

Cabinet

Held at:	Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone
Date	Wednesday, 14 December 2022
Present	Councillors John Collier, Ray Field, David Godfrey, Mrs Jennifer Hollingsbee (Vice-Chair), David Monk (Chairman), Stuart Peall, Tim Prater, Lesley Whybrow and David Wimble
Apologies for Absence	None.
Officers Present:	Simon Baxter (Chief Officer - Development), Andy Blaszkowicz (Director of Housing and Operations), Gavin Edwards (Performance and Improvement Specialist), Ewan Green (Director of Place), Andrew Hatcher (Revenues and Benefits Lead Specialist), Jonathan Hicks (Performance Specialist (Business Insight Manager)), Amandeep Khroud (Assistant Director), Sue Lewis (Case Officer (Committee)), Susan Priest (Chief Executive), Andrew Rush (Chief Officer Place & Regulatory Services), Jonathan Smith (Senior Accountant), Charlotte Spendley (Director of Corporate Services), Brian Thompson (Interim Chief Financial Services Officer) and David Whittington (Strategy & Policy Senior Specialist)

NOTE: All decisions are subject to call-in arrangements. The deadline for call-in is Friday 23 December at 5pm. Decisions not called in may be implemented on Wednesday 28 December 2022.

50. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Whybrow declared a voluntary announcement in respect of Folkestone Sports Centre Trust. She remained in the meeting for discussion and voting.

51. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2022 were submitted, approved and signed by the Leader.

52. **Princes Parade project - Options**

In November 2022, due to the significantly changed and difficult economic climate, the decision was taken to pause spending on the Princes Parade Project and for officers to re-evaluate available options and to propose a way forward (Report C/22/56). This report outlined a small number of headline options for consideration.

Proposed by Councillor Tim Prater,
Seconded by Councillor Lesley Whybrow;

That option C be agreed - Stop the project, while future land uses are considered.

(Voting: For 2; Against 7; Abstentions 0)

Councillors Prater and Whybrow asked it to be noted that they voted in favour of Option C.

Upon being put the Vote was LOST

Proposed by David Monk
Seconded by David Godfrey and

RESOLVED:

1. **That report C/22/73 be received and noted.**
2. **That option B be agreed:-**

Option B. Do just the necessary works to implement the planning permission.

3. **That it be noted that Option B would mean the site will remain secure with hoardings in place.**

(Voting: For 7; Against 2; Abstentions 0)

Councillors Prater and Whybrow asked it to be noted that they voted against this option.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Princes Parade Project is currently paused pending further review. A decision is needed on the future of the project to inform the council's budgeting and MTFs process and provide clarity for residents. For these reasons, this report focuses on the limited number of options that are realistically available at this stage.

53. **Quarter 2 Performance report 2022-23**

The report provided an update on the council's performance for the second quarter of the year covering the period 1 July 2022 to 30 September 2022. The report enabled the council to assess progress against the approved key

performance indicators arising from the council's new Corporate Action Plan. Key performance indicators would be monitored during 2022-23 and reported to CLT and Members quarterly.

Proposed by David Wimble
Seconded by Stuart Peall and

RESOLVED:

- 1. That report C/22/66 be received and noted.**
- 2. That the performance information for Quarter 2 2022-23 in Appendix 1 of the report be noted.**

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- a) The council is committed to monitoring performance across all of its corporate service ambitions to ensure progress and improvement is maintained.
- b) The council needs to ensure that performance is measured, monitored and the results are used to identify where things are working well and where there are failings and appropriate action needs to be taken.

54. Fees and charges 2023/24

The report focused on the proposed fees and charges for 2023/24 which will contribute towards meeting the council's 2023/24 budget objectives and Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The council's Fees and Charges Policy was revised and agreed by Cabinet on 15 November 2017 (Report C/17/54).

Proposed by David Monk
Seconded by Tim Prater and

RESOLVED:

- 1. That report C/22/70 be received and noted.**
- 2. That the following be approved:**
 - (i) The 2023/24 fees and charges which are set at the discretion of the Council for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account, as outlined in Appendix 2 with the following amendment:-
Remove the concessionary Football with Changing Facilities charges.**
 - (ii) The parking charges in Appendix 3;**
 - (iii) The statutory charges subject to discretionary fees in Appendix 4.**

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Cabinet agreed the recommendations because the fees and charges are essential to support the delivery of the MTFs and Budget Strategy.

55. **Budget Strategy 2023/24**

The Budget Strategy sets out the guidelines for preparing the 2023/24 budget. It supports the Corporate Plan and aligns with the direction and objectives of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). In terms of financial planning, the Budget Strategy takes account of current and future financial and economic conditions including the outcome of the Government's recent Autumn Statement announced on 17 November 2022. The Budget Strategy also sets out the underlying assumptions and initial budget-setting proposals and provides a timetable for delivering a balanced budget for approval and final Council Tax setting by Full Council on 22 February 2023.

Proposed by David Monk

Seconded by Mrs Jenny Hollingsbee and

RESOLVED:

1. **That report C/22/69 be received and noted.**
2. **That the Budget Strategy for 2023/24 set out in this report be agreed.**
3. **That the General Fund revenue growth & savings proposals for 2023/24 (Appendix 2) be approved subject to:**

The removal of the increase to Members Allowances of £61,000.

The removal of the allocation of £20,000 for Members ICT provision.

4. **That the General Fund capital growth proposals for 2023/24 (Appendix 3) be approved.**
5. **That the proposed timetable for preparing 2023/24 budgets (Appendix 4) be approved.**
6. **That the proposed arrangements for consultation be agreed.**

It was agreed by the Leader that the Corporate Action Plan working group be re-instated.

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Cabinet was asked to agree the recommendations as:

- (i) The Budget Strategy provides the framework for compiling the detailed 2023/24 budgets;
- (ii) The Budget Strategy will support the delivery of the MTFs; and
- (iii) The Budget Strategy enables the publication of initial proposals, timescales and provides details of the arrangements for consultation as required by the constitution

56. **Empty Homes Premiums**

From 1 April 2024, billing authorities will be given the ability to add a Council Tax premium to second homes and to amend existing long term empty home Council Tax premiums. The report reviewed these proposals and recommended that some changes be introduced from the financial year 2024/25.

Proposed by Tim Prater
Seconded by David Godfrey and

RESOLVED:

- 1. That report C/22/62 be received and noted.**
- 2. That it be recommended to Full Council that a Council Tax premium be introduced to second homes from the 2024/25 financial year onwards subject to the bill being enacted and guidance being published by Central Government.**
- 3. That it be recommended to Full Council that the amendments to Council Tax empty home premiums from the 2024/25 financial year onwards be adopted as demonstrated in Table 2 subject to the bill being enacted and guidance being published by Central Government.**

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Cabinet was asked to agree the recommendations to ensure income to the council is maximised whilst giving consideration to the district's Council Tax charge payers, ensuring they are treated in a reasonable and consistent manner.

57. New Grant Agreement - Folkestone Sport Centre Trust

The grant agreement with Folkestone Sport Centre Trust ends in March 2023. The current grant is for £150,000 per annum. Folkestone Sports Centre Trust have developed with the support of consultants, a business plan to assist the recovery of the business from the pandemic. To support the new business plan, the Trust have made a request to council for its continued financial support through a new grant agreement for £150,000 for five-years. The report recommendation was to agree a grant award for a shorter period of three-years.

Proposed by Mrs Jenny Hollingsbee
Seconded by John Collier and

RESOLVED:

- 1. That report C/22/64 be received and noted.**
- 2. That the council enter an agreement with Folkestone Sports Centre Trust for provision of an annual grant of £150,000 for a fixed period of three-years starting from April 2023.**

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 1)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The new grant agreement would support Folkestone Sport Centre Trust's new business plan, its recovery from the pandemic and the continued operation of the leisure centre.

58. **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Update**

The purpose of the report was to update Cabinet on the outcome of the public consultation and set out recommended changes to the document before adoption.

Proposed by David Monk
Seconded by Mrs Jenny Hollingsbee and

RESOLVED:

1. That report C/22/65 be received and noted.
2. That Cabinet supports work being carried out to update the SCI.
3. That Cabinet support the changes to the SCI as set out in Appendix 1.
4. That the updated SCI be approved for adoption.

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

So that the council has an up-to-date Statement of Community Involvement in place, to guide community engagement on planning applications and the local plan, taking account of recent consultation comments as far as possible.

59. **Housing Disabled Adaptations Policy**

The report set out the rationale for the adoption of a new policy, to assist in the management and administration of housing adaptations for Folkestone & Hythe District Council tenants.

Proposed by David Godfrey
Seconded by Stuart Peall and

RESOLVED:

1. That report C/22/68 be received and noted.
2. That the Disabled Adaptations Policy be adopted.

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Disabled Adaptations service was scheduled for review in 2022, as part of the Housing Service's policy development and review programme. As a result, a new policy has been written and is being presented to Cabinet for approval. The Council has certain obligations within housing legislation in relation to providing a fair and managed adaptations service that supports the needs of our disabled tenants. These are set out in the report.