



Agenda

Meeting: **Council**
Date: **29 November 2023**
Time: **7.00 pm**
Place: **Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone**

To: **All Members of the Council**

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to attend a meeting of the Council on the date and at the time shown above.

Anyone who wishes to have information on any matter arising on the Agenda which is not fully covered in these papers is requested to give notice prior to the meeting to the Chairman or appropriate officer.

This meeting will be webcast live to the council's website at <https://folkestone-hythe.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>.

Please note there will be 37 seats available for members of the public, which will be reserved for those speaking or participating at the meeting. The remaining available seats will be given on a first come, first served basis.

Dr Susan Priest
Chief Executive

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest (Pages 11 - 12)**

Queries about the agenda? Need a different format?

Contact Jemma West – Tel: 01303 853369
Email: committee@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk or download from our
website
www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Members of the Council should declare any discloseable pecuniary interest or any other significant interests in any item/s on this agenda.

3. **Minutes (Pages 13 - 20)**

To receive the minutes of the meeting of the council held on 20 September 2023 and to authorise the Chairman of the Council to sign them as a correct record.

4. **Chair's Communications**

5. **Petitions**

There are no petitions to be presented.

6. **Questions from the Public**

1. **From Mr Jon O'Connor to Councillor M Blakemore, Cabinet Member for Community and Collaboration**

Could an update be provided summarising any work undertaken by FHDC officers and members with Kent County Council over the last three months in order to explore options for repairing and reopening Grace Hill Library?

2. **From Mr Chris Johnson to Councillor J Martin, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Otterpool Park and Planning Policy**

At the September meeting, the Planning and Licensing Committee approved an officer's recommendation to approve the inclusion of two sections of a development's buffer strip into private gardens. Will any safeguards prevent similar adoptions on future developments, such as the Officers' Mess site in Hawkinge, or are they just a paper exercise to be ignored?

3. **From Ms Mary Lawes to Councillor Polly Blakemore, Cabinet Member for Transport**

Elderly and sick residents in permit zones get free permits for their family members who are their carers. This allows family members caring for their family to park free. However, carers from KCC, the NHS and Private Sector care do not get this and are being hit by PCN fines. Could a resident who needs care get a free hard copy permit with their details so it cannot be used elsewhere, allow Carers to use permit but hand it back for next carer?

7. **Questions from Councillors**

(Questions can be found on www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk from noon 2 days before the meeting, on Modern.gov, under the agenda for this meeting).

Up to 45 minutes is allowed for questions from councillors.

8. **Announcements of the Leader of the Council**

To receive a report from the Leader of the Council on the business of the cabinet and on matters that the leader considers should be drawn to the council's attention. The leader shall have 10 minutes to make his announcements.

The opposition groups will have an opportunity to reply to the leader's remarks. The opposition group leaders shall each have 5 minutes to respond after which the Leader of the Council will have a right of reply. Any right of reply will be for a maximum duration of 5 minutes.

9. **Portfolio Holder reports to Council (Pages 21 - 30)**

10. **Opposition Business**

There is no Opposition Business.

11. **Motions on Notice**

The following motions have been placed on the agenda in the order received; up to 60 minutes shall be allowed for debates on motions on notice:

1. **From Councillor Mrs Jenny Hollingsbee, Leader of the Conservative Group**

The Council Notes:

Folkestone and Hythe District Council officially declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency on the 24th of July 2019 acknowledging, inter alia, a pressing need for investment in sustainable low-carbon electricity production so that the UK can meet its legally binding carbon emission reductions targets.

Dungeness has a proud heritage of nuclear energy generation, spanning six decades. Over their lifetime, Dungeness A and B Nuclear Power Stations provided our residents with 264 TWH of clean, safe, and reliable electricity whilst contributing significantly to our local economy and saving around 190 million tonnes of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere.

Dungeness A is currently in the advanced stages of decommissioning. In 2021, Dungeness B moved into a de-fuelling phase, signalling an end to power production on the site. During the initial decommissioning stage, the nuclear industry will continue to be the largest employer in Romney Marsh, benefiting approximately one thousand local people in predominantly well-paid and highly skilled jobs.

Small Modular Nuclear Reactors (SMRs) are an advanced technology with a smaller footprint compared to traditional nuclear reactors and have financial, deployment-time, and safety advantages. This exciting technology continues to attract serious investment and has the potential to unlock a new nuclear future for Dungeness.

Dungeness is widely regarded by industry experts as an ideal location for one or more SMRs because it has, among other attributes, available brownfield land, underutilised grid connections, easy access to water, robust flood defences, an existing highly skilled workforce with a culture of nuclear safety, and overwhelming local support for the nuclear industry.

The Council Welcomes:

That the United Kingdom has decarbonised faster than any other G7 country with a 48 per cent reduction in carbon emissions since 1990 and was the first major economy to legislate to achieve net zero by 2050.

The UK Government's Energy Security Strategy and its planned acceleration of nuclear energy to meet up to 25 per cent of our projected energy demand by 2050 and deliver cleaner, cheaper energy and greater energy security.

The leadership of Kent County Council and the Member of Parliament for Folkestone and Hythe, Damian Collins OBE MP, in championing a new nuclear future at Dungeness and for securing a site visit by Andrew Bowie MP, the Minister for Nuclear and Networks, in July of this year.

That conversations continue to take place between private companies, elected representatives, and local and national government officials to deliver one or more SMRs at Dungeness.

The Council Believes:

Romney Marsh is a unique and important part of our district and residents deserve the full backing of Folkestone and Hythe District Council in pursuit of a new nuclear future at Dungeness.

Nuclear energy is a safe, secure, and reliable source of electricity with the lowest lifecycle carbon footprint of any energy source. Therefore, it

should be a fundamental component of the United Kingdom's transition to net zero.

SMRs are a new technology with the potential to kick-start nuclear energy generation at Dungeness once again and deliver well-paid, high-skilled jobs, as well as wider socio-economic benefits to the local area.

The Council Resolves:

1. To confirm in writing our unequivocal support for a new era of nuclear energy production at Dungeness by writing a letter to:
 - Andrew Bowie MP, Minister for Nuclear and Networks
 - Roger Gough, Leader of Kent County Council
 - Damian Collins OBE MP, Member of Parliament for Folkestone and Hythe
 2. That all members of the Cabinet, at every possible opportunity, actively promote Dungeness as a location for new nuclear power generation.
2. **From Councillor Dr Stephen Scoffham, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Biodiversity, on behalf of the Green Group**

Council Notes

- The proposals for a UNESCO Global Cross Channel Geopark are now at an advanced stage.
- The Geopark will cover a broad swathe of chalk downland from Dover to Bromley as well as Folkestone and other urban areas outside the district, along with a similar geological region in northern France
- The bid is being prepared jointly by the Kent Downs AONB and the Parc Naturel Regional des Caps et Marais d'Opale who need to demonstrate the action that has already been taken by local Councils, land management organisations, businesses and local communities
- If successful the bid will celebrate the relationship between the underlying geology, people, and natural and cultural heritage: it will help to protect the chalk landscapes in both regions, promote sustainable tourism and bring communities closer together supporting pride of place.

Council believes

UNESCO designation will bring multiple benefits throughout the district, supports both our strategic objects and the adopted AONB Management Plan, and represents a timely response to the current climate change and ecological emergencies.

Council resolves

As far as existing resources allow:

- To support the Kent Downs AONB Unit in promoting the bid, working with other organisations and Local Authorities in Kent
- To raise public awareness about the bid and the benefits it will bring to the local community and natural environment
- To include reference to the Cross Channel Global Geopark in our communications and promotional activities
- To assist the Kent Downs AONB Unit in reaching out to school children, students, and young people to help shape the bid and, if successful, on any projects that follow
- To contribute towards identifying Geosites in the Folkestone-Hythe district
- To further the development of the Cross Channel Global Geopark through the positive deployment of appropriate Council functions, resources, and responsibilities.

3. From Councillor McConville, Leader of the Labour Group

Council Notes:

There are approximately 39 care leavers aged 16-21 and 95 care leavers (aged 16-25) overall, based in the Folkestone and Hythe District or with strong links to the area.

At present young people (aged 16-21) are accommodated by Kent County Council in serviced shared accommodation provided by ClearSprings Ready Homes. Six months prior to the Young Person's 21st birthday, the Council works with KCC to support them into private sector or social housing.

Last month Kent County Council have decided to stop housing care leavers over the age of 19 (Decision notice 23-00083) from April 2024. Care Leavers already over the age of 19 will not be affected by these changes but all Care Leavers and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in the future will see their housing needs abandoned by KCC once they turn 19. KCC are making this decision purely to save money, believe this will save them £700,000 annually and will be included in their budget consultation for next year.

Folkestone and Hythe District Council has a duty to provide accommodation for all homeless young people under the age of 21. In future it will have to provide both temporary and permanent accommodation to all care leavers aged 19 until their 21st birthday when requested.

Council Believes:

Folkestone and Hythe District Council will have to house these individuals within un-serviced private sector tenancies, topping up their housing benefit by over £400 a month, based on monthly rent of £650 for shared housing in the district.

The if council had to immediately house all care leavers currently housed by ClearSprings Ready Homes (on behalf of KCC) it could cost our council in excess of £240,000 a year.

This motion believes that the proposed change represents an erosion of the safety net for our most vulnerable young people and turns the social care clock back by two decades. It calls on the Leader of the Council to write immediately to KCC Leader, Roger Gough asking him to reconsider this decision.

His letter should highlight the following:

- A significant disruption and distress which may be caused by having to house vulnerable care leavers in temporary accommodation outside of the district and where additional KCC floating support and access to education may not be accessible before a homeless decision can be made.
- Lack of high-quality supported housing available for this group via nomination agreements which will see us have to house our most vulnerable in un-serviced shared private accommodation not exclusively used by care leavers.
- The likelihood of tenancy breakdown is high, within this group of young people, with considerable impacts on them, our housing officers and the community.
- Substantial safeguarding risk which will be caused by placing this vulnerable group in the general housing stock. Risks include them being subject to financial cuckooing, County Lines, sexual exploitation and intimidation.
- Social cost of removing tenancy related support at 19 to the healthcare and justice system.
- The financial liability that this decision places on districts, far in excess of the amount saved

His letter could also highlight the lack of consultation given to local authorities by KCC about the change and request immediate data on the number of care leavers under 18 in this district and across the County, and turnover of tenancies held by 19-21 year old care leavers in order to predict and plan for the transition period.

Council resolves:

- a) Ask the Leader of the Council to write to Kent County Council asking for an immediate suspension of Decision 23-00083.
- b) Refer the item to the Overview and Scrutiny committee and cabinet to allow members, working with officers, to find a suitable path forward in service provision from April 2024.

4. From Councillor Davison, Deputy Leader of the Labour Group

This council notes:

The important and transformative work that has been done on Community Wealth Building by organisations such as the New Economics Foundation and the Centre for Local Economic Strategies.

That this work has been put into practice in authorities such as Preston where it has been extremely successful.

That a study in the Lancet (published April 1, 2023) that evaluated the impact of Community Wealth Building in Preston showed a reduction in the prescribing of antidepressants as well as in the prevalence of depression. The local population also experienced an improvement in life satisfaction (9%), as well as an increase in median wages (11%).

That the 'Preston Model' is often used to describe Community Wealth Building.

That Progressive Procurement is one of the keystones of Community Wealth Building.

That Procurement can range from the materials needed for new roads or buildings to a cleaning contract.

That as district authority we are bound by a set of rules to ensure that the procurement of goods and services is open, fair and transparent ensuring that the district gets good quality at a competitive price.

This council believes:

That we can make our procurement more progressive by looking at how the procurement process can be made simpler for potential suppliers to bid for opportunities and also how the procurement of goods and services can benefit local communities.

That we can encourage more businesses to engage with us in procurement by breaking bigger contracts down into smaller ones for example; or by making the process to bid for contracts as simple as we can (within the rules and regulations that we have to observe).

That when procuring goods and services it is also important to look at more than just the financial cost. We should also look at what additional value, or benefit, we can get from what we are buying.

For example, the construction of new buildings and developments can benefit local companies through them supplying materials and labour, and communities through employment opportunities either during construction or afterwards in the new businesses which move into these new developments.

This council resolves:

To refer to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the council's procurement plan, with specific reference to section 5 in the action plan, Local Suppliers and SME participation, which is to be reviewed quarterly.

To explore further Progressive Procurement practises which are designed to encourage more local businesses to engage with our procurement process.

That a reviewed policy should highlight not only the financial cost of projects, but also the economic benefits of localised procurement and investing capital within our own district. As well as ensuring value for money, not only for our community but also in partnership with them.

That any revised policy be decided by committee after May 2024.

12. **Report to Council on decisions made in accordance with the constitution's call-in and urgency rule (Pages 31 - 34)**

The constitution provides that, when an urgent decision is made by the Cabinet or Cabinet Member, for which any delay in implementation, likely to be caused by the call-in process, would seriously prejudice the Council's or public interest, then the 'Call-in Rules of Procedure', Part 6.3, rules 1-6 do not apply. Decisions, taken as a matter of urgency, must be reported to the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency.

13. **Extension of term of independent persons under the Localism Act 2011 (Pages 35 - 38)**

This report sets out the Audit and Governance Committee recommendations on the extension of the appointment of Chris Harman, David Carter and Ken London as the Independent Members under s28(7) of the Localism Act 2011.

14. **Committee Membership Changes (Pages 39 - 40)**

Under the Folkestone and Hythe District Council Constitution, Part 8.1 'Delegation to Officers', paragraph 3.18, the Head of Paid Service is authorised to make appointments to committees or sub-committees at the request of the relevant political group leader. This report sets out the appointments made, under these powers, on the instruction of the Leader of the Green Group.

This page is intentionally left blank

Declarations of Interest

Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI)

Where a Member has a new or registered DPI in a matter under consideration they must disclose that they have an interest and, unless the Monitoring Officer has agreed in advance that the DPI is a 'Sensitive Interest', explain the nature of that interest at the meeting. The Member must withdraw from the meeting at the commencement of the consideration of any matter in which they have declared a DPI and must not participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter unless they have been granted a dispensation permitting them to do so. If during the consideration of any item a Member becomes aware that they have a DPI in the matter they should declare the interest immediately and, subject to any dispensations, withdraw from the meeting.

Other Significant Interest (OSI)

Where a Member is declaring an OSI they must also disclose the interest and explain the nature of the interest at the meeting. The Member must withdraw from the meeting at the commencement of the consideration of any matter in which they have declared a OSI and must not participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter unless they have been granted a dispensation to do so or the meeting is one at which members of the public are permitted to speak for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the matter. In the latter case, the Member may only participate on the same basis as a member of the public and cannot participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter and must withdraw from the meeting in accordance with the Council's procedure rules.

Voluntary Announcement of Other Interests (VAOI)

Where a Member does not have either a DPI or OSI but is of the opinion that for transparency reasons alone s/he should make an announcement in respect of a matter under consideration, they can make a VAOI. A Member declaring a VAOI may still remain at the meeting and vote on the matter under consideration.

Note to the Code:

Situations in which a Member may wish to make a VAOI include membership of outside bodies that have made representations on agenda items; where a Member knows a person involved, but does not have a close association with that person; or where an item would affect the well-being of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc. but not his/her financial position. It should be emphasised that an effect on the financial position of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc OR an application made by a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc would both probably constitute either an OSI or in some cases a DPI.

This page is intentionally left blank

FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes for the meeting of the Council held at the Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone on Wednesday, 20 September 2023

Present: Councillors Abena Akuffo-Kelly, Polly Blakemore, Bridget Chapman, Tony Cooper, Laura Davison, Gary Fuller, Clive Goddard, David Godfrey, Liz Grant, Rich Holgate, Mrs Jennifer Hollingsbee, Anita Jones, Nicola Keen, Adrian Lockwood, Alan Martin, Elaine Martin, Jim Martin, Connor McConville, Jackie Meade, Tim Prater, Stephen Scoffham, Rebecca Shoob, Jeremy Speakman, Paul Thomas, Belinda Walker, David Wimble and John Wing

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Mike Blakemore, James Butcher and Liz McShane

38. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

39. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2023 were submitted, approved and signed by the Chair.

40. **Chair's Communications**

The Chair gave her communications as follows:

“I started the summer with the Folkestone Pride parade, walking through the town at the very front of the parade I was encouraged and uplifted by the many people who stopped to cheer and wave as we progressed from the Town Hall to the Leas. I have spent the earlier part of the day at New Romney Fair and both events highlighted what a vibrant and engaging District we live in.

On Saturday 12th August I had a shock to the system when I woke up very early indeed to start the Folkestone Park on the 9th anniversary. What an amazing treasure we have in the Leas and the view onto the zig zag path, coastal park, pebble beach and the sparkling sea beyond. I can think nothing better to look and encourage me whilst slogging away running a race. Perhaps soon that might entice me to join in.

I attended one of the best events of the year – the Folkestone air show. I have never seen so many people on the Leas, for a couple of hours I lost sight of the pavement and could only see endless streams of people. Thank you to all the organisers and the council for putting our district on the map with such a marvellous event.

My visit to the NCI station up on East cliff made me proud of the men of women who volunteer to watch out for people and ships in distress.

I am indebted to the mayor of Hawkinge for inviting me to two hidden gems Terlingham Vineyard and The battle of Britain Museum in aid of his charities. The view from the vineyard is the most stunning I've seen in a long while and the museum is so special because it has personal stories of the men that fought and died to preserve our freedom.

I look forward to finding more hidden gems to share with you”.

41. **Petitions**

There were no petitions.

42. **Questions from the Public**

The questions asked, including supplementary questions, and the answers given are set out in Schedule 1, appended to these minutes.

43. **Questions from Councillors**

The questions asked, including supplementary questions, and the answers given are set out in Schedule 2, appended to these minutes.

44. **Announcements of the Leader of the Council**

The Leader made the following announcements:

“I have attended many meetings regarding Otterpool Park with government agencies, developers and potential Joint Venture Partners, these discussions continue.

Princes Parade hoarding: We have now received the report from the contaminated land specialists, and we are able to move forward. Unsurprisingly there are low levels of contamination across the site. It will be necessary to fence the land. The hoardings can now come down but we have to immediately fence the land with a suitable fence, we are currently seeking permission from Historic England regarding the fence posts and quotes are being sought for the work - so while progress has been slow, we have been progressing! Once the site is refenced we will be consulting to ask local people for their views on the future of Prince's Parade

Napier Barracks update from Home Office. We understand that the Home Office is considering the inclusion of Napier Barracks as part of contingency plans to house asylum seekers. If this proposal goes ahead it could potentially double the numbers housed on at the barracks and would likely need temporary facilities such as tents to brought onto the site. This is a hugely worrying proposal as in our view there is already a lack of space at Napier and conditions are overcrowded. Clearly this is not something that we would wish to see

happen. At present there has been no formal announcement from the Home Office and we will have to wait and see what they decide. If the Home Office press forward with their idea of increasing the number of asylum seekers at Napier Barracks, I will be writing formally to voice the Council's objections and I ask both Councillor McConville and Councillor Hollingsbee to join me in voicing our objections.

I was delighted to visit Home Pine House to give a Community Champion Award to Mr. Jim Marsh, who, along with his wife have kept the gardens at Home Pine House to such an excellent standard. Jim also raises a great deal of money for Great Ormond St Hospital, organises the community bingo and plays a major role in many other community projects. I was pleased to offer him the grateful thanks of the Council and to highlight his role in our community.

Following their announcement of cuts to local bus services I convened a meeting with Stagecoach to discuss. I can report a positive response, with some routes being saved. The Stagecoach Managing Director will be considering my views on how we might save further routes. There have been meetings, email and some difficult discussions with Stagecoach but I can report, this evening, that I am very hopeful that the No.10 bus service will be reinstated to Lympne.

I was please to attend the Royal British Legion - Freedom of the Town Celebration Gala Evening and to specifically honour Mrs Ann Berry an ex Councillor who does a great deal of work for the RBL.

I have attended the Kent Leaders Forum to discuss the issues which affect the Council's in Kent. I have been in close contact with regard to the Kent Resilience team, in their management of both Dover TAP and Operation Brock and I can report that we managed to most of the summer without too many major incidents.

I attended a meeting of Go Folkestone and was delighted to hear their plans for street collection of small electrical appliances for recycling, which will be rolled out in a couple of weeks time.

I attended Brockhill School to talk to year 12 and year 13 students about Local Government and as always, came away really impressed with the school.

I attended a meeting of Cycle Shepway and will be supporting their Big Ride Out on 21st September from Folkestone West Station at 4.00pm.

With regard to the news reports of RAAC in many schools nationally I can report that only Palmash Primary School was affected. The remedial works were carried out during the summer and we are in contact with our KCC colleagues monitoring any further works to buildings.

I have held a number of meetings with officers, KCC officers and the Leader of KCC, Roger Gough regarding Grace Hill Library. I have also had meetings with Damian Collins MP who has raised the matter with Michael Gove, the Minister for Levelling Up. While there is no certainty, officers are looking at the possibility of extending our Levelling Up works to include essential repairs to the Library Building. Please note, this has yet to be agreed and any additional funding is unlikely to provide for a comprehensive restoration of the building, but it may allow for essential repairs and for the building to be made wind and weathertight”.

Councillor McConville, Leader of the Labour Group responded to the communications and stated that in terms of Napier Barracks, his group had made it clear over a long period of time they had called for closure of the barracks, as they were not fit for purpose, and the same could be said for the government policy on this matter. He added that he was happy to voice his objections to this proposal if and when needed. In terms of the buses, he stated that since the timetable changes on 3 September, major routes had already had at least one, sometimes two timetable changes. There was an unacceptable level of daily cancellations and without X (formerly known as Twitter) people would not know of the cancellations. Sadly, a number of drivers had taken redundancy in the recent restructure and bus station changes, and those staff who remained now seemed to be leaving, meaning there seemed to be no end to this substandard of service.

The Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee, also responded to the communications and stated that she was looking forward to seeing the reports relating to Otterpool Park. She raised concerns about the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which stated that the original funding proposal was not now considered affordable. In terms of the Princes Parade hoardings, she stated she would be interested to know the costings of taking down the existing hoardings and replacing them with fencing. She added that there was an asset of £20 million sitting there, and something needed to be done about it. In terms of Napier Barracks, she completely agreed, and in her time as Cabinet Member, she stated that she had spent hours in meetings on the matter. It was not just the number and the expansion, but the resources that were required in order to manage the facility – ie community safety, litter, and the pressure on doctors surgeries, dentists, hospitals. She asked the Leader why he would wait for the decision to be made, rather than submitting the objections now. She added that it was good news in respect of bus services, particularly the Number 10 bus to Lympe, and that she had been approached by a number of people about this who would be delighted. Anything that could be done to help was important. She stated that it was lovely to hear of the Freedom of the Town gala evening and offered congratulations to former Cllr Mrs Ann Berry who she stated had spent a long time in the council chamber and had done an awful lot of work, and asked for her thanks to be recorded. She thanked the Leader for his comprehensive report.

The Leader then responded to the comments of both opposition group leaders and added that he would take on board all comments made and would try to respond in detail with figures. He suggested a discussion about Napier Barracks in order to compose a joint objection. He concluded by advising that on Saturday at 11.30am, the Folkestone Great Beach Clean would be taking place at the beach at the bottom of Remembrance Road. He stated that everyone was welcome, equipment would be supplied and it would be a great event. He added that on Sunday, the Folkestone Half Marathon would be taking place, running from the Leas, into Hythe, and back again. He stated that if people did go and spectate, and saw a grey haired individual staggering along at the end, it was likely to be him.

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

RESOLVED:

That the Leaders announcements be noted.

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

45. **Portfolio Holder reports to Council**

The Portfolio Holder reports had been circulated within the agenda pack and noted by Members.

46. **Opposition Business**

Councillor Cooper, on behalf of the Labour Group, set out the opposition business which raised concerns about the system for reporting information on bathing water in the district.

Proposed by Councillor Cooper,
Seconded by Councillor Chapman; and

RESOLVED:

That Option (b) (refer the issue to the Cabinet or relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as the case may be, for their observations, before deciding whether to make a decision on the issue) be applied to the business shown below:

To make it known to full council what, if any, system is currently in place across the District to provide information about bathing water – including pollution incidents, both on the councils digital platforms and in an easily accessible place in the near vicinity of the bathing water.

If no system is currently in place, then to refer to cabinet to approve a system which delivers these outcomes.

This system should consider but not be limited to: Digital displays in the vicinity of bathing sites which access real time data from Southern Water's Beachbouy software. A system of flags which is clearly identifiable.

Before implementing this proposal, funding would need to be agreed and secured for this initiative.

To refer this to cabinet to determine a report looking at options to deliver this outcome. Either through:

- Solely council funded
- In partnership with Southern Water, the Environment Agency or a collaboration of all parties.

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

47. **Motions on Notice**

Councillor McConville outlined his motion which related to toilet twinning.

Proposed by Councillor McConville,
Seconded by Councillor Davison; and

RESOLVED:

- To twin the 3 new changing places toilets with the charity "Toilet Twinning".
- To pay £180, £60 per toilet, to achieve this.
- To display the certificates received within the changing places toilets once opened.

(Voting figures: 21 for, 6 against, 0 abstentions).

48. **Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)**

The report set out the Council's policy on the use of directed surveillance and covert human intelligence sources under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

Proposed by Councillor Fuller,
Seconded by Councillor Holgate; and

RESOLVED:

1. That report A/23/14 be received and noted.
2. That the RIPA policy and procedure in appendix 1 to the report be approved.

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

49. **Members' Allowances - Independent Remuneration Panel**

The report recommended that the term of the current three Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) be extended a further four years to November 2023, and also that recruitment be commenced to fill the vacant fourth IRP position.

Proposed by Councillor Prater,
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee; and

RESOLVED:

1. That report A/23/13 be received and noted.
2. That the term of the existing IRP Members (Paul Murphy, Judy Williams and Chris Harman) be extended for a further four year term of office from the 2 December 2023.
3. That the term of the Parish Remuneration Panel be extended under the regulations, the members of which shall be identical to the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
4. That delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive to commence recruitment for a fourth member of the IRP (to fill the vacancy left by Beverley Crouch's resignation in March 2022) and to form a selection panel comprised of the Chair of the Council, the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader of the Council and a representative from the Conservative Group.

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

50. **Transformation - 2023-25**

The report set out an approach to transformation spanning a two-year period. The transformation seeks to reduce management duplication, improve efficiency, ensure that organisation capacity is focused on the Council's priorities, and deliver financial savings by making the best use of IT, Premises, Asset & Contract Management and reducing the overall number of staff across the Council.

Proposed by Councillor Meade,
Seconded by Councillor Keen,

That the consideration of the report be deferred and a detailed plan be provided before the vote took place.

(Voting figures: 9 for, 16 against, 1 against).

The amendment was therefore LOST.

Members commented on various aspects of the report and the Chief Executive provided clarity on some of the points raised.

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

RESOLVED:

- 1. That report A/23/15 be received and noted.**
- 2. That the creation of a £1.5 million transformation fund in the budget for 2023/24 be approved, drawn from existing reserves.**

(Voting figures: 18 for, 9 against, 0 abstentions).

Council 29 November 2023

Agenda item 9 (Portfolio Holder reports)

1. Report of the Leader and Cabinet Member for Otterpool Park and Planning Policy

1. To start with, some good news! I successfully completed the Folkestone Half Marathon, a brilliant event which I have completed a number of times before and one I highly recommend to everyone, including Councillors!
2. I have been honoured to attend a number of events with an Armed Forces connection in my role as Leader but also Armed Forces Champion: the Ghurka Memorial Service, the Dedication of the Royal British Legion Standard in Hythe, Armed Forces Champion training at Ashford Barracks and of course Remembrance Sunday, which was both poignant and moving.
3. The Leaders of the four political groups and Independent Councillor Paul Thomas have been meeting regularly as we move towards a committee system.
4. I have attended many meetings regarding Otterpool Park with government agencies, developers and potential Joint Venture Partners, these discussions continue.
5. I have been delighted to visit many businesses in our District: Holiday Extras, who have created one of the most exciting and dynamic work environments I have ever been in, Port Lympne who, at the height of the summer season, employ over 600 people full or part time and Church and Dwight a long established Folkestone Company who are busy making and exporting nasal spray to China! Impressive, dynamic, forward looking, our business community creating jobs, offering training and giving people a future. This Council is a friend to good business.
6. Princes Parade hoarding: We are now out to tender to obtain prices from contractors to remove the hoarding and the concrete blocks that support it, and then erect a low level fence around the site. Once the site is refenced we will be consulting next year to ask local people for their views on the future of Prince's Parade.
7. Following their announcement of cuts to local bus services I have been in almost daily contact with Stagecoach to discuss. The Stagecoach Managing Director will be considering my views on how we might save further routes . There have been meetings, email and some difficult discussions with Stagecoach but so far my only success is the No.10 bus service which has been reinstated to Lympne.
8. I have been in regular contact with Southern Water mainly because of the sewage on the Copperfield's Estate in Lydd, the flooding on Udan Rd in Dymchurch and the failure of the pumps at the Range Road pumping station in Hythe. I have a site meeting with Southern Water and KCC Councillors on 1st December.
9. Along with many coastal District Councils I attended a meeting organised by the Environment Agency to collectively express our shared concern about Southern Water's consistent failure to meet the needs of their customers. As a result of the meeting I signed a joint letter along with all the other leaders, addressed to OFWAT, the water regulator, asking them to take action against Southern Water.

10. I have attended the Kent Leaders Forum to discuss the issues which affect the Council's in Kent. I have also attended meetings of the East Kent Leaders forum which has a more focused view of the issues affecting the East Kent Districts.

11. I have held meetings with Go Folkestone to try and locate the foundation stone to the long demolished Folkestone Pier in its original location.

12. I was delighted to attend the opening of the Sunflowers Room on the Bayle, I was equally pleased to attend a breakfast prayer meeting at the Baptist Church in Cheriton and I ate too much when I attended the Rotary Club dinner in Hythe.

2. Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Governance

Clearly the key focus of the Finance part of my portfolio has been to progress the work on the budget for next year, and the Medium Term (4 year) Financial Strategy (prediction) that goes with it.

The series of documents that support the budget are about to start to come to Cabinet and Council over the next three months. Remember that the Strategy published this time last year by the previous administration predicted we would overspend revenues by over £18m in the 4 years 2023-27, running us out of money around year 3.

We cannot do that. The review we are undertaking is "root and branch" (there are 5000 ish lines in our budget - we've looked at all of them!) in order to increase revenues and cut spending to leave us with a budget and projection that gives us long term future. I'd like to that Susan, all Directors, CMT and all officers with their work on this, and especially the work on the transformation project which is likely to generate significant savings in itself.

We are still a few weeks away from being able to start to publish the outcome of the work, and there is still going to be a need to make some difficult decisions. No-one likes increasing service costs, but fundamentally we are going to have to. No-one likes cutting discretionary services, but in some areas we are going to have to. However we have very limited scope on increasing our council tax, and staff wage increases and other inflationary pressures higher than that increase can be. Something has to give. But - spoiler alert - the MTFS we will publish this November will not show an £18m shortfall over the next 4 years. Stay tuned.

Monitoring of the current years budget is also crucial however: no point having a budget you don't stick to. I'm pleased to say that at the end of September we were predicting (all due caveats apply!) an underspend on the revenue budget for the full year of just over £500,000. That is a result of a ruthless focus by officers and staff on keeping costs down, not filling posts if possible, and simply good housekeeping. It's only a prediction at this time, and we'll gain more certainty as the end of the year approaches, but it's a good place to be.

In terms of Governance the Constitution Working Group continues to meet. I think we now have a clear streamlined structure, with good checks and balances, to put forward to members. I was able to outline that "Two Lead Committee"

structure to Overview and Scrutiny Committee recently, and there will be an all member briefing on 11 December that I hope you can all attend.

I'm still confident we will deliver the new arrangements and the constitution that overlays it by May, within the budget Council agreed for the process. We will end up with a system that is open to much wider input and debate from across the Council and proportional across committees: exactly what we were aiming for.

3. Report of Councillor Mike Blakemore, the Cabinet Member for Community and Collaboration

Earlier this month I was delighted we were able to announce the success of the bid made in the summer for more than £335,000 of Safer Streets funding from the Police & Crime Commissioner. While the council led this bid, it involved other members of the Community Safety Partnership, who will together deliver targeted initiatives such as improvements to CCTV and radio networks in Folkestone town centre, increased patrols and initiatives to tackle violence against women and girls.

I have previously been involved in discussions around the Kent & Medway Integrated Care Strategy and recently took part in a symposium to develop this further. The same week, I attended the launch of Kent Move Together (by Active Kent & Medway), where it was mentioned that we have one of the least active districts in Kent – not good if we want to improve mental and physical health. I also attended a meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Network run by Folkestone Sports Centre Trust.

In October, I had the enormous privilege of launching the district's mobile food service which the council has worked with the Rainbow Centre to provide and I helped celebrate the first birthday of Hythe Pantry. The mobile service, understood to be the first in the country to combine a mobile foodbank and food pantry service, also offers cost-of-living advice and support at the locations visited by the mobile van: Hawkinge Community Centre; Harbour Church, Folkestone; Folkestone Academy and Hardy Hall, Lydd. Cheriton Baptist Church will join these locations from January.

Last month I was privileged to chair the inaugural meeting of Folkestone Community Forum, which aims to bring together many community groups in the town, to take a forward-looking approach and give as many groups as we can a voice as Folkestone undergoes changes, including the Brighter Folkestone transformation of the town centre. Soon afterwards, nearly 40 community groups from across the district attended one of the regular networking events organised by the council: this one with the theme 'working together'.

Meanwhile, the council continues to press Kent County Council (KCC) on its intentions regarding Folkestone Library – now closed for almost a year – and we await with interest the results of KCC's consultation on youth services, which we responded to previously. The consultation results are due to be published soon

with a decision to quickly follow that could see funding removed from much-valued youth clubs in Hythe, including Shepway Autism Support Group.

4. Report of Councillor Polly Blakemore, the Cabinet Member for Transport, Regulatory Services & Building Control

Parking restrictions have now been introduced on Turketel Road which joined the Zone B CPZ in October. The two additional loading bays on The Stade are now also in effect to help with the parking issues in that area.

Stagecoach have reintroduced the No 10 bus service to Lympe with effect from Monday 13th November as a trial service so it's up to people to use it in order to prove that it is an indispensable service. We are keeping pressure on Stagecoach to restore a bus service that is fit for purpose in the light of the recent cuts and cancellations due to driver shortages.

I attended the Southeastern Stakeholder Forum where attendees were given an insight into the rail company's fleet and service modernisation plans and progress towards becoming more reliable, efficient and sustainable.

On a sunny afternoon in September I joined Cycle Shepway's Big Bike Ride to see how easy it was to cycle from Radnor Park to the Harbour Area – the answer is 'not very'! Events like this all help to inform infrastructure projects such as Folkestone – A Brighter Future.

There was good news at September's Joint Transportation Board where members voted to approve the proposed Active Travel Scheme for Cheriton which will see a 20mph zone introduced on the High Street along with walking and cycling improvements to make the area safer and more inviting for all. I met with Hawkinge Town Council to discuss parking issues in the town and am in contact with Kent County Council regarding possible solutions to obstructive parking causing delays and cancellations on the No 73 bus route. I joined a walk around at The Stade to review the ongoing problems with parking there with Councillor Meade and parking officers. Further areas for improvement were identified such as marking parking bays and installing on-road signage to deter illegal parking. These measures will be put in place in good time for the next summer season. Central Ward Councillors have arranged a public meeting to which I have been invited in order to meet residents, listen to and discuss their parking concerns and review the current situation. I have also been in conversation as regards parking in and around Hythe High Street. A draft version of the Parking Strategy has been delivered, is being revised and will shortly be reviewed by cabinet members.

Officers have been working hard on the update of Folkestone & Hythe's Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) with the associated planning work being carried out by AECOM. The stakeholder engagement event was held in early November with the next step being the public consultation.

The second Licensing Forum was held in the Council Chamber in September bringing together residents, businesses, the Police and council officers and members. The purpose of these forums is to facilitate a positive and collaborative conversation between the council and all stakeholders to enhance working relationships. Presentations were given by the Licensing Team and Kent Police which provided updates on licensed premises statistics, inspection activity and various initiatives being introduced across the district. The discussion centered around a need for an improvement in communication and engagement between the parties particularly as concerns community challenges such as the antisocial and criminal behaviour of people moving from one licensed premises to another within Folkestone town centre. In response to requests from stakeholders, Licensing Forums will be held more frequently in future with the next one scheduled in January 2024.

The mid-year Food Standards Agency Return has been completed with the team on track to complete the food hygiene inspection programme by 31st March 2024. With the rise in the number of food businesses in the district over the last five years, the number of food and hygiene complaints has also risen. Enforcement action undertaken so far in 2023 has increased by over 150% compared to 2022.

A Section 215 notice was served on the White Lion in Cheriton which has lain empty for nearly two decades and has deteriorated significantly. The owners have until November 2024 to complete a series of improvements to the building. Along with officers, whom I thank for their tireless work, I took part in the Star Chambers to identify budget priorities for 2024/2025.

5. Report of Councillor Gary Fuller, the Cabinet Member for Resident Engagement and Accountability

In the past month, the team have been exploring ways to improve and streamline the support offered to the public. Most recently we have begun to discuss the potential to facilitate the support offered by local organisations through training and sharing appropriate information. A particular focus for this needs to be Romney Marsh, where take up of the Council's online My Account service is lower than in other areas of the district.

Government is also changing how complaints are handled in the public sector and the Council will be responding to that, making changes and suggestions as needed. This will require some internal changes going forwards, but I'm confident the team will take it in their stride.

The Polling District, place and station review consultation finished on November 17th, and the results should be going to the next meeting of the Audit and Governance committee. Many thanks to the Elections team for running this, for producing an excellent report, and for taking on board the suggestions received.

As this is the last Full Council meeting before Christmas, I would like to wish everyone at the Council and across the District a very merry Christmas. Thanks for all that you do to serve our district. I hope you get a well-deserved rest.”

6. Report of Councillor Rich Holgate, the Cabinet Member for Place Plan, Heritage, Tourism and District Economy

A very busy period has seen us take great steps across the portfolio.

Having consolidated Phase 1 feedback we were able to share back with District residents the output of their thoughts in a simple 'you said, we did' fashion. It's an example of how this administration is living its intent to be transparent and engaging with communities.

Phase 2 engagement events are nearly upon us and I am looking forward to seeing many of our residents join us to share their thoughts and feedback on our plans. We have also invited schools and colleges too to ensure we are speaking to and including our 'future residents'!

On the note of working with our communities, we also kicked off the 'Folkestone Community Forum' with many key stakeholders across Folkestone. Cllr Blakemore and I had an array of fantastic feedback and support from the group and I am very excited this Forum is now up and running. A huge thanks to everyone involved in organising this working group.

The Folkestone Community Forum replicates a similar concept to that of our Romney Marsh Partnership which continues to play a significant role in delivering projects and change across the Marsh.

A standout moment since we last met was the launch of the Rural England Prosperity Fund which is looking to provide businesses across the district with grants to drive their business ambitions. Delighted to see several expressions of interest already and looking forward to many more.

Finally, as Summer closed out I spent several weekends enjoying music at the Leas Bandstand, organised by the Chambers. From DJs to a Pink Floyd tribute act - the events have been well attended and great to experience. I understand the owners of the Chambers are potentially looking to move on in the new year. I know I'm not the only one in wanting to thank Chris and Liz Smith for everything they have brought to the music scene in Folkestone and the District and wish them every success moving forward.

Looking ahead, we will be identifying how to better activate our Heritage strategy and ensuring the engagement events are well attended and all feedback captured.

7. Report of Councillor Stephen Scoffham, the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Biodiversity

The key issue since my last report has been the review of Council expenditure. This is a painful but necessary discussion which is necessary in preparing a balanced budget. It has also raised questions about the importance of the climate change and biodiversity agenda within the Council's operations.

Meetings and site visits

- Discussions relating to electrical recycling with Hythe Open Door Project (16th September and 12th October)
- Meeting and site visit to see the Community Fridge and Foodbank in operation at Wood Avenue, Folkestone (21st September)
- Visited Hawkinge Youth Club (28th September)
- Engaged with both local action group and Swingfield Parish Council regarding traffic mitigation measures on the A260 in Densole (2 October)
- Attended the launch of the KCC Making Space for Nature Report (5 October)
- Supported the Sustainable Fashion Show (Sandgate Environmental Action Group) (8 October)
- Liaison with Richard Haines regarding White Cliffs Countryside Project (16th October)
- Attended the This is Our Village open day at Elham Village Hall (21st October)
- Site visit and meeting with Kent Wildlife Trust at Covert Wood (16 November)

Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

Work continues to identify actions within the control of the Council that might usefully be pursued.

District Wide Carbon Reduction Strategy

The strategy is open for public consultation. I have been involved in the process of bringing the report to this point, contributing to the foreword, and speaking on a short video presentation to encourage participation.

Carbon Innovation Lab (CIL)

This group continues to provide a valuable focus for local action groups and met on 20th November.

North Downs Forum

The Forum is slowly emerging as a valuable Think Tank for priorities and actions in the NDE and NDW wards. A second meeting took place on 27 November. These are informal events to generate ideas and are open to anyone who is interested.

Beach erosion

I answered questions about the beach defences between Folkestone and Sandgate on both BBC South East and BBC Radio Kent in early November.

Bid for UNESCO Cross Channel Global Geopark

I have been promoting the bid for the UNESCO Global Cross Channel Geopark both within and beyond the Council. The bid is being prepared jointly by the Kent Downs AONB and the Parc Naturel Regional des Caps et Marais d'Opale. As well as drawing attention to the relationship between people and nature the project aims to celebrate and protect the chalk landscapes in both regions, enhance tourism and bring communities closer together.

Planning issues

There are a number of long-standing planning issues relating to caravan camps and outdoor activities in the North Downs East ward which are now being actively investigated which I am watching closely. I have also been involved with discussions about parking problems in Hawkinge and traffic management on the A260 in Densole.

8. Report of Councillor Rebecca Shoob, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

I was pleased to attend the latest Strategic Tenants Advisory Panel which was given a presentation of the results of this year's Tenant Satisfaction Survey. I was very pleased to note that satisfaction was mostly up on the previous year's results. Full results and analysis will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny before being shared in the next tenants' newsletter due in January.

I also attended the first STAP scrutiny meeting which looked at how the council handles complaints about housing. This was a hugely useful session and I look forward to the results of the follow up meetings.

As agreed by cabinet earlier this month, a consultation will be starting soon on charging tenants for telecare (Lifeline) services at full cost, as these have to date been subsidised by the Housing Revenue account.

Work on the Repairs and Maintenance options appraisal has recently been concluded and will be reported to cabinet next month.

The draft Housing Revenue Account business plan, the result of huge amounts of hard work from the team, was presented to OSC earlier this month. I was absolutely delighted that the team have been able to build in budget for adding new homes to our housing stock, be that through new builds or purchasing existing properties. The HRA faces huge pressures and has to do a lot of things: looking after our existing homes and tenants is absolutely essential – but so is expanding the number of homes available for social rent.

The financial pressures faced by local authorities across the country are huge – as are the pressures faced by many of our residents. I was very pleased to support the recent temporary housing crisis summit convened by Eastbourne Council, which called for urgent government action to address this growing crisis. Although our district has a relatively low use of temporary accommodation, the issue of a low and out of date Local Housing Allowance is a significant issue for us. A letter, signed by Cllr Jim Martin and 118 other council leaders, demanding urgent action on rates of Local Housing Allowance and other measures to help

address the growing crisis, was sent to the Chancellor following the summit. I look forward to the response.

Finally, I must thank officers for swiftly implementing the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol ahead of storm Ciaran and the outreach team and our partners who worked hard to make sure that everyone who wanted to take up accommodation was able to. Thank you also to Members and others who alerted the team to people who may have been in need of help.

9. Report of Councillor Jeremy Speakman, the Cabinet Member for Assets and Operations

As well as casework and attending meetings relating to my Hythe Rural Ward, I continue to have regular meetings and correspondence with relevant officers and residents on matters specifically relating to my portfolio. In addition I have been engaged in the following activities;

- Oral update and report in relation to my portfolio to Hythe Town Council
- On site visits to Radnor Park toilets to assess progress of refurbishment
- Meeting with Councillor Edward Biggs, Dover District Council to discuss shared responsibilities in oversight of the Veolia Waste Services Contract
- Meeting with Hythe Environmental Community Group to discuss expansion of current e-waste recycling scheme and ongoing correspondence.
- On site meeting with Councillors Adrian Lockwood and Jackie Meade and officers to investigate issues with street cleansing in their Ward and subsequent correspondence.
- Meeting with residents from Lymgne regarding their concerns about the Council's feasibility study to site a solar park in the village.
- On site meeting with Councillor Davison and local resident to investigate concerns regarding an abandoned plot of land and siting of bulk refuse bins
- On site meeting with residents from Leas Cliffs to investigate concerns expressed regarding management of vegetation along the cliff.

Implementation of changes identified in the Waste Services Audit action plan has been a key focus in recent weeks. This involves continuing review discussions with the Dover Waste Management Team and relevant officers from Dover District Council. I have also met with my counterpart in Dover, Councillor Edward Biggs to consider ways of improving the effectiveness of the service and joint working arrangements. Recent extended periods of rainfall coinciding with leaf fall and gully maintenance issues have clearly been a challenge for Veolia and there has been some localised flooding.

Projects at Ship Street, Coast Drive and Biggins Wood as well as others remain on track and the income derived will be of major benefit to the council. Smaller scale schemes such as the concession and new toilet block at the Coastal Park may bring less income but have proved to be very popular with the public. New Pétanque courts are being installed at Radnor Park following money raised by a

community group. Through the winter, new fish swims will be installed for fishing on the Royal Military Canal after grant funding from the EA (Environment Agency). The Changing Places Toilets for Disabled Adults Project is on track to deliver new facilities at The Coastal Park, Radnor Park and Dymchurch main car park.

This report will be made public on 21 November 2023



Report Number **A/23/16**

To: Council
Date: 29 November 2023
Status: Non- Executive Decision
Chief Executive: Susan Priest
Responsible Officer: Amandeep Khroud, Assistant Director – Governance, Law and Regulatory Services

SUBJECT: Report to Council on decisions made in accordance with the constitution's call-in and urgency rule

SUMMARY: The constitution provides that, when an urgent decision is made by the Cabinet or Cabinet Member, for which any delay in implementation, likely to be caused by the call-in process, would seriously prejudice the Council's or public interest, then the 'Call-in Rules of Procedure', Part 6.3, rules 1-6 do not apply. Decisions, taken as a matter of urgency, must be reported to the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

This report is recommended to Council, to note for information, in accordance with the constitution, Part 6.3, rule 7.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. To receive and note report A/23/16.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The constitution (paragraph 7, part 7.3, Call-In Rules of Procedure) provides that, when an urgent decision is made, for which any delay in implementation, likely to be caused by the call-in process, would seriously prejudice the Council's or public interest, then the call-in rules of procedure, Part 6.3, rules 1 to 6, do not apply. Decisions, taken as a matter of urgency, must be reported to the next available meeting of the council, together with the reasons for urgency.
- 1.2 On 18 October 2023, Cabinet considered report C/23/41, which outlines reforms to the local plan-making system that will be brought into force when the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill receives Royal Assent; these will be the most far-reaching reforms to the local plan-making system for 20 years. The Bill is expected to gain Royal Assent within the next few weeks. The current consultation, 'Consultation on implementation of plan-making reforms', sets out how the reforms will be put into practice. The consultation is being conducted by the Department for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and will close on 18 October 2023.

The Cabinet resolved:

1. That report C/23/41 be received and noted.
2. That the draft consultation responses set out in Appendix 1 for submission to DLUHC be approved.
3. To express the council's interest in becoming a 'front runner' authority through the consultation response (Appendix 1, Question 41).

It was necessary to take the decision under the constitution's 'Call in and Urgency' rule (Part 6.3, rule 7) for the reasons below:

Government launched a consultation on reforms to the local plan system on 25 July, to implement requirements in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill which is about to receive Royal Assent. The consultation will close at 11:59pm on 18 October. Officers have been assessing the proposals and drafting proposed district council responses to the consultation. Given the wide-ranging nature of the reforms and the lead-in times for September Cabinet, there was insufficient time to take the item to September Cabinet.

2 LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

2.1 Legal Officer's comments (AK)

There are no legal issues arising from this report.

2.2 Finance Officer's comments (RH)

The financial implications of this report were addressed in the Cabinet reports to which this report relates.

2.3 Diversity and Equalities Implications (GE)

There are no diversity and equality implications arising from this report.

3 CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting:

Jemma West
Democratic Services Senior Specialist
Tel: 01303 853 369
E-mail: jemma.west@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

None

This page is intentionally left blank

This report will be made public on 21 November 2023



Report Number **A/23/18**

To: Council
Date: 29 November 2023
Status: Non-executive decision
Responsible Officer: Amandeep Khroud, Assistant Director - Governance, Law & Regulatory Services

SUBJECT: EXTENSION OF TERM OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

SUMMARY: This report sets out the Audit and Governance Committee recommendations on the extension of the appointment of Chris Harman, David Carter and Ken London as the Independent Members under s28(7) of the Localism Act 2011.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Council is asked to agree the recommendations set out below in order to provide the council with independent members under s28(7) of the Localism Act 2011.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note report A/23/18.
2. To extend the term of Chris Harman, David Carter and Ken London as the Independent Persons under s28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 for a further term of four years.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Under S 28(7) Localism Act 2011 the council must appoint an Independent Person to fulfil certain duties under the council's standards regime. In addition the Independent Person(s) were under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 given an additional role.
- 1.2 As the term of office of the Council's current Independent Persons is due to expire on 18 December 2023, the report asks Council to extend the term by a further four years. The three current Independent Persons (Chris Harman, David Carter and Ken London) have all agreed to continue in the role.
- 1.3 At its meeting of 13 September 2023 the Audit and Governance Committee recommended to Full Council:
 1. That report AuG/23/12 be received and noted.
 2. That the term of the three Independent Persons be extended until 18 December 2027 under the provisions of the S 27 (7) Localism Act 2011 and the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.

2. INDEPENDENT PERSONS

- 2.1 Chris Harman's background starts with HR Director at district and unitary tiers and Head of HR for the Independent Television Commission. He has been a Chief Executive of a unitary authority, a consultant with the United Nations Public Administration Network and as a management and HR consultant within the public and private sectors. He has served as the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Folkestone and Hythe District Council. He is a resident in the district.
- 2.2 David Carter's background is a Customs Officer, dealing with international movement of people and goods at ports and airports, primarily in anti-smuggling role. He has worked for HMC&E's Training Services Division where he eventually took charge of the national training programme for all Customs uniformed staff. He has also served as a Magistrate and Justice of the Peace on the Southend-on-Sea and Rochford Bench. Mr Carter is a volunteer guide for National Trust at the South Foreland Lighthouse. Mr Carter served as Chairman of the Shepway Standards Committee until it was resolved in 2012. He is resident in the district.
- 2.3 Ken London's background is an engineer in the public and private sector. He worked as part of an investigation team dealing with insurance matters. Mr London was a member of the Kent Police Authority for ten years, a magistrate for 28 years which included being chairman of the Kent Courts' Board. Mr London is actively involved in two charities. He is a resident in the district.

3. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

3.1 Legal Officer's Comments (AK)

The legislation requires the appointment of at least two independent persons to be approved by a majority of the members of council.

3.2 Finance Officer's Comments (TM)

The service area has advised finance that any costs arising from this report can be met from existing budgets.

3.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications (GE)

No implications arising directly from this report.

4. CONTACT OFFICER AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising from this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting:

Amandeep Khroud, Assistant Director - Governance, Law & Regulatory Services

Tel: 01303 853253

Email: amandeep.khroud@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

[Report to Audit and Governance Committee](#) – 13 September 2023

This page is intentionally left blank

This report will be made
public on 21 November
2023

Report Number **A/23/17**

To: Council
Date: 29 November 2023
Status: Non- Executive Decision
Chief Executive: Susan Priest

SUBJECT: COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

SUMMARY: Under the Folkestone and Hythe District Council Constitution, Part 8.1 'Delegation to Officers', paragraph 3.18, the Head of Paid Service is authorised to make appointments to committees or sub-committees at the request of the relevant political group leader. This report sets out the appointments made, under these powers, on the instruction of the Leader of the Green Group.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. To receive and note report A/23/17.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Under the Folkestone and Hythe District Council Constitution, Part 8.1 'Delegation to Officers', paragraph 3.18, the Head of Paid Service is authorised to make appointments to committees or sub-committees, at the request of the relevant political group leader, subject to the conditions that (a) the appointed member shall be a replacement for a committee or sub-committee member from the same political group, or the appointee is to fill a vacant seat on the committee/sub-committee allocated to the political group of which he/she is a member and (b) the changes shall be reported to the next available meeting of the Council. This delegation is only exercisable in respect of councillors who are members of a political group.

2. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES/SUB-COMMITTEES

- 2.1 The following changes to membership of committees/sub-committees have been made with effect from 16 October 2023:

Committee/ Sub-Committee	Previous Committee Member	New Committee Member
Planning and Licensing	Jeremy Speakman	Anita Jones

3 LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

3.1 Legal Officer's comments (AK)

There are no legal issues arising from this report.

3.2 Finance Officer's comments (TM)

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

3.3 Diversity and Equalities Implications (AK)

There are no diversity and equality implications arising from this report.

4 CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting:

Jemma West
Democratic Services Senior Specialist
Email: jemma.west@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk
Phone: 01303 853369

The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report: None