



Agenda

Meeting: **Folkestone & Hythe District and Parish Councils' Joint Committee**
Date: **14 January 2021**
Time: **7.00 pm**
Place: **Remote Meeting**

To: **All members of the Folkestone & Hythe District and Parish Councils Joint Committee**

The committee will consider the matters listed below at the date and time shown above. The meeting is open to the press and public and will be streamed live at bit.ly/YouTubeMeetings.

Members of the committee who wish to have information on any matter arising on the agenda which is not fully covered in these papers are requested to give notice prior to the meeting to the appropriate officer.

1. **Appointment of chairman**

The committee must appoint a parish councillor to chair the meeting.

2. **Apologies for absence**

3. **Declarations of interest (Pages 3 - 4)**

Members of the Council should declare any interests which fall under the following categories:

- a) discloseable pecuniary interests (DPI)
- b) other significant interests (OSI)
- c) voluntary announcements of other interests

4. **Minutes (Pages 5 - 8)**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2020.

Queries about the agenda? Need a different format?

Contact Kate Clark – Tel: 01303 853267
Email: committee@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk or download from our
website www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

5. **Census in March 2021**

A presentation to be provided by the Census Engagement Manager for South East Kent from the Office of National Statistics.

6. **Covid-19 Vaccination Programme**

An update will be given to members.

7. **Brexit Transition Update**

An update will be provided to members.

8. **'My Account' presentation and update**

'My Account' is the Council's personalised system for residents to give quick and easy access to services. A presentation will be given to members which will include updates and enhancements to this service.

9. **Budget Strategy 2021/22 (Pages 9 - 14)**

Report FH/20/01 summarises the overall Budget Strategy for 2021/22. The report seeks to outline the proposals being consulted upon.

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.

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Minutes

Folkestone & Hythe District and Parish Councils' Joint Committee

Held at:	Remote meeting
Date	Thursday, 24 September 2020
Present	Councillors Graham Allison, Laszlo Dudas, Frank Hobbs, Mrs Jennifer Hollingsbee, Terence Mullard and Paul Thomas
Apologies for Absence	None
Officers Present:	Kate Clark (Case Officer - Committee Services), Gavin Edwards (Performance and Improvement Specialist), Mrs Jess Harman (Community Safety Specialist), Andrew Rush (Regulatory Services & Corporate Contracts Lead Specialist) and Adrian Tofts (Strategy, Policy & Performance Lead Specialist)
Others Present:	Insp. Andrew Brittenden (Kent Police)

7. **Appointment of chairman**

Proposed by Councillor Terry Mullard
Seconded by Councillor Frank Hobbs

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs Jenny Hollingsbee is appointed chairman for the meeting.

Affirmation received from all members.

8. **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

9. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2020 were submitted and approved. The chairman, Councillors Mrs Hollingsbee, agreed that her electronic signature could be added to the minutes.

10. **Community Safety Partnership Plan 2020/21**

Mrs Jess Harman, Community Safety Specialist, along with Inspector Andrew Brittenden from Kent Police, showed a presentation on the work that the Community Safety Partnership and Unit carries out. The presentation is attached to these minutes.

Overall, members were extremely grateful and thanked the Partnership for the services they deliver within the district.

Members asked, at a parish level, what they could be involved with or promote. It was suggested that since the roll out of the Covid-19 test and trace programme, all business are required to display QR codes, and it would be helpful if Parish councils could encourage this at a local level.

Other points noted by members were:

- The CSP and CSU cover the whole district, however concentration of work is more likely to be in Folkestone
- Engagement meetings are a good way of providing information and the CSU will look at any problem areas upon request.
- Covid-19 Marshalls to help ensure social distancing rules. Funding for these is not available at present and details are still awaited.
- Napier Barracks. It was confirmed that there will be police involvement required. Community engagement and residents' safety is paramount. Members were reminded of the virtual meeting to address questions on Friday 25 September at 3pm.

11. **Government Consultation on the Planning White Paper - 'Planning for the Future'**

Mr Adrian Tofts, Strategy, Policy and Performance Lead Specialist, gave a presentation on the MHCLG's planning White Paper, 'Planning for the Future'. The presentation is attached to these minutes.

He advised members that the consultation closes on 29 October 2020. The district council is preparing a response for Cabinet's consideration on 21 October.

Mr Tofts showed in his presentation the three 'pillars' to reforms.

Members noted the following:

- Neighbourhood Plans. Timescales for production of these is extremely tight as the district council have only 30 months to produce a Local Plan, although the Government sees a continued role for parishes within the new system. Government would need to provide more advice on Neighbourhood Plans and how they are incorporated into the updated Local Plan.

- AONB – planning applications would be decided by policies within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- Increase in housing targets. This hasn't been confirmed and there would be constraints to consider, ie green belt and AONBs. A further consultation may come forward.
- Design Codes, these would be used to decide detailed planning applications, however questions arise as to how this would work where they cover towns and villages with buildings from different eras.
- Proposed infrastructure levy would see payments being made at occupation and not when development starts. More details needed as it seems to be more of a shift to local authorities who may have to forward fund infrastructure against the levy.
- Members were pleased to see enforcement strengthening. The White Paper argues that proposals to speed up the planning process could potentially release more officers to carry out enforcement duties and there are proposals to increase the level of fines that could be charged to people who develop without planning permission.

Members thanked Mr Tofts for a very informative presentation.

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This Report will
be made public on
6 January 2021

Report No: **FH/20/01**

To: Folkestone & Hythe District & Parish Councils'
Joint Committee
Date: 14 January 2021
Head of Service: Charlotte Spendley, Director of Corporate Services
Cabinet Member: Councillor David Monk – Leader of the Council

SUBJECT: BUDGET STRATEGY 2021/22

SUMMARY: This report summarises the overall Budget Strategy for 2021/22. The report seeks to outline the proposals being consulted upon.

In accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 full Council will consider and agree the budget and council tax for the coming financial year 2021/22, this meeting will be held on 24 February 2021. Both the draft budget and the Budget Strategy will build into the final position, which is also affected by the Local Government Finance Settlement.

The objectives for consultation on the 2021/22 budget proposals will be to:

- (i) Engage with key stakeholder groups and local residents;
- (ii) Seek feedback on specific budget proposals for 2021/22; and
- (iii) Seek feedback on general spending and income generation priorities

1. BACKGROUND AND BUDGET STRATEGY

1.1 Council approved the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 to 2024/25 (MTFS) on 25 November 2020 and Cabinet agreed the Budget Strategy for 2021/22 on 9 December 2020. These reports considered the council's forecast budget position for 2021/22 from a strategic perspective. The detailed draft General Fund budget will be presented to Cabinet on 20 January 2021, prior to Full Council approving the final budget proposals and the level of council tax at its meeting on 24 February 2020.

1.2 The budget proposals in this report have been prepared assuming a 2.0% council tax increase in 2021/22. The final decision will not be confirmed until 24 February 2021. In addition, the following remain to be finalised:

- the forecast for council tax and net business rates income.
- the council tax base position.
- this council's share of Collection Fund balances.
- the Local Government Finance Settlement.

These items will be confirmed in the final budget report.

- 1.3 The MTFS identified that the Council faced a budget shortfall of £3.5m in 2021/22. The Corporate Leadership Team, Assistant Directors and Chief Officers have reviewed current budget allocations and savings proposals. Unavoidable budget growth of £296k was approved by Cabinet on 9 December. In addition the review of fees & charges and other identified savings resulted in savings of £1.1m (including £65k of additional income following the review of fees & charges) being identified through the Budget Strategy process. The growth and savings approved as part of the Budget Strategy are outlined in full within Appendix 1.

2. CONTEXT

- 2.1 The context and financial climate have previously been set out in the MTFS and Budget Strategy reports. The Council continues to face challenging times and tight financial restraint is expected to continue to be applied across the public sector well over the medium to longer term.

Spending Round

- 2.1 The government previously stated its intention to hold a Spending Review in 2020, covering the period 2021/22 to 2023/24, delayed from 2019 due to political focus on the Transition from the EU. However, with the unprecedented uncertainty of Covid-19 and to prioritise the response to the pandemic, it was announced that a one-year Spending Review would be conducted covering the financial year 2021/22 and that plans for the Spending Review would be kept under review. The one-year Spending Review was announced on 25 November.

Local Government Finance Settlement

- 2.2 The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2021/22 is expected in late December. Any financial impacts arising from the announcement will be built into the draft detailed budget papers being presented to Cabinet in January 2021.

3. RESERVES

- 3.1 The forecast balance on the General Reserve was reported to Cabinet through the Budget Strategy in December 2020 and will be updated to reflect planned use and 2020/21 outturn predictions for inclusion in the final budget reports to Cabinet and Council on 24 February 2021
- 3.2 Estimates of changes to Earmarked Reserves are shown below:

Reserve	Balance 1/4/2020 £'000	2020/21 Movement £'000	Balance 1/4/2021 £'000	2021/22 Movement £'000	Balance 31/3/2022 £'000
Business Rates	5,699	(4,300)	1,399	-	1,399
Invest to Save	366	(366)	-	-	-
Carry Forwards	681	(158)	523	-	523
IFRS ¹ Reserve	31	(23)	8	(1)	7
VET ² Reserve	257	50	307	(66)	241
New Homes Bonus (NHB)		(18)		(344)	1,998
Corporate Initiatives	2,360		2,342		
Maintenance of Graves	998	(694)	304	(58)	246
Leisure	12	-	12	-	12
Otterpool Economic Development	497	49	546	(100)	446
Community Led Housing	1,570	(1,570)	-	-	-
Lydd Airport Homelessness Prevention	401	-	401	-	401
High Street Regeneration	4,384	(2,858)	1,526	(950)	576
Climate Change	417	(52)	365	-	365
	9	-	9	-	9
Total	20,682	(5,914)	14,768	(1,519)	13,249

Notes:

¹ IFRS = International Financial Reporting Standards

² VET = Vehicles, equipment and technology

4. BUDGET PREPARATION – NEXT STEPS

4.1 The following items remain subject to confirmation:

- Final Local Government Finance Settlement.
- Council Tax Base position
- The council's share of the Collection Fund surplus or deficit.
- Town and parish precepts.
- Business rates income forecast.

4.2 These will be covered in the final budget reports to Cabinet and Council on 24 February 2021, along with details of the special expense charged to Folkestone and Sandgate taxpayers.

5. ROBUSTNESS OF ESTIMATES AND ADEQUACY OF RESERVES

5.1 The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council's Chief Finance Officer to formally give an opinion on the robustness of the budget and adequacy of reserves.

- 5.2 The Chief Finance Officer's statement will be presented to Council when it considers the budget for 2021/22 on 24 February 2021; it will set out the assumptions used to arrive at the final budget recommendations.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Any feedback provided through the budget consultation will be reported to Cabinet through the final budget report in February, which will determine the proposed budget and council tax levels for the forthcoming financial year.

7. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

7.1 Legal Officer's Comments (AK)

Subject to Cabinet ensuring best value and having regard to its general fiduciary duties and those relating to equality, transparency and efficiency, there are no legal implications arising directly out of this report.

7.2 Finance Officer's Comments (CS)

The Budget for 2021/22 will be submitted for approval by Cabinet and Full Council in February 2021. This report is the latest stage in the detailed budget process and will be used to inform the preparation of the final budget proposals.

7.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications (CS)

The budget report to Council in February will include an Equality Impact Assessment of the budget recommendations for 2021/22.

8. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

Charlotte Spendley, Director of Corporate Services
Tel: 07935 517986
E-mail: charlotte.spendley@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

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

- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 to 2024/25
- Budget Strategy 2021/22
- Draft General Fund Budget 2021/22

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – 2021/22 General Fund Revenue Growth & Savings Proposals

Growth Proposals

Portfolio	Description of Proposal	£
Recurring items		
Property Management and Grounds Maintenance		
1	Additional funds to support Coastal Protection Schemes	7,900
2	Improvements to the High Street	15,000
Revenues, Benefits, Anti-Fraud & Corruption		
3	Case Officer (focus on Income Recovery)	30,000
Communities		
4	Contribution to KCC for safeguarding work	1,500
Enforcement Regulatory Services, Waste and Building Control		
5	Building Control insurance and registration costs	10,000
6	Increase in Parking Enforcement contract	10,000
7	Licensing Specialist	36,800
8	Environmental Health Officer	44,400
Digital Transformation and Customer Services		
9	ICT licence costs	68,760
Total Recurring Revenue Growth Proposals 2021/22		<u>224,360</u>
Non-recurring items		
Digital Transformation and Customer Services		
1	ICT improvement costs (Office 365/Microsoft Teams)	71,500
Total Revenue Growth Proposals 2021/22		<u><u>295,860</u></u>

Savings Proposals

Portfolio	Description of Proposal	£
Recurring items		
Property Management and Grounds Maintenance		
1	Decrease in Engineers & Building professional fee costs	(20,000)
2	Decrease in Maintenance Officers material costs	(2,850)
3	Decrease in canal drainage costs	(3,000)
4	Decrease in planned maintenance costs	(28,000)
5	Decrease in various building holding accounts	(45,860)
6	Decrease in Street Furniture costs	(5,000)
7	Decrease in passenger shelter costs	(7,500)
Leader		
8	Decrease in various HR costs-training and advertising costs	(47,000)
9	Decrease in Members training	(7,200)
10	Decrease in various Legal Services costs	(9,500)
11	Decrease in Emergency Planning costs	(9,200)
Revenues, Benefits, Anti-Fraud & Corruption		
12	Increase HB overpayments and Council Tax recovery	(230,000)
Housing, Transport and Special Projects		
13	Decrease in Off-Street Parking costs	(10,000)
14	Decrease in On-Street Parking costs and increase in income	(40,500)
15	Decrease in Temporary Accommodation costs	(12,000)
Communities		
16	Decrease in Hythe Pool contract costs	(20,000)
17	Decrease in Community Grants	(15,000)
18	Increase in Lifeline income	(30,000)
Economy		
19	Decrease in Economic Development & Regeneration professional fee costs	(20,000)
Enforcement Regulatory Services, Waste and Building Control		
20	Increase in Household Waste Collection income	(20,000)
21	Increase in garden waste collection income	(90,000)
22	Increase in Household Waste Collection income from KCC for tipping away payments	(150,000)
23	Increase in Pollution Reduction income	(7,500)
24	Increase in Planning Performance Agreement income	(50,000)
25	Increase in Planning application fee income	(92,000)
Digital Transformation and Customer Services		
26	Decrease in ICT licence costs	(29,000)
27	Decrease in various Customer Services costs	(20,600)
Total Recurring Revenue Savings Proposals 2021/22		<u>(1,021,710)</u>
Non-recurring items		
Digital Transformation and Customer Services		
1	Temporary vacancy held for Customer Services Advisor	(26,000)
Total Revenue Savings Proposals 2021/22		<u>(1,047,710)</u>