Cabinet in January which would hopefully contain a more complete picture including whether further savings would be required.

The Group Manager – Financial Services highlighted that whilst the Government settlement was not expected until 19th December, this date was by no means confirmed and there could be further delays in the process. There had been no further information as to what the reduction in funding was likely to be. Members noted that there was a statutory requirement for the budget to be set in February 2013.

In regard to Council Tax, from a financial perspective, the Group Manager – Financial Services stressed that it would be significantly advantageous if the Council Tax for 2013/14 was set close to the 2% cap instead of taking the grant being offered if it was frozen.

For the report to Cabinet in January 2013, Officers would update the 10-year budget with the settlement figure and any Council Tax decision as well as revisiting the other assumptions with any additional information that had become available. If a budget gap remained, difficult savings decisions would need to be made.

The Group Manager – Financial Services had sent an email to all Town and Parish Councils the previous week informing them of the effect of the Government changing their decision as to how the Council Tax Base was calculated for these authorities. The Government would be giving Sevenoaks District Council some funding to help address the effect on these councils which would be allocated proportionately based on the impact of the change to Council Tax Support.

The Chairman suggested that, as the Government grant became more marginal, Sevenoaks District Council would need to manoeuvre into a self-sustaining position in order to become less reliant on any future grant.

A Member suggested that the savings assumptions around partnership working be reviewed to ensure that they were realistic assumptions. Whilst acknowledging the point that was being made, the Chairman stressed that assumptions were constantly tested.

Members stressed the need to consider the £160,000 savings that the Council would need to make and the Chairman tasked each Portfolio Holder to have discussions around the options available before the Cabinet meeting in January.

Resolved: That

- (a) The comments and recommendations of the Select Committees as set out at Appendix E be noted;
- (b) Officers and Portfolio Holders be requested to investigate further proposed solutions for the £160,000 budget shortfall.