



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Held at:	Council Chamber - Civic Centre, Folkestone
Date	Tuesday, 14 November 2017
Present	Councillors Miss Susan Carey, Peter Gane (Chairman), Clive Goddard, Miss Susie Govett (In place of Ian Meyers), Ms Janet Holben, Mrs Claire Jeffrey (Vice-Chair), Russell Tillson and Mrs Rodica Wheeler
Apologies for Absence	Councillor Frank McKenna and Councillor Ian Meyers
Officers Present:	Mark Damiral (Housing Options Manager), Leigh Hall (Group Accountant), Adrian Hammond (Housing Strategy Manager), Sue Lewis (Committee Services Officer), Tim Madden (Corporate Director - Organisational Change) and Charlotte Spendley (Head of Finance)
Others Present:	

50. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Miss Susie Govett declared a voluntary announcement as she is a Trustee of Romney Resource Centre. She remained in the meeting during discussion and voting on this item.

51. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 27 September and 10 October were submitted, approved and signed by the Chairman.

52. **East Kent Housing - Proposed new formal resident involvement structure**

Report OS/17/05 sets out proposals developed with residents, to change the formal resident involvement structure for East Kent Housing, to provide improved governance. The purpose of this report is to seek comments and endorsement from the Shepway District Council, Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Debra Upton, East Kent Housing informed members that before these changes resident involvement was poor, these proposals will develop the relationship with residents allowing them to be involved and meeting more regularly.

The old structure had a number of local groups which all ran differently and this new way, that residents have come up with, will allow for their voices to be heard. It will reduce duplication and have a more consistent approach.

The main change being the Residents' Panel which will involve more resident participation, have a pool of resident members who can work with officers and then feed the information back to others.

Members asked a number of questions which the officer responded to and these are set out below:

- Financial implications – this is not driven by money but to hear residents' voices. No financial implications are expected.
- Review – the new structure will be reviewed after one year.
- Residents' Panel – the panel will meet quarterly, dates will be set in advance.

Proposed by Councillor Clive Goddard
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Claire Jeffrey and

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note report OS/17/05.**
- 2. To support the proposals in the strongest forms.**

(Votin: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

53. Property purchase initiative to increase the supply of affordable and good quality temporary accommodation

Report C/17/58 sets out a proposal to purchase a property to be used as temporary accommodation as an alternative to expensive and less suitable Bed and Breakfast accommodation. The proposed temporary accommodation is the most appropriate and cost effective method for meeting the statutory requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Adrian Hammond, Housing Strategy Manager and Mark Damiral, Housing Options Manager presented members with the report noting that the Council's temporary accommodation costs have increased considerably over the last two years.

The acquisition and conversion of a suitable property or properties to provide 12 units of temporary accommodation for homeless households will help to alleviate the increase.

Members asked a number of questions paying particular attention to the following:

- Tenants will be given licences of no more than 6 months in the proposed accommodation but will receive support and future homeless prevention interventions will be provided by officers.
- Officers have learnt lessons from previous types of accommodation and the 12 units proposed will be over 2 or 3 properties and not all in one place.
- Families will not be placed in properties that are not suitable, all the new units will be self-contained with separate bathroom and kitchenette facilities.
- Officers will review the success of the project and if levels of homelessness and the need for temporary accommodation increases the Council could consider providing further units in the future.
- Other options have been considered and the Cabinet Member for Housing, together with officers have visited two modular housing providers, both of which could be used to provide temporary accommodation solutions.

Members noted the report.

Proposed by Councillor Ms Susan Carey
Seconded by Councillor Clive Goddard and

Resolved:

1. To receive and note Report C/17/58.

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

54. General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring - 2nd Quarter 2017/18

Report C/17/60 provides a projection of the end of year financial position of the General Fund revenue budget, based on expenditure to the 31 August 2017.

Members noted the report and the main variations are explained at 2.4 onwards in the report.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Claire Jeffrey
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Rodica Wheeler and

Resolved:

1. To receive and note Report C/17/60.

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

55. Housing Revenue Account Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2017/18 - 2nd Quarter 2017/18

Report C/17/57 provides a projection of the end of year financial position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue expenditure and HRA capital programme based on net expenditure to 30 September 2017.

Members noted the report with officers being informed that the areas at greater risk of variances are being closely monitored, particularly in respect of New Build projects.

Proposed by Councillor Russell Tillson
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Rodica Wheeler and

Resolved:

1. To receive and note Report C/17/57.

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

56. Budget Strategy 2018/19

Report C/17/56 This Budget Strategy sets out the guidelines for preparing the 2018/19 Budget. It supports the Corporate Plan and aligns with the direction and objectives of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The Budget Strategy takes account of current and future financial issues, sets out the underlying assumptions and initial budget-setting proposals and provides a timetable for delivering a balanced budget in 2018/19.

Members noted the report which sets out the current financial position, together with the government funding which remains uncertain in respect of core funding. Changes between the 2017/18 approved budget and 2018/19 budget forecast that have been taken into account are shown in the report at 4.1.

Section 5 of the report outlines the budget proposals for 2018/19 with the Council using a range of approaches to address the deficit in the short and medium term.

Members paid particular attention to the following:

Members paid particular attention to the following:

- Business Rate Retention Scheme – officers informed that a bid consisting of all Kent authorities had been made. If successful this would give a financial benefit to Shepway of at least £0.25 million and access to an East Kent Growth fund. The actual amounts would depend upon the level of business rates received.
- New Homes Bonus – officers informed that changes to the scheme in 2017/18 were set out in paragraph 2.12 and that the government would announce any subsequent changes for 2018/19 at the announcement of the finance settlement. It was reported that if no new government

monies are forthcoming for 18/19 then the Council need to manage within the existing limits.

Proposed by Councillor Ms Susan Carey
Seconded by Councillor Clive Goddard and

Resolved:

1. To receive and note Report C/17/56.

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

57. Update to the General Fund Medium Term Capital Programme and Quarter Monitoring 2017/18

Report C/17/55 provides a projected outturn for the General Fund capital programme in 2017/18, based on expenditure to 30 September 2017, and identifies variances compared to the latest approved budget. The report also seeks full Council's approval to include three new schemes in the General Fund Medium Term Capital Programme previously considered by Cabinet during 2017/18.

Members noted the report paying particular attention to the following:

- Section 2.2 of the report informs of the net reduction in the projected outturn for 2017/18 with members being informed that point 2 - Empty Properties Initiative is delayed due to the joint working scheme with KCC and the lack of demand at present.
- Holiday Lets Development, Coast Drive - ongoing sustainability project.
- Princes Parade – the funding identified is dependent upon the final scheme being agreed.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Rodica Wheeler
Seconded by Councillor Russell Tillson and

Resolved:

1. To receive and note Report C/17/55.

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

58. Fees and Charges 2018/19

Report C/17/54 focuses on the proposed fees and charges for 2018/19 which will contribute towards meeting the council's 2018/19 budget objectives and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Council's Fees and Charges Policy was approved by Cabinet on 8 September 2010 (Report C/10/24). This report recommends some changes to the Policy to ensure it remains relevant and up to date.

Members noted the report agreeing to the recommended changes to the Fees and Charges Policy, paying particular attention to the increases in line with inflation and agreed that action needs to be taken now to benefit the Council in the years ahead.

Proposed by Councillor Ms Susan Carey
Seconded by Councillor Russell Tillson and

Resolved:

- 1. To fully support Report C/17/54.**

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 0)