

## **MATTERS REFERRED BY PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE AND/OR SELECT COMMITTEES**

- a) Treasury Management Strategy 2013/14 (Minute 114 Performance & Governance Committee 8 January 2013)

The Local Government Act 2003 (the Act) and supporting regulations required the Council to 'have regard to' the Prudential Code and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable. The Act required the Council to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy (as required by investment guidance issued subsequent to the Act). The report set out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraphs 57-59 of the report, which dealt with changes to the investment criteria in the light of recent credit rating downgrades. Paragraph 58 set out officer's proposals for the 2013/14 investment policy. Members agreed with the proposals in general, but expressed great concern with regards to increasing the limits of investments to 40% of the total fund to any single institution or institutions within a group of companies. Some Members felt that it should remain at 25% or possibly increase to 30%. A Member was nervous of Building Societies.

In response to a question on longer term investments, the Principal Accountant reported that advice received recommended against investments for longer than three months, except in the cases of semi-nationalised banks and public authorities where up to one year was recommended. This was in line with what neighbouring authorities were doing.

It was agreed that these concerns should be referred to the Finance Advisory Group.

### Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that there were no adverse equality impacts arising from the report.

Resolved: That the concerns expressed above be drawn to the attention of the Finance Advisory Group.

- b) Sevenoaks District Tenancy Strategy and Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Policy (Minute 35 Services Select Committee - 14 January 2013)

The Head of Housing and Communications presented the report which covered the District Council's proposed Tenants strategy and the approach to the current welfare reform whilst ensuring that the District's limited affordable housing supply would go to those deemed in most need (with more emphasis now through the Allocation policy on local connection and employment) and that future rent revenues were fair but maximised opportunities for Registered Social providers to generate funding for the provision of new social sector housing. The Head of Housing and Communications reported that that Allocation Policy was developed in conjunction with the local community and local providers through consultation. Its main purpose is to identify fairly who should have

priority on the Register for rehousing and this is to be undertaken by using 4 bands instead of points, in line with rest of Kent. Members were also provided with an update on the on-going work with West Kent Housing Association surrounding the Housing Register. West Kent HA had agreed to manage the Register for a further 2 years from 1st April 2013. Officers and West Kent HA would be undertaking a review of people currently on the register and hoped to reduce it by half to around 1000. There were many registered who would not be re housed in the near future and they would be given other options to consider.

The proposed Tenancy Strategy would also be trialled on a 10% sample of the Housing Register. An update on this trial would be provided to the June 2013 Committee.

The Head of Housing and Communications reported that the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Balanced Communities had also reviewed the Housing Register Allocations Policy and had suggested that paragraph 1.1 be amended to read:

*“Anyone living in the United Kingdom who is at least 18 years old, and who is applying for a social housing property to use as their only or principal residence and who has a local connection to the Sevenoaks District, may apply to the SDHR.”*

The Committee endorsed the amended wording.

#### Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted the equality impacts arising from the report on the Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Policy and Tenancy Strategy. Members noted that there was no adverse impact with regards to the Tenancy Strategy. With regard to the Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Policy, Members noted that there would be sections of the Community who would be considered to have a greater need than others and therefore would be allocated more priority to assist them to achieve rehousing more quickly.

The Vice-Chairman welcomed the inclusion of the greater emphasis on local connection to Sevenoaks in the new banding systems.

Members considered the Housing Register Allocations Policy and the Priority Banding System and a Member highlighted that there appeared to be very little support for young working people on low wages. Members stressed that they felt that the policy should be clearer in rewarding people in work and should accommodate employment, for example where possible, workers should be found accommodation which enabled them to keep working. The Head of Housing and Communications responded that Officers recognised the issues and continuously sought solutions. The Council offered a Deposit Bond Scheme and encouraged tenants to consider housing which was outside the District. Younger people were also encouraged to consider shared ownership opportunities and the Council was also looking to establish a Single Persons Scheme and Officers were investigating a suitable site for this. Intermediate rental properties were also available.

In response to a question, the Housing Manager, reported that people with no access to the internet would be able to obtain information though the Council’s magazine, In Shape; information would also appear in local newspapers; West Kent Housing

Association would also be writing to people on the Housing Register and, if required, customers could be sent personalised sheets of suitable properties that were available.

Members also considered the need for suitable temporary accommodation across the District. A Member stressed the importance of consideration being given to where affordable housing was located. The Vice-Chairman suggested that the Group Manager – Planning be invited to attend the June 2013 Committee meeting to provide an update on Section 106 money and comment on social and affordable housing across the District.

*Action 3: That the Group Manager – Planning be invited to attend the June 2013 Committee meeting to provide an update on Section 106 money and comment on social and affordable housing across the District.*

Resolved: That the adoption of the Sevenoaks District Tenancy Strategy and Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Policy be supported subject to the comments above, and both documents be RECOMMENDED to Cabinet for approval as District Council policy.

c) Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (Minute 23 Environment Select Committee 15 January 2013)

The Principal Planning Officer presented the report which explained that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was a new mechanism for securing contributions from developers towards the provision of infrastructure that was required to support development. In order to begin charging CIL, the Council needed to prepare a Charging Schedule, which would set out what developers would need to pay in £ per sq m of new buildings and any variations by area or type of development. Following consultation between June and August 2012, responses to the consultation had been reviewed and additional work on the evidence base had been undertaken.

A Draft Charging Schedule had been prepared and it was recommended that the proposed residential charges remain at £75/m<sup>2</sup> and £125/m<sup>2</sup>, based on the same charge areas previously consulted on. Proposed charges for supermarkets and retail warehouses continue to be at £125/m<sup>2</sup> but on the basis of additional viability evidence it was proposed that other retail uses were not charged CIL. If agreed, the Draft Charging Schedule would be published for interested parties to comment on and would then be submitted for independent examination. If found sound, it was likely that the Council would be in a position to adopt the Charging Schedule in late 2013 / early 2014.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that there were no adverse equality impacts arising from this report.

Resolved: That the following recommendations to Council be endorsed subject to a request that the Environment Select Committee have the opportunity to review the implementation plan before it is adopted:

- a) That the Community Infrastructure Levy Draft Charging Schedule be agreed for publication and submission for independent examination; and
- b) That the Portfolio Holder is authorised to agree minor presentational changes and detailed amendments to the Charging Schedule to assist the clarity of the document.

The Principal Planning Officer was thanked for all his hard work.