

Meeting: **Cabinet**
Date: **13 December 2023**
Time: **5.00 pm**
Place: **Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone**

To: **All members of the Cabinet**

All Councillors for information

The cabinet will consider the matters listed below on the date and at the time and place shown above.

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.

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest (Pages 7 - 8)**

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

- a) disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI);
- b) other significant interests (OSI);
- c) voluntary announcements of other interests.

3. **Minutes (Pages 9 - 12)**

To consider and approve, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting

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

held on 15 November 2023.

4. **Refresh of the Council's Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy 2023 and general update (Pages 13 - 52)**

The Council is part of the statutory safeguarding role within the wider public sector, with responsibilities to children, young people and vulnerable adults. The children, young people and vulnerable adults safeguarding policy of the Council has been updated and is attached at Appendix 1. Cabinet are advised of the changes made to the 2021 policy as the refresh takes place every two years. Cabinet are also advised of the wide range of activity that has taken place over the last few years with updates on safeguarding practice. Due to the nature of the content of the safeguarding policy Cabinet are presented with a public version (available on the website). An internal version containing personal information is available on the intranet for staff and members.

5. **Quarter 2 Performance report 2023/24 (Pages 53 - 84)**

This report provides an update on the Council's performance for the second quarter of the year covering 1st July-30th September 2023. The report enables the Council to assess progress against the approved key performance indicators arising from the Council's Corporate Action Plan.

Key performance indicators are being monitored during 2023-24 and are reported to Members quarterly.

6. **Oportunitas progress report 2023/24 To 31 October 2023 (Pages 85 - 118)**

This report provides an update from the Board of Oportunitas Ltd ("the company") on activities undertaken so far during the 2022/24 financial year, including a projected outturn for the profit and loss account for the period to 31 March 2024 compared to the original forecast, based on activity to 31 October 2023. The report also outlines the company's audited Statement of Accounts for the financial year ending 31 March 2023. This report is in-line with the requirement contained in the Shareholder's Agreement between the company and the Council.

7. **Options Report on whether to continue to maintain Kent County Council (KCC) owned grass in the District, which is subsidised by Folkestone & Hythe District Council (FHDC) (Pages 119 - 128)**

This report outlines the current arrangement with Kent County Council (KCC) to maintain rural and urban verges and the financial implications of this for Folkestone & Hythe District Council (FHDC). Various options are outlined in the report for consideration to reduce budgets in line with the Star Chamber exercise.

8. **Waste and Street Cleansing contract budget proposals (Pages 129 - 136)**

The following report outlines proposed budget savings, incomes, and growth options for the financial year 23/24 for the Waste & Street Cleansing Contract. The report proposes the council seeks to negotiate a contract saving of £200K, looks to rationalise the overall number of street litter bins, increases to the bulky waste and garden waste fees and a budget growth item to restructure the Waste Team.

9. **Update to the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28 (Pages 137 - 178)**

The Medium Term Financial Strategy ('MTFS') is the Council's key financial planning document. It puts the financial perspective on the Council's Corporate Plan priorities, expressing the aims and objectives of the various plans and strategies in financial terms over the four year period ending 31st March 2028. It covers both revenue and revenue implications for capital spend for the General Fund. Also included are the Council's reserves policies. The MTFS is a key element of sound corporate governance and financial management.

10. **Budget Strategy 2024/25 (Pages 179 - 210)**

This Budget Strategy sets out the guidelines for preparing the 2024/25 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 and the Government's Autumn Statement delivered on for 22 November 2023.

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 28 February 2024.

11. **Fees and Charges 2024/25 (Pages 211 - 242)**

This report focuses on the proposed fees and charges for 2024/25 which will contribute towards meeting the council's 2024/25 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) and was last re-approved in December 2022 (see appendix 1, report C/22/70).

12. **Treasury management 23/24 - quarter 2 report (Pages 243 - 258)**

This report provides an update on the Council's treasury management activities that have taken place during 2023/24 against the agreed strategy for the year. The report also provides an update on the treasury

management indicators approved by Cabinet earlier this year.

13. **Second home and empty home Council Tax Premiums (Pages 259 - 268)**

This is a report to re-affirm a decision passed on 22 February 2023 by Full Council under report number A/22/25. This is due to a delay in Royal Assent being received and therefore a delay of 12 months from the previous decision.

From 1 April 2025, billing authorities will be given the ability to add a Council Tax premium to second homes. Billing authorities will also be given the ability to amend existing long term empty home Council Tax premiums from 1 April 2024. This report reviews these proposals and recommends that some changes are introduced from the financial year 2024/25.

14. **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2023 - 2053 (Pages 269 - 320)**

This report seeks Cabinet approval for the HRA Business Plan (BP) 30-year model which sets the parameters of the work and spend that is undertaken by the Council's housing team, underpinning every decision taken in the HRA. The BP model aligns with the direction and objectives of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), alongside the commitments of the HRA capital programme and acquisitions and new build ambitions for HRA led housing. Once approved by Members, a summary version of the HRA BP will be published in 2024.

15. **Housing Repairs and Maintenance Options Appraisal recommendation for procurement (Pages 321 - 368)**

The Housing Repairs and Maintenance (R&M) current contract with Mears Ltd is due to expire 06/04/2025. The contract is a critical customer facing one as it currently includes all Responsive Repairs and the Planned Maintenance service, (incl. replacement kitchen and bathrooms - capital programme), also Void repairs and some Compliance related services. This contract is Housing's largest and the council's second highest in terms of spend. Following presentation at Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 26 September 2023, a full Options Appraisal Report is attached at Appendix 1.

16. **Consultation from Kent County Council on the draft Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP) (Pages 369 - 396)**

Kent County Council (KCC) is consulting on a draft Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP). The plan aims to develop a network of walking and cycling routes across Kent, integrate cycling and walking into transport policies, set out priorities for future investment and provide evidence to support local projects. The plan is out for consultation until 10

January 2024. The report summarises the KCWIP proposals and puts forward draft comments as the basis for the district council's response to the consultation.

17. **Romney Marsh Coastal Destination Centre including Beach Chalet Project (Pages 397 - 414)**

In June 2021 Cabinet (Cabinet report C/21/13) approved a proposal to create a visitor destination centre on Coast Drive carpark in Greatstone that falls within the council's ownership. The project is an opportunity to create a coastal destination centre, facilitate inward investment, improve the local economy and to bring forward a sustainable place making intervention. The proposal offered 108 beach huts a visitor hub with café/education centre, enhanced car parking, toilet facilities including a Changing Places Toilet and public realm improvements. The project also delivers a revenue surplus to the council from year one and continuing throughout the 20-year lifetime of the scheme.

This report is to advise Cabinet of the work to date and the challenges that have been encountered leading to changes to the original proposed scheme because of site and planning constraints identified during the design development process. The report provides an update on the current design proposal and programme including the proposed procurement of contractors and seeks additional budget approval to enable the delivery of the scheme.

18. **Solar farm Opportunity - Lypne (Pages 415 - 454)**

In response to the recommendations 2 & 3 of the Cabinet report C/23/17 of 12th July 2023 Otterpool Park LLP undertook to explore the opportunity of a solar farm at Lypne and to complete the soft market testing and the options available to the Council.

This report sets out the results of the market testing and makes recommendations on the next steps.

19. **Exclusion of the Public**

To exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that it is likely to disclose exempt information, as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 –

'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). "Financial or business affairs" includes contemplated as well as current activities.'

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