

Minutes

Cabinet

Held at:	Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone
Date	Wednesday, 28 February 2024
Present	Councillors Mike Blakemore, Polly Blakemore, Gary Fuller, Rich Holgate, Jim Martin (Chairman), Tim Prater (Vice-Chair), Stephen Scoffham, Rebecca Shoob and Jeremy Speakman
Apologies for Absence	Councillors Fuller and Holgate gave apologies for lateness.
Officers Present:	Amandeep Khroud (Assistant Director), Lydia Morrison (Interim S151 Officer), Ola Owolabi (Chief Financial Services Officer), Susan Priest (Chief Executive), Lorraine Smith (Economic Development Senior Specialist) and Jemma West (Democratic Services Senior Specialist)
Others Present:	Councillor Laura Davison (Folkestone & Hythe District Council) and Councillor Connor McConville (Folkestone & Hythe District Council)

NOTE: All decisions are subject to call-in arrangements. The deadline for call-in is Friday 8 March at 5pm. Decisions not called in may be implemented on Monday 11 March 2024.

85. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

86. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2024 were submitted, approved, and signed by the Leader.

87. **Housing Compliance Policies - Asbestos and Electrical Safety**

The report presented two policies in relation to health and safety compliance for the Council's housing landlord service. These are, specifically the Housing Compliance (Asbestos) Policy and the Housing Compliance (Electric Safety) Policy.

Proposed by Councillor Shoob,
Seconded by Councillor J Martin; and

RESOLVED:

1. That report C/23/89 be received and noted.
2. That the proposed changes to the Council's Housing Compliance (Asbestos and Electric Safety) Policies outlined in the report and in the appended track-changed documents be approved.

(Voting figures: 7 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

(Councillors Holgate and Fuller were not present at the meeting for consideration of this item).

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Cabinet was asked to agree the recommendations because: -

- a. There have been changes in legislation and best practice since the policies were introduced in 2021. Cabinet needs to be made aware of these changes and the policies updated.
- b. The policies will expire in April 2024 and therefore require updating/renewing to ensure the Council is fully compliant with health and safety legislation.

88. Folkestone and Hythe District Council Budget 2024/25

The report presented the Folkestone and Hythe District Council Budget 2024/25.

Councillor Prater advised on an amendment to the recommendations, that a fifth recommendation be added as per the addendum which had been circulated at the meeting (appended to these minutes).

Proposed by Councillor Prater,
Seconded by Councillor J Martin; and

RESOLVED:

1. That report C/23/90 be received and noted.
2. To recommend to Full Council that the proposed Revenue Budget 2024/25 be approved, and a Council Tax rate of £280.08 be set at Band D, representing an increase of £8.01 on the current charge.

3. That the Council Tax Resolution at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.
4. That it be noted, with thanks, the voluntary reduction in Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) from the Leader (£13,740) and Deputy Leader (£1,145) to enable the Ward Grants budget to remain at £90,000 in the 2024/25 budget.
5. That the budget be amended, in respect of the Members allowances, as per the addendum which is appended to these minutes.

(Voting figures: 8 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

(Councillor Fuller did not take part in the vote, as he arrived towards the end of the debate on this item).

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

Cabinet was asked to agree the recommendations because the District Council's Revenue Budget and Council Tax rate for 2024/25 needs to be set in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

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Council – 28 February 2025

Recommendations from Cabinet held on 28 February 2024

Agenda item 13 (Revenue Budget, Capital Strategy, Capital Programme, Reserves and Balances, Treasury and Investment Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy and Council Tax for 2024/25)

An amendment to paper C/23/90 has been proposed, this relates to the Annual Member Allowances increment within the 2024/25 budget. The draft published budget proposal identified £36.8k (6.7%) increase to the 2024/25 Annual Member Allowances. This is in line with the Council Constitution that the allowances shall be automatically adjusted, annually, by reference to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The member allowances increase was based on the September CPI index, for implementation the following April.

This proposed budget would now need to be amended to reflect the following changes.

1. A reduction from 6.7% to 5% on basic allowance payable to all members; and
2. Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for 2024/25 are frozen at 2023/24 payment levels.

This would save around £13,200 a year and would have the added benefit of reducing the total bill for allowances, saving the Council more money in the longer term.

The changes to the published budget will have small cascading impacts on the figures presented in the original agenda pack. The changes are summarised below:

- The 2024/25 Members Allowance budget will be reduced, with the net revenue budget requirement shown in 'Appendix A' reducing from £18,995,555 to £18,982,355, a movement of £13,200.
- The Net Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves/drawdown from reserves detailed in Appendix 6 will be reduced from £405,000 to £392,000, a movement of £13,200.
- Paragraph 2.5 will now read.....*The 2024/25 net service expenditure is £18,982,355. The budget details are set out at Appendix 1.*

For ease of reference, the updated Appendix 1 – Revenue Budget 2024/25 is provided below:

Appendix 1 – Revenue Budget 2024/25

GENERAL FUND SUMMARY			
2023/24		2024/25	2024/25
Original Budget		Draft Original Budget Jan-24	Draft Original Budget Feb-24
£		£	£
	SUMMARY OF NET EXPENDITURE		
	Service Heads		
8,445,560	Finance, Strategy & Corporate Services	7,751,330	7,834,430
683,190	Human Resources	733,260	733,260
2,976,100	Governance & Law	3,248,940	3,230,640
740,960	Leadership Support	590,900	511,660
6,712,940	Place	6,957,130	7,022,130
413,180	Economic Development	435,800	435,800
165,400	Planning	206,080	208,480
2,483,630	Operations	2,301,180	2,283,680
3,048,610	Housing	2,971,090	3,081,790
(5,919,556)	Recharges	(6,440,395)	(6,475,515)
33,040	Vacancy Turnover Target Savings	(424,000)	116,000
19,783,054	TOTAL HEAD OF SERVICE NET EXPENDITURE	18,331,315	18,982,355
541,430	Internal Drainage Board Levies	585,610	585,610
2,502,000	Interest Payable and Similar Charges	2,381,000	2,381,000
(2,521,000)	Interest and Investment Income	(3,043,000)	(3,043,000)
(365,568)	New Homes Bonus Grant	(135,700)	(135,700)
(4,616,551)	Other non-service related Government Grants	(5,584,550)	(5,758,680)
2,801,300	Town and Parish Council Precepts	2,801,300	2,993,850
18,124,665	TOTAL GENERAL FUND OPERATING NET EXP	15,335,975	16,005,435
(2,180,000)	Net Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	57,720	(392,090)
1,625,000	Minimum Revenue Provision	2,325,000	2,325,000
2,487,000	Capital Expenditure funded from Revenue	1,055,000	1,055,000
20,056,665	TOTAL TO BE MET FROM LOCAL TAXPAYERS	18,773,695	18,993,345
(59,451)	Transfer to/(from) the Collection Fund	-	-
(3,921,454)	Business Rates Income	(4,023,175)	(4,023,175)
16,075,760	TOTAL TO BE MET FROM DEMAND ON THE COLLECTION FUND & GENERAL RESERVE	14,750,520	14,970,170
(14,289,513)	Council Tax-Demand on Collection Fund	(14,750,520)	(14,970,170)
1,786,247		-	-
	(SURPLUS)/DEFICIT FOR YEAR		
1,786,247	Contribution from General Reserve	-	-
1,786,247	BALANCE AT END OF YEAR	-	-