

Meeting: **Council**
Date: **24 January 2024**
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 Chair 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 5 - 6)**

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 7 - 16)**

To receive the minutes of the meeting of the council held on 29 November 2023 and to authorise the Chair 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**

There are no questions from the public.

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 each have an opportunity to reply to the leader's remarks. The opposition group leaders shall 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 17 - 26)**

10. **Opposition Business**

There is no opposition business.

11. **Motions on Notice**

The following motion 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 J Martin, Leader of the Council

The majority of Councillors in the chamber are fully supportive of the move to a committee system and away from a cabinet system. The working group has made great progress and has been well supported by officers and external consultants.

The principles and processes of a committee system are not in question, the problem is the deadline of May 2024 and the lack of time for members to become familiar with the mechanisms and detailed operations of the committee system.

I would therefore like to put forward the following motion - This council believes that the current work on this important project should continue with the view of introducing the changes in May 2025. The proposed governance changes will be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee and Full Council for approval. This will allow more time for all councillors to be familiar with, and understand, the changes involved in the move to a committee system of governance.

12. Refresh of the Council's Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy 2023 and general update (Pages 27 - 66)

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. Council are advised of the changes made to the 2023 policy as the refresh takes place every two years. Council are also advised of the wide range of activity that has taken place over the last few years year with updates on safeguarding practice. Due to the nature of the content of the safeguarding policy Council 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.

13. Review of polling districts and polling places 2023 (Pages 67 - 82)

Section 18 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by Part 4 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006) places a duty on the Council to conduct a review of polling places and polling districts every four years. The last review was concluded by Folkestone & Hythe District Council in September 2019. This report outlines the steps the Council is taking to comply with this duty and seeks approval from Council to approve the recommendations made in the latest review which concluded on 17 November 2023.

14. Second Home and Empty Home Council Tax Premiums (Pages 83 -

92)

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 and other from the financial year 2025/26.

15. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28 (Pages 93 - 136)

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.

16. Committee Membership Changes (Pages 137 - 140)

The report advises on changes to the political balance of Folkestone and Hythe District Council, following the resignation of Councillor Liz Grant on 14 December 2023. It also sets out the appointments since the last Council meeting, under Part 8.1 of the constitution, 'Delegation to Officers', paragraph 3.16, which authorises the Chief Executive to make appointments to committees or sub-committees at the request of the relevant political group leader.