

Agenda

Executive

Thursday, 26 January 2023 at 7.30 pm

New Council Chamber, Town Hall, Reigate



This meeting will take place in the Town Hall, Castlefield Road, Reigate. Members of the public, Officers and Visiting Members may attend remotely or in person.

All attendees at the meeting have personal responsibility for adhering to any Covid control measures. Attendees are welcome to wear face coverings if they wish.



Members of the public may observe the proceedings live on the Council's [website](#).

Members:

M. A. Brunt (Leader)

T. Schofield

T. Archer

R. H. Ashford

R. Biggs

N. J. Bramhall

E. Humphreys

V. H. Lewanski

C. M. Neame

K. Sachdeva

Mari Roberts-Wood
Managing Director

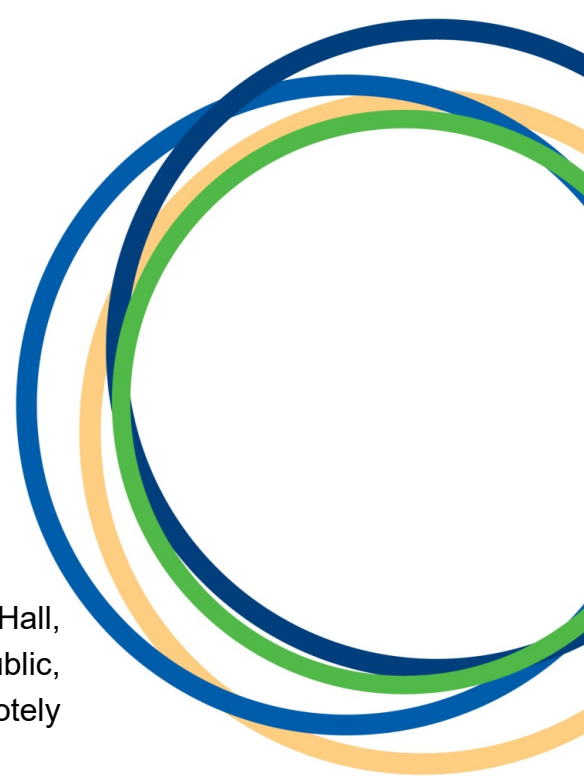
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Reigate & Banstead
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Banstead | Horley | Redhill | Reigate



- 1. Apologies for absence**
To receive any apologies for absence.
- 2. Minutes** (Pages 5 - 12)
To approve the Minutes of the last meeting on 15 December 2022.
- 3. Declarations of interest**
To receive any declarations of interest.
- 4. Budget & Capital Programme 2023/24** (Pages 13 - 164)
The Executive Member for Finance and Governance.
- 5. Council Tax 2023/24** (Pages 165 - 174)
The Executive Member for Finance and Governance.
- 6. Social Housing Downsizing Support Scheme** (Pages 175 - 184)
The Executive Member for Housing and Support.
- 7. Council's Social Landlord Functions - Supporting Policies** (Pages 185 - 220)
The Executive Member for Housing and Support.
- 8. Calendar of Meetings 2023 - 2024** (Pages 221 - 234)
The Leader of the Council.
- 9. Statements**
To receive any statements from the Leader of the Council, Members of the Executive or the Head of Paid Service.

10. Any other urgent business

To consider any item(s) which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered as a matter of urgency – Local Government Act 1972, Section 100B(4)(b).

(Note: Urgent business must be submitted in writing but may be supplemented by an oral report).

11. Exempt business

RECOMMENDED that members of the Press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that:

- (i) it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act; and
- (ii) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.



Our meetings

As we would all appreciate, our meetings will be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and trust, working together for the benefit of our Community and the Council, and in accordance with our Member Code of Conduct. Courtesy will be shown to all those taking part.



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Notice is given of the intention to hold any part of this meeting in private for consideration of any reports containing "exempt" information, which will be marked accordingly.

Minutes of a meeting of the **Executive** held at the **New Council Chamber - Town Hall, Reigate** on **Thursday, 15 December 2022 at 7.30 pm.**

Present: Councillors M. A. Brunt (Leader); T. Schofield (Deputy Leader), T. Archer, R. H. Ashford, R. Biggs and V. H. Lewanski

Attended remotely: Councillor K. Sachdeva

Visiting Members present: Councillors M. Blacker, P. Chandler, J. Essex, N. Harrison. Councillor J. Booton (remotely)

44 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bramhall, Councillor Humphreys and Councillor Neame.

Councillor Sachdeva attended virtually so could not vote at the meeting.

45 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 17 November 2022 be approved.

46 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

47 Commercial Strategy: Progress Update

The Portfolio Holder for Investment and Companies, Councillor Archer, presented the first annual update on progress to deliver the Council's Commercial strategy, Part 1 of which was agreed in November 2020 and Part 2 in December 2021.

Progress on commercial assets and commercial services this year had been positive with work on commercial assets making a particular contribution. Achievements set out in the report included: securing almost £1.2m from new property lettings, preventing nearly £400k of costs from void properties and good progress on developments at The Rise and Wheatley Court enabling cautious income projections of £250k in 2024/25, increasing to £800k by 2027-28. The Council had also agreed to buy temporary and emergency housing units, approved a programme of re-letting café premises in parks to improve income and develop future opportunities on remaining key properties and potential land assembly.

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A review of fees and charges had been completed to make Council services more commercial. This exercise had identified approximately £1m in savings and additional income. Information on those changes was considered in the annual budget papers.

There were areas where plans had changed following new government funding regulations. For example, the Council was no longer progressing plans for a holding company. Proposals to strengthen the Council's procurement and contract management skill base had also been slower than envisaged due to recruitment challenges.

The report was considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 8 December 2022 and additional information including the outcome of individual development projects would be provided. Committee Members also expressed interest in continuing to explore all options for future use of assets and service provision but agreed that in some cases the decision not to progress with a commercial opportunity was the right decision.

Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Harrison, thanked Councillor Archer for highlighting the good progress and achievements that had been made over the year. Additional financial information on projects with both revenue and capital implications had been requested and provided as well as information on revenues and benefits trading activities. In addition, there had been interest in the progress on the housing strategy and plans to move forward future projects using the housing reserve. The formal quarterly asset performance report to the Partner, Shareholder and Trustee Sub-Committee was welcomed.

Visiting Members commented that questions had been raised and information sought on business plan feasibility on housing projects such as Wheatley Court in Redhill. They had also raised questions on social housing future developments as well as information set out in the section on Priority 3: Asset (Re-) Development – Securing new income streams and/or capital receipts from development projects (p28 of the agenda pack).

Councillor Brunt, Leader of the Council, noted that the housing strategy was separate to the commercial strategy, being about delivering more affordable housing across the borough. He confirmed that the Council was now a registered provider of social housing since earlier this year and the Council was providing housing already through that mechanism.

Officers confirmed that as a registered provider of social housing this could attract funding from Homes England. The Council was looking at the land it owned and future opportunities, but increasingly high building costs made building from scratch extremely expensive. Building Wheatley Court had been a positive result for the Council.

Visiting Members also asked about work with Surrey County Council on renewable energy investment opportunities. It was confirmed that officers worked closely with the County's growing climate change team on these issues, including on renewable energy and retrofitting domestic properties.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Commercial Strategy Annual Progress Report at Annex 1, along with the observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, is noted and agreed for publication on the Council's website.

48 Quarter 2 2022/23 performance report

Members received the Quarter 2 2022/23 performance report which gave an overview of the Council's performance from July to September 2022 including Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reporting, as well as revenue and capital budget monitoring and a progress update on the Financial Sustainability Programme.

The Executive Member for Policy and Resources, Councillor Lewanski, updated the Committee on the Council's Key Performance Indicators – of the 10 KPIs reported on, nine were on target or within the agreed tolerance. One red-rated indicator (KPI 3 – Staff Turnover) showed 16% turnover as against a target of 12%. During COVID-19, turnover had been lower than expected and was now 'catching up' due to the strong labour market.

The report had been considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 December 2022. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman, Councillor Harrison, noted that the Committee had commented on affordable housing completions (KPI 7), requested information on projects that had received planning permission, but work had yet to commence, staff turnover (KPI 3) and food waste (KPI 10 Recycling).

Visiting Members asked questions on the following areas:

Staff turnover – Members asked if the rise in staff turnover was across the whole organisation or in a particular department. Officers confirmed that the higher turnover was not concentrated in one department but across the whole organisation. Turnover was continually monitored through exit interviews as staff left for new jobs, life changes following COVID-19 or took retirement. There was a competitive jobs market following the pandemic, making it difficult to recruit skilled staff in some areas.

Affordable housing – Members thanked officers for the breakdown in types of affordable housing that had been provided to Members which showed the affordable housing in the Borough that was for social rent which made it easier to track progress which was positive.

Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance, Councillor Schofield, presented the Revenue and Capital Budget position for quarter 2 to 30 September 2022. On the revenue budget the projected full year outturn was £19.113m against a management budget of £20.062m resulting in an underspend for the year of £948k (4.7%). The full year Capital Programme forecast at the end of quarter 2 was £31.86m (53%) below the approved Programme for the year. The variance was a result of £35.54m slippage and a £0.24m net underspend. The reason for the forecast slippage was that while substantial budgets had previously been allocated for investment in housing developments, the related business cases had not yet been developed.

The report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Chairman, Councillor Harrison, noted that a positive forecast outturn and clearly

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favourable variance was highly satisfactory. Areas highlighted by O&S Members included questions on inflation, energy costs and the favourable variance shown in the return of car parking income. Visiting Members welcomed the separate items set out in the budget monitoring report to show where there was funding that had been allocated for investment such as the housing strategy. They asked about the environmental sustainability reserve and spending in this area. The Leader said this would be looked at in the coming year.

The Leader thanked Councillor Harrison and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their useful and constructive feedback to Executive.

RESOLVED – that the Executive:

1. Notes the Key Performance Indicator performance for Q2 2022/23 as detailed in the report and Annex 1
2. Notes the Budget monitoring forecasts for Q2 2022/23 as detailed in the report and at Annexes 2 and 3.

49 Risk management - Quarter 2 2022/23

Executive Members received an update report on risk management in Quarter 2 2022/23 (July to September 2022). The Portfolio Holder for Policy and Resources, Councillor Lewanski, reported that there were no new strategic risks set out in Quarter 2 and no strategic risks recommended for closure.

At the end of Quarter 2 there was one red-rated operational risk and additional detail on this was provided in Annex 2 (exempt).

The report had been considered by the Audit Committee on 7 December 2022 and no formal observations made to Executive.

There were no questions from Executive Members or Visiting Members.

RESOLVED – that the Executive:

1. Note the Q2 2022/23 update on risk management provided by the report.

50 Treasury Management Strategy Mid-Year Report 2022/23

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance and Governance, Councillor Schofield, introduced the Treasury Management Strategy Mid-Year Report which provided an update on the performance of the Council's treasury management activities for the first half of this financial year. The report forms part of formal reporting requirements under the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

Councillor Schofield reported that treasury management performance for 2022/23 to date including performance against the Council's Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators was on track and complied with the borrowing and investment position and limits that Members had agreed previously as part of the Strategy for 2022/23.

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One minor non-compliance matter was highlighted in the report (funds held in an investment account for one day more than the timescale specified) and investment procedures had been reviewed as a result to improve controls.

The report had been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 7 December 2022. An Addendum to the agenda had been published which set out the observations from Members in the draft Audit Committee minute on this item.

A Visiting Member from the Audit Committee commented that the Committee had expressed strong reservations about the information presented at Table 5: Investment Portfolio – Non-Treasury Investments (p105) in the report to the Committee. As the Chairman of the Audit Committee, Councillor J. King, could not attend this Executive meeting, a statement from him on behalf of the Committee had been circulated to Executive Members. The Committee's concerns were specifically about the limitations of the information provided in the report on the current and forecast value of the Council's investments in Horley Business Park LLP, Greensand Holdings Limited and Pathway for Care Limited.

Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance, Councillor Schofield, noted that the purpose of the Treasury Management report was not an appraisal of the Council's companies. It was a brief snapshot of funds invested at a point of time and showed the cumulative value of loans and interest accrued to date. Information on the Council's companies was provided in regular performance reports, which were reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as well as in the annual Statement of Accounts to the Audit Committee.

Councillor Schofield and Portfolio Holder for Investment and Companies, Councillor Archer, invited Audit Committee Chairman, Councillor J. King, to attend future meetings of the Executive's Partnership, Shareholder and Trustee Sub-Committee (formerly named the Commercial Ventures Executive Sub-Committee). This gave more detail about ongoing work in this area and the Chairman could thereby be aware of commercial confidential discussions and raise questions on behalf of the Audit Committee.

Visiting Members raised concerns that the information in Table 5 on third party loans was set out in a way that was inaccessible to a member of the public or to a lay person without a finance background. Without further background information attached to the table, it did not provide the information they were seeking on company assets and income. They asked for further clarity on the information provided and assurance that there were plans in place to mitigate any future risks.

Councillor Brunt, Leader of the Council, responded that the detail and background information on companies' performance was contained in the twice-yearly Companies Performance Update report to the Overview & Scrutiny and Partnership, Shareholder and Trustee Committees which is available to all Members. The Treasury Management Strategy Mid-Year report was not designed to be a detailed report on investments as this information was provided in other reports to Committee which covered many of these points. Any investment carries a degree of risk which is examined through detailed business cases and considered by the Executive's Commercial Ventures Executive Sub-Committee (CVESC) – now the Partnership, Shareholder and Trustee Sub-Committee.

Chief Finance Officer, Pat Main, confirmed that this report was not intended to be an investment appraisal or detailed performance report. It was a factual statement of

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sums advanced and of interest accrued. As noted by Members, a comprehensive companies update report is submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and their observations are provided to the Executive's Partnership, Shareholder and Trustee Sub-Committee. The accounting value of company investments is reported in the Statement of Accounts which is reported to the Audit Committee each year.

Portfolio Holder for Investment and Companies, Councillor Archer, in response to the concerns raised, clarified that Greensand Holdings Ltd has an income stream – the rental income on the Crown House offices – and that interest on the loan for the land in Horley was capitalised. This was a legitimate and acceptable accounting treatment for development land. He emphasised the oversight of the companies' performance is set out in regular reports to the Partnerships, Shareholder and Trustee Sub-Committee (formerly CVEESC) that all Members could attend.

Managing Director, Mari Roberts-Wood, added that treasury management reporting was laid out in statutory guidance to all local authorities, with set criteria, which all local authorities and Section 151 Officers are required to follow when producing their reports to Committee.

It was noted that the discussions at Audit Committee had referred to the challenges in interpreting technical treasury management information. The Leader supported the proposed additional training from the Council's treasury advisers to assist Members on the Committee with their important work.

Following this discussion, Visiting Members asked a further question about ethical and sustainable investments, such as using banks that have significant investments in fossil fuels, and if this is taken into account. Chief Finance Officer, Pat Main, confirmed that regard to environmental, sustainability and governance (ESG) factors was an increasingly relevant factor for consideration when investing, however this must always be secondary to ensuring security, liquidity and income from the Council's investments. Further information will be provided in the Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24.

RESOLVED – that the Executive:

1. Note the Treasury Management Performance for the year to date and the updated prudential indicators, note the observations from the Audit Committee, and **RECOMMEND** the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report to Council.

51 Statements

There were no statements.

52 Exempt business

There was no exempt business discussed.

53 Any other urgent business

The Observations on Budget Scrutiny – Budget Scrutiny Panel Report from was published as an Addendum following the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting the previous week on 8 December 2022 and was discussed at agenda item 10a (Minute 53a).

53a Observations on Budget Scrutiny - Budget Scrutiny Panel Report

Executive Members received the report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Budget Scrutiny Panel which met on 29 November 2022 to consider the provisional Budget proposals for 2023/24 and to make recommendations to the Executive in line with the Council's budget and policy procedure rules. This had been discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 December 2022. The Committee's observations and recommendations were set out below.

Councillor Harrison, Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Panel, introduced the report. It was a full report in terms of a balanced revenue budget which was an improvement from the previous year

- There were still uncertainties about government grants so Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider this item again at its January meeting
- The main recommendations in the Budget report were agreed from (i) to (vii). The Panel noted the £1.5m budget for staff salary growth.
- Recommendations (viii) to (x) set out that the budget proposals were achievement, realistic and based on sound financial practices.
- Recommendation (xi) to (xiii) noted proposed savings would not be expected to have a significant impact on services, inflation cost pressures had been addressed and earmarked Reserves would be used, as necessary, with analysis requested on how they are used over previous years.

There had been 60 plus questions from Panel Members which all received full responses with supplementary questions asked at the Panel. He thanked the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Schofield and officers for these responses and for helpful changes in the way the information in the report was presented.

Councillor Brunt, Leader of the Council, thanked the Budget Scrutiny Panel and Overview and Scrutiny Committee members for their work on scrutinising the Budget for the coming year. Good feedback had been received through the scrutiny process and useful points had been raised which could be taken forward for the final Budget & Capital Programme 2023/24 report to Executive on 26 January 2023 and to Council on 9 February 2023.

RESOLVED that the Executive note the following observations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee following recommendations from the Budget Scrutiny Panel in response to the Service and Financial Planning 2023/24 report:

- i. The national and local policy context and significant financial uncertainties at this stage in the budget-setting process were noted, along with the associated uncertainties and risks.

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- ii. The service proposals set out in the report which seek to respond to this context and deliver corporate policies be endorsed.
- iii. The draft service business plans for 2023/24 to 2025/26 be approved, and that Heads of Service be authorised to finalise their plans for their service areas in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders.
- iv. The following be approved for consultation under the Council's budget and policy framework: a) Medium Term Financial Plan Forecasts and proposed actions to address the forecast Revenue Budget gap; b) Service Revenue Budget growth proposals totalling £0.442 million, savings of (£0.828) million and additional income of (£1.186) million; c) Central Revenue Budget Savings proposals totalling (£0.897) million. The Panel noted that the £1.500 million budget for pay increases was not specifically referenced in this Recommendation but acknowledged that it was included in the supporting tables and narrative in the body of the report. d) Revenue Issues, Risks and Opportunities totalling £2.407 million, to be funded from earmarked Reserves as necessary; e) Revenue Reserve Balances at 1 April 2022 of £45.596 million; f) Forecast balanced Revenue budget for 2023/24, subject to final confirmation of the outstanding items; and g) Capital Programme Growth proposals totalling £7.683 million. With the provision of a clearer explanation for the £1.5million for staff salary growth under c) Central Revenue Budget Savings proposals.
- v. The Fees & Charges Policy was noted.
- vi. The Reserves Policy was noted.
- vii. The Local Council Tax Support Scheme be reviewed during 2023/24 and the outcome be reported as part of Service & Financial Planning for 2024/25.
- viii. Assumptions and individual budgets were to be reconsidered following the December Government financial settlement announcement; consequently the Panel did not draw a final conclusion on the overall Budget proposals for 2023/24.
- ix. The final Service and Financial Planning 2023/24 report to Executive on 26 January will also be an agenda item for discussion at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 January 2023.
- x. The Panel considered the explanations in the Budget report for year on year changes in the budget and found the Budget proposals to be achievable, realistic and based on sound financial practices and reasonable assumptions, subject to the outstanding matters set out in (1), (2) and (3) above.
- xi. The Panel noted that the proposed savings were not expected to have a significant impact on service scope or quality.
- xii. The Panel noted that inflation cost pressures had been addressed in the Budget on a case by case basis. The Panel expressed concern about recent inflationary pressures which put short-term inflation well above the Bank of England target and suggested this would put unbudgeted upward pressure on the cost of goods and services and on personnel costs.
- xiii. The Panel noted that the Budget for 2022/23 included the use of £2.407 million funding from earmarked Reserves, as necessary, and that the use of these Reserves was necessarily a one-off source of funding.

The meeting finished at 8.33 pm



SIGNED OFF BY	Chief Finance Officer
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TO	Executive
DATE	Thursday, 26 January 2023
EXECUTIVE MEMBER	Portfolio Holder for Finance & Governance

KEY DECISION REQUIRED:	YES
WARD (S) AFFECTED:	ALL

SUBJECT:	BUDGET 2023/24 and CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 to 2027/28
RECOMMENDATIONS:	
That Executive recommend to Council:	
<p>(i) The latest Medium-Term Financial Plan forecast at Annex 1</p> <p>(ii) An increase in Reigate & Banstead’s Band D Council Tax of £7.25 (2.99%) and a final taxbase of 63,495.31 Band D equivalents;</p> <p>(iii) A Revenue budget requirement of £23.194 million for 2023/24, as set out in this report and at Annex 2, which reflects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service budget growth proposals totalling £0.442 million, savings of (£0.828) million; additional income of (£1.186) million and forecast issues, risks and opportunities totalling £1.843 million; • Central Revenue Budget net growth proposals totalling £2.379 million and forecast issues and risks totalling £0.564 million; <p>(iv) The forecast for Revenue Reserves (Annex 3) and the recommended use of £0.977 million from Reserves in 2023/24 comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £0.493 million from the IT Strategy Reserve to fund implementation of the approved IT Strategy; and • Up to £0.484 million from the Government Funding Risks Reserve, where necessary, to fund the forecast reduction in housing benefit subsidy; 	

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- (v) **A Capital Programme of £59.899 million for 2023/24 to 2027/28 as set out in this report and including net Capital Programme Growth Proposals of £7.672 million;**
- (vi) **The updated Fees & Charges Policy (Annex 7)**
- (vii) **The Chief Finance Officer's report on the robustness of the Budget estimates and adequacy of Reserves.**

That Executive authorise:

- (viii) **The Chief Finance Officer to make any necessary final technical adjustments to the Budget and Council Tax arising from final budget refinements or changes to Government funding.**

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To ensure that the Council continues to plan and manage its resources well, deliver high standards of service and meet the aims and objectives of its Five-Year Plan for 2020-2025 and supporting Strategies.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report sets out the recommended Revenue Budget and a £7.25 (2.99% per annum) increase in Band D Council Tax for 2023/24. It also presents the recommended Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2027/28.

Recommendations (i) to (vii) are subject to approval by the Council. The Executive has authority to approve recommendation (viii).

STATUTORY POWERS

1. The Local Government Act 1972 requires the Council to set the associated annual budget as part of proper financial management. This report is part of that process.
2. The Local Government Act 1992 requires councils to set a balanced budget and announce the Council Tax level by 11 March each year. Section 65 of the Act requires the Council to consult representatives of those subject to non-domestic rates in the Borough about its proposals for expenditure for each financial year.
3. The Chief Finance Officer has a key role to play in fulfilling the requirements of the statutory duty under the Local Government Act 2003 to keep the authority's finances under review during the year and take action if there is evidence that financial pressures will result in a budget overspend or if there is a shortfall in income.
4. Council Tax Reduction Scheme: Section 13A(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) requires billing authorities to make a reduction scheme for persons in financial need or classes of persons that the authority considers – in general – to be in financial need. Section 13A(1)(c) of this Act gives billing authorities the power to reduce a liability to an extent that is seen fit.
5. Local Council Tax Support Scheme allowances and premiums will be increased on 1 April in line with other national increases contained within the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 and the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012; the Local Scheme is also scheduled for review during 2023/24.

FINANCIAL CONTEXT

6. The purpose of this report is to:
 - Set out the recommended Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2023/24 following scrutiny of the draft budget proposals and the provisional Local Government Funding Settlement announcement on 19 December 2022;
 - Set out the proposed Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2027/28; and
 - Receive a commentary on the budget and adequacy of reserves from the Chief Finance Officer, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003.

Government Funding

7. The 2023/24 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was published on 19 December 2022. As expected, it was for one year only and is based on rolling-over the core elements of Spending Review 2021 (SR21) funding levels.
8. Once again, the emphasis was on providing stability by rolling forward key elements of 2022/23 funding alongside extra cash for priority areas, such as social care, and a commitment to increase district and borough authorities' Core Spending Power (the Government's measure of the resources available to local authorities to fund service delivery) by at least 5%, after taking account of the increased council tax referendum limit that was announced in the November Autumn Statement. While welcome this was still below the forecast rate of CPI at 5.5% and the 9.2% increase for upper tier councils.
9. This was another one-year settlement; however the announcement did set out some core principles for 2024/25 including maintaining funding and council tax increases at 2023/24 levels. The current expectation is that local government funding reform will now take place after the next general election, no earlier than 2025/26.

The main points are set out below:

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- **Council Tax** – the council tax referendum limit will be 3% for lower tier authorities.
- **Business Rates (NNDR) Retention** – the business rates multiplier has once again been frozen instead of increasing in line with inflation. Therefore, the three elements of the NNDR Retention system (Baseline Need, NNDR Baseline and Tariff/Top Up amounts) remain at 2022/23 levels. However, the Under-Indexing Multiplier Grant has been increased to ensure that local authorities' shares of NNDR income is not impacted (although the indexing basis is now RPI instead of CPI). The NNDR Revaluation in April 2023 is not anticipated to have significant impacts on this Council's funding position (or its own NNDR costs) due to the associated transitional support arrangements.
- **Top Up/Tariff Adjustments ('Negative RSG')** – as in previous years, the Government has eliminated the negative RSG impacts for another year.
- **Lower Tier Services Grant** – this grant has been deleted.
- **Services Grant** – this grant has been retained but reduced.
- **Minimum Funding Guarantee Grant** – new for 2023/24 onwards – funding to ensure an increase in all authorities' Core Spending Power
- **New Homes Bonus** - 2023/24 allocations were announced. The 'deadweight' of 0.4% has been maintained but there are no longer any 'legacy' payments in respect of previous years' allocations.
- **Council Tax Support** – £100 million additional funding was announced.
- **Rough Sleepers and Troubled Families Programmes** – as in previous years no announcements were made as part of the Settlement.
- **Homelessness Prevention** – £310 million Homelessness Prevention Grant for 2023/24 was announced on 23 December; along with consultation on a proposed new distribution approach.

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLANNING

10. The Council has been planning for the loss of Government funding, with the objective to become financially self-sufficient going forward. In order to achieve self-sufficiency the Council needs to continue to find budget efficiencies whilst also generating new sustainable sources of additional income.
11. An updated Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was approved in July 2022 and forecasts were refreshed in November 2022. The MTFP sets out the financial direction of the Council over the medium term to ensure that the Council plans and manages its resources effectively. It also sets out the priorities that have been taken into account when preparing the budget for 2023/24:
 - To ensure resources are aligned with the Corporate Plan **priorities**
 - To maintain a **balanced budget** such that expenditure matches income from council tax, fees & charges, and government and other grants and to maintain that position
 - To set a rate for **council tax** which maximises income necessary to deliver our strategic objectives while ensuring that Government referendum limits are not exceeded. The percentage increase will be reviewed annually and be approved by Full Council
 - To maximise other income by setting **fees & charges**, where we have the discretion and need to do so, at a level to ensure at least full cost recovery, promptly raising all monies due and minimising the levels of arrears and debt write offs

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- To ensure a long-term sustainable view is taken of our **investments** and that appropriate risk analyses are used when considering new investments
 - To consider and take advantage of **commercial opportunities** as they arise to deliver new income streams
 - To maintain an adequate and prudent level of **reserves** and regularly review their planned use and allocation to support delivery of our priorities.
12. The latest MTFP forecasts are set out at Annex 1 and indicate a budget gap of £3.042 million for service budgets in 2024/25, reducing to £2.373 million by 2027/28. Further work will commence to update MTFP forecasts to support service & financial planning for 2024/25 onwards. The outcome will be reported to Executive in summer 2023.

Financial Sustainability Programme

13. Reliance on one-off measures such as the use of Reserves is not without risks and will not be sustainable over the long-term. Going forward, solutions that reduce costs or increase income on a permanent basis will have to be identified for 2024/25 onwards.

14. A Financial Sustainability Programme has been implemented, focussing on four key areas:

Income Generation

- Pursuing opportunities to generate new income streams;
- Optimising Fees & Charges; and
- Implementation of the Commercial Strategy.

Use of Assets

- Making effective use of existing assets, including the repurposing and sale of surplus properties.

Prioritisation of Resources

- Reviewing in-year budget monitoring forecasts to identify new opportunities for savings and efficiencies;
- Reviewing the level of service provided and focussing resources on priority services; and
- Managing pay costs and making effective use of staff resources.

Achieving Value for Money

- Actively pursuing options to share with other councils to realise efficiency savings; and
- Identification of invest to save opportunities – including investment in technology and assets to reduce operational costs.

15. The Corporate Governance Group (comprising statutory officers and Directors) oversees progress in the identification and delivery of initiatives in the Plan while delivery of individual projects is managed through officer management Boards.

16. Progress is reported to Executive, Overview & Scrutiny and individual Portfolioholders as part of quarterly performance reporting.

Commercial Strategy

17. While service efficiencies and council tax increases are important, their contribution to addressing the financial challenges faced by the Council is limited. It is therefore important that the Council also becomes an increasingly commercial organisation. This means maximising existing net income streams and generating new ones to support service delivery. This requires investment – and will have an element of commercial

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risk – but it will also enable the Council to develop and grow into a self-sustaining organisation. To guide its work in this area, the Council agreed its Commercial Strategy Part 2 in December 2021.

18. The Commercial Ventures Executive Sub-Committee (now the Partnership, Shareholder and Trustee Executive Sub-Committee), supported by other Executive Members, has been working to develop and implement the Council's commercial agenda. This has included (and will continue to include) consideration of the scale and appropriate type of investments and income generation opportunities - including opportunities for partnership working - all in the context of the wider economic and policy framework within which the Council needs to operate.
19. The current MTFP financial model includes indicative forecasts for income from newly-constructed commercial units at the Cromwell Road and Marketfield Way (The Rise) developments. These are based on an early assessment of the level of rental income net of landlord overheads and handover expenses; they will be updated in future MTFS reports as these developments are handed over and tenancies are signed. Forecasts for other commercial projects will be included when individual business cases have been approved and delivery timescales are confirmed. An annual report on progress against the Council's Commercial Strategy was provided in December 2022.

REVENUE BUDGET

20. The Revenue Budget comprises five 'building blocks' as follows:

- **Net Cost of Services:** These are the direct costs incurred in delivering services, net of specific income generated by them;
- **Central Budgets:** These are costs incurred and income received that are not service-specific, eg. Pension Fund deficit contributions and treasury management costs and income;
- **Sources of Funding:** These income budgets are general, non-service specific income sources. They include other grant funding from Central Government and our share of Non-Domestic Rate income;

For 2023/24 it includes the continued impact (benefit) of the one-off elimination of 'Negative Revenue Support Grant'. Over the medium term this is expected to cease (now no sooner than 2025/26) resulting in a significant budget pressure;

- **Council Tax:** After the budget requirement has been established for the other blocks then the amount required by this Council from council tax can be calculated; known as the 'Demand on the Collection Fund'; and
- **Contributions (to)/from Reserves:** This relates to use of Earmarked Revenue Reserves, which have been allocated to fund specific purposes. The impact of the use of Reserves is a reduction in the total income demand on council taxpayers. It also refers to the use of funds from the General Fund Balance to support the annual revenue budget

21. The table below summarises the final Revenue Budget for 2023/24

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Table 1: BUDGET SUMMARY	Budget 2022/23 £m	Budget 2023/24 £m
1. Net Cost of Services	17.544	17.814
2. Central Budgets	2.437	5.380
NET EXPENDITURE 2023/24	19.980	23.194
3. Council Tax	15.222	16.293
4. Business Rates (NNDR)	1.710	3.994
5. Other Un-ringfenced Grants		
• Lower Tier Services Grant	0.107	-
• Services Grant	0.164	0.093
• New Homes Bonus Grant	1.000	1.034
• Minimum Funding Guarantee Grant	-	0.803
6. Grants Transferred to Reserves:		
• Homelessness Prevention	0.668	0.686
• Transfer to Reserves	(0.668)	(0.686)
7. Call on Earmarked Reserves:		
• Government Funding Risks Reserve	0.115	0.484
• Pension Reserve	0.350	-
• COVID-19 Risks Reserve	1.100	-
• IT Strategy Reserve	-	0.493
Use of funds from the General Fund Balance to support the Revenue Budget ¹	0.212	-
NET SOURCES OF INCOME	19.980	23.194

NOTE

- The actual sum to be drawn from Reserves to support the budget will depend on the budget outturn position for 2022/23. Over recent years the budget outturn has been an underspend position with no requirement to call on Reserves.

2023/24 Service Budget Proposals

22. Service budget proposals are summarised below:

Table 2: SERVICE BUDGET PROPOSALS	Approved Budget 2022/23 £m	Proposed Budget 2023/24 £m	Net Budget Increase / (Decrease) £m
ORGANISATION			
Communications / Customer Service	1.151	1.104	(0.047)

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Table 2: SERVICE BUDGET PROPOSALS	Approved Budget 2022/23 £m	Proposed Budget 2023/24 £m	Net Budget Increase / (Decrease) £m
Finance	1.260	1.235	(0.025)
ICT	1.810	1.851	0.041
ICT - Reserve-funded growth for Strategy implementation	-	0.493	0.493
Legal & Governance	2.294	2.406	0.112
Organisational Development & HR	0.816	0.716	(0.100)
Corporate Policy, Projects & Performance (including Environmental Sustainability)	0.449	0.429	(0.020)
Property & Commercial	(1.203)	(1.222)	(0.019)
Property & Commercial – growth for Reserve-funded issues & risks	-	1.350	1.350
PLACE			
Economic Prosperity	0.282	0.277	(0.005)
Neighbourhood Operations	5.239	4.336	(0.903)
Place Delivery	0.371	0.326	(0.045)
Planning	0.718	0.593	(0.125)
PEOPLE			
Community Partnerships	1.312	1.184	(0.128)
Housing	1.026	0.926	(0.100)
Revenues, Benefits & Fraud	0.537	0.487	(0.050)
Leisure & Culture	0.538	0.335	(0.203)
SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM	0.943	0.988	0.045
TOTAL	17.544	17.815	0.271

23. For 2023/24 onwards the cost of housing benefit payments and associated government funding will be reported in budget monitoring as Central Budget item instead of within Service budgets (Revenues, Benefits & Fraud) on the basis that these are costs that are generally outside Council's direct control.
24. An area for future consideration as part of budget-setting relates to posts that are currently funded through calling on the Homelessness Prevention grant that is held in an Earmarked Reserve. They comprise:
- Housing 6.9 FTE £0.247m
 - Revenues, Benefits & Fraud 1.0 FTE £0.033m
25. The 2023/24 Homelessness Prevention grant allocation of £0.686 million was confirmed in December 2022. This has been transferred to an earmarked Reserve until called upon to fund related expenditure. While there is currently sufficient grant funding available for these posts to continue in 2023/24 there always remains a risk that the grant may cease and a decision would be required whether to continue to fund these posts through the Revenue budget as part the service & financial planning process.
26. Other posts that are funded fully or in part from fixed term resources include:

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- Community Partnerships 1.0 FTE £0.044m East Surrey Heartlands NHS
- Community Partnerships 0.4 FTE £0.018m Surrey County Council
- Economic Prosperity 1.0 FTE £0.034m DWP
- Leisure & Culture 4.3 FTE £0.157m Refugee Support Grant
- Leisure & Culture 3.0 FTE £0.131m East Surrey Partnership
- Place Delivery 1.0 FTE £0.071m Section 106 funding
- Planning & Development 2.0 FTE £0.087m CIL

27. As reported to Executive in October 2022, work on preparing the Local Plan will require the allocation of funding from the Corporate Plan Delivery Fund in 2022/23 onwards as the details and timings are confirmed. It is also anticipated that work on the Council's response to the Development Consent Order relating to Gatwick airport expansion will also require the allocation of funding from the Corporate Plan Delivery Fund in 2022/23 onwards as the details and timings are confirmed.
28. The 2023/24 budget does not include any specific funding implications arising from implementation of the Leisure & Culture and Organisation Development strategies that are currently in development. Any significant implications will be considered as part of service and financial planning for 2024/25.
29. Net Service savings, additional income and growth proposals of £1.572 million were approved in the Service & Financial Planning 2023/24 report to Executive on 17 November 2022. This included deletion of 3.6 FTE vacant funded posts and £1.186 additional income from Fees & Charges.
30. There are no additional Service savings, income or growth proposals in this report.

Service Budget Issues, Risks and Opportunities – 2023/24 Onwards

31. In addition to the service budget growth proposals in this report there are other potential service budget pressures and opportunities that will have to be addressed in 2023/24 onwards:

Issues:

(i) Energy Prices

- Electricity and gas costs are currently forecast to be up to £0.700 million higher in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23 budgets;
- The current 12 month contracts are due to be renewed again in March 2023 (gas) and October 2023 (electricity) and it is challenging to forecast what prices will be at that time due to the volatility of the supply market;
- There is also uncertainty regarding the extent to which the Government's planned financial support mechanism for businesses and the public sector will reduce these pressures. Recent announcements indicate that the support provided will be lower than during 2022/23;
- It is therefore proposed to include budget growth for these costs in 2023/24. Action will also be taken to reduce consumption wherever possible.

Risks

Service Budget risks are detailed in the MTFP Summary at Annex 1 – the most significant include:

(i) Property Rental Income

- Excellent progress has been made over the past year to fill several of the Council's longstanding void commercial properties. This has the dual

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benefit of maintaining rental income levels and also avoiding having to fund the costs of managing empty buildings (energy, rates, insurance, etc). However there will always be periods of time when some units are vacant.

- It is now necessary to realign property budgets to ensure that there is sufficient funding to cover the costs of premises that are forecast to be void in 2023/24.
- It is proposed to include £0.650 million budget growth for these costs in 2023/24.

(i) Government Waste & Resources Strategy

- Proposals set out in the Waste & Resources Strategy, are still anticipated to be introduced via secondary legislation following enactment of the Environment Bill and this was confirmed in the Settlement announcement in December 2022. The Strategy sets out how the Government intends for the country to preserve material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency, and moving towards a circular economy.
- Three key measures from the Strategy are proposed:
 - Invoke the 'polluter pays' principle and extend producer responsibility (EPR) for packaging;
 - Introduce a deposit return scheme (DRS) for drinks containers, to reward people for bringing back bottles and encourage them not to litter their empties; and
 - Improve recycling rates by ensuring consistency in household and business recycling.
- These measures will have a considerable impact on local authorities, particularly consistency in recycling, which will affect how kerbside recycling services are delivered in the near future.
- Timescales are subject to confirmation when the outcome of consultation is known.
- Recycling budgets are also currently experiencing significant volatility due to rapid pricing changes. There are times when the Council generates an income from recyclates while at others it has to pay to dispose of the same waste. This makes future budget planning challenging.
- There are no specific proposals at this time to adjust Service budgets for these risks in 2023/24 however the position will have to be kept under review as the details are confirmed.

Opportunities

(i) IT Strategy Implementation

- Following approval of the IT Strategy in March 2022, service budgets have been increased by £0.224 million (one-off costs) and £0.269 million (ongoing expenditure) for planned investment in disaster recovery, cyber defences and replacement telephony infrastructure.
- The costs will be funded in 2023/24 from the earmarked IT Strategy Reserve that was established as part of budget-setting in 2022/23 for this purpose.

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32. In total the Service budget proposals result in a net decrease:

TABLE 3.0: SERVICE BUDGET PROPOSALS		2023/24	
		FTE	£m
Budget Movements:			
November Report Annex			
3.1	Services – Pay	(3.6)	(0.296)
3.2	Services – Non-Pay	-	(1.276)
NET BUDGET GROWTH / (SAVINGS)		(3.6)	(1.572)

NOTE 1: provision for the annual staff pay award and other contractual pay increases are reported as part of Central budgets.

33. Growth to address Service budget issues, risks and opportunities comprises:

TABLE 3.2: FORECAST SERVICE BUDGET ISSUES, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES		2023/24	
		FTE	£m
November Report Annex			
3.4	Budget Risks – Property & Commercial	-	1.350
3.5	Budget Opportunities – IT Strategy Implementation	-	0.493
BUDGET GROWTH FOR FORECAST ISSUES, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES		-	1.843

Central Budget Proposals 2023/24

34. Central budgets are summarised in the table below. They comprise those budget items that are corporate in nature and are not associated with delivery of specific services.
35. Overall there is a net budget increase compared to 2022/23.

Table 4: CENTRAL BUDGETS	Approved Budget 2022/23 £m	Proposed Budget 2023/24 £m	Net Budget Increase / (Decrease) £m
Insurance	0.465	0.467	0.002
Treasury Management	0.813	(0.087)	(0.900)
Housing Benefits – net cost ²	0.269	0.833	0.564
Budget for Pay Increases ¹	-	1.500	1.500
Employer Pension Costs	0.350	2.240	1.890
Central Vacancy Turnover Provision	-	(0.150)	(0.150)
Central Pay Cost Provision	0.099	-	(0.099)

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Table 4: CENTRAL BUDGETS	Approved Budget 2022/23 £m	Proposed Budget 2023/24 £m	Net Budget Increase / (Decrease) £m
Apprenticeship Levy	0.078	0.080	0.002
Central Recruitment & Visa Expenses	0.045	0.045	-
Central Training Budget	0.082	0.082	-
External Audit Fees	0.053	0.150	0.097
Internal Audit Fees	0.059	0.065	0.006
Preceptor Grants – Horley Town Council Double Taxation	0.038	0.044	0.006
Funding Contribution – Banstead Commons Conservators ²	0.086	0.111	0.025
TOTAL	2.437	5.380	2.943

NOTES:

1. To be transferred from Central to Service budgets in April 2021 to reflect allocation of the pay increase across services
To be confirmed when final salary costs are confirmed
2. Previously reported within Service Budgets

Risks

36. Central Budget risks are detailed in the MTFP Summary at Annex 1 – the most significant include:

(ii) Housing Benefit subsidy and funding

- £0.564 million budget growth is required to fund the reduction in housing benefit subsidy and grants from Government (DWP). There are several reasons why this funding is forecast to reduce including the continued transition of claims to Universal Credit, increased costs of supported housing claims, increased cost of discretionary housing payments.
- Following confirmation of the Provisional Settlement it is proposed to fund them through calling on the Government Funding Risks Reserve, where necessary, that has been established for this purpose.

37. Other proposed changes in Central Budgets in 2023/24 were set out in the November budget report; the final updates are detailed below:

Table 5: CENTRAL BUDGETS	Outcome of Review
Insurance	The final budget forecast is expected to be confirmed in February 2023; no significant increases are expected
Treasury Management	This Budget has been reviewed in detail to ensure that it reflects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forecast interest on balances. Interest rates have started to rise following the recent Bank of England decision to increase the base rate however the range of institutions that are available to place investments remains limited (in line with the Treasury Management Strategy) to ensure security of funds. The forecast also reflects the continued use of cash balances wherever possible for short-term funding of the capital programme instead of taking out external loans.

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Table 5: CENTRAL BUDGETS	Outcome of Review
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forecast borrowing costs (interest and Minimum Revenue Provision for loan repayment) in line with the proposed Capital Programme and Treasury Management Strategy. The forecast reflects planned spend profiles and the continued use of cash balances for short-term funding of the capital programme instead of taking out external loans. It also reflects application of the MRP Policy in the Treasury Management Strategy. The impacts of the Government's proposed changes to MRP regulations (announced in December 2021) have not yet been assessed but will have to be considered for budget-setting in 2024/25 (assuming they go ahead). • Forecast interest receipts relating to loans to the Council's companies. These sums are subject to a credit risk assessment when preparing the Council's annual accounts and provision is made for impairment (where appropriate) to reflect the outcome. • Current capital expenditure and borrowing plans at January 2023; the budget implications of any new loans will be considered when the decision is made to advance them. • No provision has been made for the costs of borrowing for investment in projects to support delivery of the Commercial Strategy and Housing Delivery Strategy; these costs will be assessed when individual business cases are submitted for approval. • Resulting in a reduction in forecast treasury management costs, compared to 2022/23, of (£0.900) million;
Housing Benefits	<p>These sums were previously reported in Service budgets (Revenues, Benefits & Fraud) and comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £31.823 million forecast expenditure on benefit claims • £31.554 million forecast Government funding
Budget for Pay Increases	<p>Capacity of £1.500 million has been included in the budget for forecast contractual pay increases and the annual cost of living offer for 2023/24 This budget is held centrally and, when the pay award has been confirmed, will be allocated to services ready for the start of the new financial year.</p> <p>Provision has also been made for reversal of the 1.25 percentage point (£0.250 million) increase in employer national insurance contributions that was introduced from April to November 2022. This was part-funded by the Services Grant (£0.164 million) during 2022/23.</p>
Pensions	<p>The budget includes funding for the employer secondary contribution of £1.890 million that is due in April 2023 following the 2022 Fund revaluation.</p> <p>This Council's element of the Pension Fund was 94% funded at the revaluation in 2022 and has sufficient assets to meet fund accrued benefits over the medium term.</p>
Central Vacancy Turnover Provision	<p>Establishment of a central vacancy turnover provision in recognition that (based on previous experience) there is likely to be a number of vacant posts during the year – (£0.150) million along with deletion of a</p>

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Table 5: CENTRAL BUDGETS	Outcome of Review
	historic central pay cost provision of £0.099 million that is no longer required;
Apprenticeship Levy, Central Recruitment and Visa Costs, Central Training Costs	No changes are proposed.
Audit Fees	Forecast increase in external audit fees following the recent award of the new contracts by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) - £0.097 million. The budget also reflects the contracted increase for internal audit fees.
Horley Town Council Double Taxation	Central budgets include £0.038 million funding for a preceptor grant to Horley Town Council. This is the latest instalment under a 10-year agreement (2014/15 to 2023/24) to eliminate 'double taxation' whereby Horley residents pay direct to the Town Council for the local services that it provides. A decision will be required during budget setting for 2024/25 whether to continue this arrangement.
Banstead Commons Conservators	Central budgets include an increase of £0.025 million (in 2023/24 only) in the Council's contribution to the work of the Banstead Commons Conservators. This is in addition to the £0.086 million allocation that was previously reported as a service budget item. This additional funding will assist the Conservators in delivery of current operations while they seek additional external sources of income and funding for 2024/25 onwards.

Revenue Budget Funding 2023/24

38. The sources of funding for the revenue budget are set out in the table below.

Table 6: REVENUE BUDGET FUNDING	Approved Budget 2022/23 £m	Proposed Budget 2023/24 £m	Net Budget Increase / (Decrease) £m
Council Tax	15.222	16.293	1.071
National Non-Domestic Rates	1.710	3.994	2.284
Other Un-ringfenced Grants:			
• Lower Tier Services Grant	0.107	-	(0.107)
• Services Grant	0.164	0.093	(0.071)
• New Homes Bonus Grant	1.000	1.034	0.034
• Minimum Funding Guarantee Grant	-	0.803	0.803
Call on Earmarked Reserves:			
• Government Funding Risks Reserve	0.115	0.484	0.369
• Commercial Risk Reserve	-	-	-

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Table 6: REVENUE BUDGET FUNDING	Approved Budget 2022/23 £m	Proposed Budget 2023/24 £m	Net Budget Increase / (Decrease) £m
• Pension Reserve	0.350	-	(0.350)
• COVID-19 Risks Reserve	1.100	-	(1.100)
• IT Strategy Reserve	-	0.493	0.493
Use of funds from the General Fund Balance to support the 2023/24 Revenue Budget	0.212	-	(0.212)
TOTAL	19.980	23.194	3.214

39. Work is now complete to update the Funding forecasts that have been taken into account when arriving at the final budget proposals for 2022/23. Factors taken into account include:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Council Tax | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2023/24 increase is based on a 2.99% Band D equivalent increase and the forecast tax base (as detailed below). This is in line with the referendum limit announced that was by the Government in November 2022. Includes the council's share of the historic Collection Fund surplus. |
| Business Rates (NNDR) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes continued funding for 'negative RSG', as confirmed in the December Provisional Settlement. Also includes the council's share of the historic Collection Fund surplus. |
| New Homes Bonus Grant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes updated allocations for New Homes Bonus based on the December 2022 Provisional Settlement announcement. |
| Other Grants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The December Settlement included a number of grant changes that have been reflected in the updated budget proposals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deletion of the Lower Tier Services Grant ○ Reduction of the Services Grant ○ Introduction of a new Minimum Funding Guarantee Grant to ensure that all lower tier councils see a 5% increase in their Core Spending Power |
| Contributions (To)/From Reserves | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no requirement for a contribution from the General Fund Balance as there is no forecast Revenue Budget gap in 2023/24. • As reported in November – the Council faces budget risks some which were originally anticipated to have to be funded from Reserves relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Energy costs ○ Property voids The December Provisional Settlement announcement has provided confirmation that it will be possible to fund these costs without calling on Reserves as they can be accommodated within available funding. • There remains a call on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the IT Strategy Reserve to fund delivery of the approved Strategy; and |

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- the Government Funding Risks Reserve, where necessary, to fund the forecast reduction in Housing Benefit subsidy.

COUNCIL TAX 2023/24

40. In setting the Council Tax Requirement for 2023/24 the Council must give consideration to the three elements that make up the overall requirement:
- the precept amount;
 - the Taxbase; and
 - the outcome of the previous year's cash collection.

41. The Government sets a cap each year which has the effect of limiting the annual increase to the tax base before a referendum is required. This was confirmed with the Chancellor's Autumn Statement in November 2022 as being the higher of 2.99% or £5.00 for lower tier councils.

Taxbase

42. When considering the taxbase the Council has no authority over the banding of new builds, that is decided by the Valuation Office Agency, but as the planning authority it is responsible for ensuring an adequate supply of housing to meet the needs of the local population and is therefore in a position to approve and promote applications to build new homes.
43. The Taxbase increase reported to Council in December 2022 is unchanged and the recommendation is to adopt an increase in the council tax base from 62,274 to 63,495 properties representing a taxbase increase of 1,220.61 (1.96%) compared to 2022/23.

Council Precept

44. The recommendation is to set an annual precept increase for Reigate & Banstead Borough Council for 2023/24 of 2.99% taking the Council precept to £249.71 for a Band D property. This represents an increase of £7.25 compared to 2022/23.
45. This increase will yield an additional £0.756 million in income, comprising an increase of £0.305 million from the increase in the tax base and £0.451 million from the 2.99% Band D increase.

Collection Fund Outturn

46. Another factor that has to be taken into account when forecasting council tax income for 2023/24 is the cash surplus or deficit that is brought forward on the Collection Fund from previous years. This is the difference between the actual amount of cash collected compared to the target collection rate that was forecast for that year during budget setting.
47. In 2021/22 there was an overall surplus on the Collection Fund carried forward of £1.589 million and it is anticipated that there will be an overall projected surplus (cash surplus) of £2.214 million for 2022/23. Therefore at the end of 2022/23 the collection fund is anticipated to have a net surplus of £3.803 million. This will be shared by the preceptors in line with their share of the precept, which means that Reigate and Banstead will have a surplus of an estimated £0.438 million.
48. Historically the authority has had a very strong performance record, consistently recovering 99.7% (0.3% shortfall) of income due. Recovery performance was impacted for a period due to the COVID-19 pandemic but the forecast for 2023/24 has been restored to pre-pandemic levels to reflect the forecast recovery position. Failure to

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achieve this level of recovery would however give rise to a Collection Fund deficit for 2023/24 and would have to be taken into account when setting the budget for 2024/25.

Council Tax Requirement 2023/24

49. Based on the above recommendations the Council Tax Requirement for 2023/24, (compared with 2022/23) is set out below.

Table 7: COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT	2022/23	2023/24	Movement	Impact On Yield
Taxbase Band D Equivalents Forecast at October	65,955.00	67,019.80	1,064.80	Positive : Increase
Forecast Growth in New Homes	519.00	205.67	(313.33)	Adverse : Decrease
	0.79%	0.31%	(0.48%)	
Allowance for Non-Collection in 2023/24	(187.00)	(188.23)	(1.23)	Adverse : Increase
	(0.28%)	(0.28%)	0	
Reduction in Band D equivalents due to increased demand for the Local Concessionary Support Scheme	(4,012.3)	(3,541.92)	470.38	Positive : Decrease
	(6.08%)	(5.28%)	0.80%	
Forecast Average Band D Taxbase	62,274.70	63,495.32	1,220.62	Positive : Increase
Council Tax Band D	£242.46	£249.71	£7.25	
Council Tax Requirement	£15,099,124	£15,855,416	£756,292	
Forecast share of Collection Surplus/ (deficit) brought forward	£122,800	£437,838	£315,038	
Net Council Tax Income for this Council	£15,221,924	£16,293,254	£1,071,330	

Council Tax Policy

50. No policy changes are recommended for 2023/24.
51. Local Council Tax Support Scheme allowances and premiums will be increased on 1 April in line with other national increases contained within the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 and the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2022; the Scheme is also scheduled for review during 2023/24.
52. The December Settlement Announcement included funding for additional Council Tax Support in 2023/24, representing an extra £25 in support for working age and pensioner households for cost of living pressures.

Precepting Authorities

53. Details of the proposed council tax precepts for Surrey are set out in a separate report on this agenda. In summary the proposals are as follows:

Table 8.1: ANALYSIS OF DRAFT COUNCIL TAX BY PRECEPTOR		
	£000	% share
	£	%
Surrey County Council ¹	108,620,800	75.20%
Surrey Police & Crime Commissioner ¹	19,402,265	13.43%

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Table 8.1: ANALYSIS OF DRAFT COUNCIL TAX BY PRECEPTOR		
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	15,855,416	10.98%
Horley Town Council	524,965	0.36%
Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council	42,915	0.03%
	144,446,361	100.00%

Table 8.2: ANALYSIS OF DRAFT COUNCIL TAX CHANGES BY PRECEPTOR				
Authority	2022/23	2023/24	Increase ¹	
			£	%
Surrey County Council ¹	1,629.39	1,710.69	81.30	4.99
Surrey Police & Crime Commissioner ¹	295.57	305.57	10.00	3.38
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	242.46	249.71	7.25	2.99
Horley Town Council	43.17	47.76	4.59	10.63
Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council	29.72	29.72	0.00	0.00
	2,240.31	2,343.45	103.14	4.6%

NOTE:

1. Subject to confirmation by Surrey County Council on 7 February and the PCC on 3 February 2023.

Council Tax Forecasts

54. Each 1% increase in Council Tax generates £0.153 million additional income for this borough. A 2.99% increase in 2023/24 will yield £0.451 million additional income.
55. For MTFP modelling purposes, based on a 2.99% increase and a 1.00% increase in the taxbase, the Council Tax income forecast at January 2022 is set out below:

Table 9: COUNCIL TAX FORECAST	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
Forecast Resources	15.222	15.855	16.565	17.231	17.924	18.644
Annual Increase in Income		0.756	0.709	0.666	0.693	0.721
Cumulative Increase in Income		0.756	1.466	2.132	2.824	3.545
Band D	£242.46	£249.71	£257.18	£264.87	272.79	£280.95
Band D Increase	-	£7.25	£7.47	£7.69	£7.92	£8.16
Taxbase Increase	1.62%	1.96%	1.44%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%
Annual Band D % Increase		2.99%	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%

56. Although council tax is a significant source of funding for local government, it remains subject to restrictions by Government. The Localism Act included a requirement to hold a local referendum if any council tax increase is deemed 'excessive'; a limit for increases is set each year by the Government.
57. The forecast amount of council tax to be collected takes into account local decisions on discounts, exemptions and reliefs and Local Council Tax Support scheme claim numbers.

RETAINED BUSINESS RATES (NNDR)

58. The Council collects Business Rates ('National Non-Domestic Rates' or 'NNDR') on an agency basis for Government. Of the total NNDR collectable, this Council retains 40% of the benefits with 10% paid to the County and 50% to the Government.

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59. For 2023/24 the Council's NNDR Baseline income (before adjustments) will be £2.478 million out of a total estimated income of £54.175 million.
60. The key factors that determine this income stream are outside this Council's control:
- The NNDR 'multiplier' (pence in the pound of rateable value) which is set by Government; and
 - The rateable value of a property which is set by the Valuation Office Agency.
61. Therefore the only decision to be taken by this Council each year is in terms of determining a forecast for income during the year, being:
- The estimate of projected growth / decline in the NNDR Baseline as a result of business failure, property conversions or new builds.
62. The local government funding regime then requires a number of adjustments to arrive at the actual sum to be retained. The Provisional Settlement in December confirmed that this Council's Tariff (the additional sum retained by Government) means that of the £21.670 million Baseline sum this Council must return an additional £20.255 million to the Government and retain just £1.415 million.
63. There are then three further adjustments for section 31 grants, multiplier gap adjustments and levy payments which collectively add a further £1.000 million to the NNDR contribution to the Council funds in the year 2023/24. The section 31 grants help offset the loss of income due to the continuation of reliefs announced by Government.
64. The next adjustment relates to 'Negative Revenue Support Grant (RSG)' whereby the Government has previously announced its intention to recoup a notional 'over-funding' of authorities like Reigate & Banstead. In the December 2022 Settlement Announcement the Government indicated once more that Negative RSG has 'been addressed' through its inclusion in the overall local government funding baseline. If correct this authority will avoid the previously-predicted reduction in NNDR in future years. For now the MTFP assumption is that Negative RSG may yet have an impact but not until at least 2025/26.
65. The final adjustment relates to this Council's share of historic Collection Fund surpluses or deficits; representing £1.516 million additional funding for 2023/24

Summary Forecast

66. In summary this means that the total contribution from NNDR to this Council in 2023/24 will be £3.995 million

Table 10: NNDR ANALYSIS	2022/23	2023/24
	£m	£m
Gross NNDR Income	51.923	52.162
<u>Plus</u> Forecast Growth	0.239	2.013
Gross NNDR Income	52.162	54.175
<u>Plus</u> Forecast Growth	0	0
Gross NNDR Income	52.162	54.175
<u>Less</u> Government share (50%)	(26.081)	(27.088)
<u>Less</u> Surrey County Council share (10%)	(5.216)	(5.418)

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Table 10: NNDR ANALYSIS	2022/23	2023/24
	£m	£m
Forecast Gross NNDR Income - Reigate & Banstead share (40%)	20.865	21.669
<u>Less</u> Tariff due to Government	(19.494)	(20.255)
Forecast Net NNDR Income - Reigate & Banstead after Tariff	1.371	1.414
<u>Plus</u> Section 31 Grant for Reliefs	1.154	1.000
<u>Plus</u> Multiplier gap/Inflation adjustment	0.258	-
<u>Plus</u> Levy Payment/Receipts from Government	(0.070)	0.064
Forecast NNDR Income - Reigate & Banstead	2.713	2.478
Forecast Net Share of previous years' Surplus / (Deficit)	(1.003)	(1.516)
Forecast NNDR Income - Reigate & Banstead	1.710	3.994

67. The 2023/24 budget is therefore based on a total of £3.994 million income from NNDR, an increase of £2.284 million as compared to 2022/23. These forecasts will be subject to in-year monitoring as more up to date information is received.

USE OF RESERVES

68. As set out above, there is no requirement to draw on the General Fund Balance to support Revenue Budget in 2023/24.
69. Forecast balances on Revenue Reserves at 1 April 2023 are summarised below and detailed at Annex 3.

Table 11: RESERVES SUMMARY	Forecast Balance ¹ at 1 April 2023 £m
General Fund Balance	3.500
Other Earmarked Reserves	33.706
TOTAL	37.206

NOTE

1. Final balance depends on draw down of funds from Earmarked Reserves during the remainder of 2022/23

70. The Policy on the use of Reserves was approved by Executive in November 2022.
71. The Council holds Reserves to provide protection against financial risks. The current level of reserves provides a relatively secure financial base compared to many authorities; it is important to ensure an appropriate balance between securing the financial position of the Council and investing in delivery of services.
72. Reserves can be held for four reasons:
- A working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing.
 - A contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies.
 - A means of building up funds to meet known or predicted liabilities.
 - A means of setting aside sums for future identified uses and / or investments.

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73. There is an opportunity cost of holding reserves in terms of restricting capacity to invest in current service delivery but this is offset by the additional flexibility that reserves provide when manage budget risks and adverse variations.
74. The legal requirement for the Council to agree a balanced budget means that Council may be required to draw on its reserves to address any shortfall between forecast expenditure and forecast income.
75. The Council has set a minimum level of unallocated General Fund reserves of 15% of the net revenue budget (£23.194 million), which equates to £3.500 million (for 2023/24). The forecast unallocated balance on the General Fund at 31 March 2022 is consistent with this limit.

New Reserve: Economic Pressures Reserve

76. As part of budget setting for 2023/24 the Executive has considered the implications of the increase in the council tax referendum limit by 1% for 2023/24 and 2024/25.
77. In acknowledgement that the additional income from a 1% increase was not anticipated when the November report was drafted and, recognising that there are likely to be increasing pressures on local residents, as a consequence of current economic challenges, a new earmarked revenue Reserve has been created as part of budget-setting for 2023/24 based on the equivalent of a 1% council tax increase - £0.150 million. The funds will be available to provide additional discretionary support.
78. Other areas that have been considered as part of the review of Reserves include:

Table 12: RESERVES REVIEW OUTCOME	
Reserve	Recommendations
General Fund Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance increased to ensure the balance remains in line with 15% of net revenue budget
Government Funding Reduction Risks Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance increased to help mitigate future reductions in Government funding pending delivery of new sustainable income streams.
Commercial Risks & Volatility Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance increased to help address risks of failure to meet income targets from commercial ventures while remedial action is taken.
COVID-19 Risks Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These funds were set aside to help fund ongoing funding risks in 2022/23, in particular in relating to income losses following the pandemic, until alternative sources of funding were identified or budget efficiencies achieved. • These risks related primarily to car park income reductions that have been addressed as part of budget setting for 2023/24. • The Reserve has therefore been deleted and the remaining balance used to maintain the General Fund Balance and other earmarked Reserves.
Corporate Plan Delivery Fund (CPDF) Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance increased in order to continue to provide time-limited funding to deliver key priorities, Corporate Plan objectives and invest-to-save initiatives.
New Posts Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Reserve was established in previous years to help manage the impact of service changes that are now complete. It has therefore been deleted as part of budget-setting for 2023/24 and the remaining balance

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Table 12: RESERVES REVIEW OUTCOME	
Reserve	Recommendations
	used to maintain the General Fund Balance and other earmarked Reserves.
Brexit Funding Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Reserve was established in previous years to account separately for grant funding received. It has been deleted as part of budget-setting for 2023/24 and the remaining balance used to maintain the General Fund Balance and other earmarked Reserves.
Flood Prevention Works Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established as part of budget-setting for 2023/24 to fund costs that were previously capitalised where capitalisation is no longer an option

FORECAST BUDGET GAP AT JANUARY 2023

79. The forecast budget gap over the next five years is set out below. Further details are provided in the MTFP at Annex 1 (Appendix 2).

Table 13: MEDIUM TERM REVENUE BUDGET FORECAST	Forecast Budget 2022/23	Forecast Budget 2023/24	Forecast Budget 2024/25	Forecast Budget 2025/26	Forecast Budget 2026/27	Forecast Budget 2027/28
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
FORECAST GAP	Balanced	Balanced	3.042	2.586	2.294	2.373
Annual Increase in Gap	-	Balanced	3.042	(0.456)	(0.292)	0.079
Gap as % of 2023/24 budget requirement	-	n/a	15.23%	12.94%	11.48%	11.88%

80. MTFP forecasts are based on a cautious estimate of future costs and income streams. They will be updated and reported to Executive in July 2023 in preparation for 2024/25 services & financial planning.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Capital Investment Strategy and Capital Programme

81. The latest Capital Investment Strategy was approved by Executive in July 2022 and sets out how the Council plans to invest in assets to generate income.

2022/23 to 2026/27 Approved Capital Programme

82. The Capital Programme that was approved in January 2022 and the unspent balance on previously-approved schemes is summarised below:

Table 14: CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 to 2027/28 by SERVICE	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	TOTAL £m
	BFWD £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	
ORGANISATION SERVICES:							
Property Services	5.223	1.657	1.373	1.267	0.049	1.594	11.163
IT Services	0.224	0.200	0.260	0.250	0.200	0.200	1.334
Organisational Development	0.452	0.250	0.250	0.250	-	-	1.202

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Table 14: CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 to 2027/28 by SERVICE	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	TOTAL £m
	BFWD £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	
Environmental Strategy	0.250	-	-	-	-	-	0.250
PEOPLE SERVICES:							
Housing	0.519	1.304	1.304	1.304	1.304	1.304	7.039
Leisure & Culture	0.172	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.672
Community Partnerships	0.075	0.030	-	-	-	-	0.105
PLACE SERVICES:							
Neighbourhood Operations	0.659	1.531	0.763	0.880	0.918	0.902	5.653
Place Delivery	9.410	15.100	-	-	-	-	24.510
Economic Prosperity	-	0.100	0.100	0.100	-	-	0.300
TOTAL APPROVED CAPITAL PROGRAMME	16.984	20.272	4.150	4.151	2.571	4.100	52.228

83. In addition to the sums included in the approved Capital Programme the Council has previously committed to invest.

- £64.0 million for investment in Commercial income-generating assets; and
- £30.0 million for investment in Housing projects.

Proposals for use of these funds will be subject to approval of reports by Executive or the Commercial Ventures Executive Sub Committee when the business cases are developed.

Capital Programme Growth 2023/24 onwards

84. Capital Programme growth proposals totalling £7.672 million for 2023/24 to 2027/28 were set out in the November budget report.

Table 15: CAPITAL PROGRAMME GROWTH 2023/24 to 2027/28	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	TOTAL £m
	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	
Organisation	0.046	0.040	0.860	0.003	0.589	1.538
People	0.108	0.115	0.115	0.115	1.519	1.972
Place	0.034	0.016	0.259	-	3.653	4.162
TOTAL	0.188	0.171	1.234	0.118	5.961	7.672

85. The primary reason for this growth is the addition of 'rolled-forward' allocations for 2027/28 (also 2025/26 for Property Services) and some small-scale rescheduling of previously-approved allocations to match spending plans. No other significant growth proposals are anticipated.

Capital Programme 2023/24 onwards

86. The Capital Programme for 2023/24 onwards, including approved growth, is therefore:

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Table 16: CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22 to 2027/28 by SERVICE	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	TOTAL £m
	BFWD £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	
ORGANISATION SERVICES:								
Property Services	5.223	1.657	1.419	1.307	0.909	1.597	0.089	12.201
IT Services	0.224	0.200	0.260	0.250	0.200	0.200	0.500	1.834
Organisational Development	0.452	0.250	0.250	0.250	-	-	-	1.202
Environmental Strategy	0.250	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.250
PEOPLE SERVICES:								
Housing	0.519	1.304	1.412	1.419	1.419	1.419	1.419	8.911
Leisure & Culture	0.172	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.772
Community Partnerships	0.075	0.030	-	-	-	-	-	0.105
PLACE SERVICES:								
Neighbourhood Operations	0.659	1.531	0.897	0.996	1.177	0.902	3.853	10.015
Place Delivery	9.410	15.100	-	-	-	-	-	24.510
Economic Prosperity	-	0.100	-	-	-	-	-	0.100
TOTAL APPROVED CAPITAL PROGRAMME	16.984	20.272	4.338	4.322	3.805	4.218	5.961	59.899

Capital Programme Funding

87. Sources of funding for the 2023/24 Capital Programme are summarised below:

Table 17: CAPITAL PROGRAMME FUNDING 2021/22 to 2027/28	2021/22 BFWD £m	2022/23 Projected £M	2023/24 Projected £M	2024/25 Projected £M	2025/26 Projected £M	2026/27 Projected £M	2027/28 Projected £M	TOTAL
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE 2022/23 to 2026/27	16.983	20.272	4.338	4.322	3.805	4.218	5.961	59.899
FUNDED BY:								
Capital Reserves	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Receipts	16.656	18.659	0.505	-	-	-	-	35.820
Capital Grants & Contributions	0.327	1.613	1.431	1.431	1.431	1.431	1.431	9.097
Prudential Borrowing	-	-	2.402	2.891	2.374	2.787	4.530	14.982
TOTAL CAPITAL FUNDING 2021/22 to 2027/28	16.983	20.272	4.338	4.322	3.805	4.218	5.961	59.899

88. The sources of funding for the Capital Programme are explained below:

Table 18: CAPITAL PROGRAMME FUNDING	
Capital Reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previously the Council benefitted from access to significant capital Reserves following the sale of its housing stock. Over recent years these Reserves have been utilised to invest in the capital programme. The remaining balance was nil at March 2022.
Capital Receipts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sale of capital assets results in a capital receipt that can be used to invest in new capital assets or to repay prudential borrowing. The main source of capital receipts over the duration of this Capital programme relate to delivery of major schemes including the Marketfield Way (The Rise) redevelopment. These capital receipts have been factored into forecast funding requirements. Flexible use of capital receipts – there are no current plans for use of this funding option.
Capital Grants & Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forecasts of the future grant funding allocation for Disabled Facilities works have been updated to reflect forecast allocations. They also include the Council’s share of Section 106 and CIL funding. Revenue funding equivalent to the historic New Homes Bonus grant allocation up to 2020/21 has been allocated to support implementation of the Housing Delivery Strategy.
Prudential Borrowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The primary source of long-term funding for the Capital Programme is now prudential borrowing, primarily from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB). Loans are managed through the approved Treasury Management Strategy and policies. Interest on borrowing is paid to the PWLB and charged to the annual revenue budget along with the Minimum Revenue Provision that is necessary to set aside funds for eventual repayment of the loan principal. These costs have to be taken into account when setting a balanced Revenue Budget. There are increasing restrictions on the type of capital expenditure that is eligible for prudential borrowing. Borrowing to fund investment solely for commercial gain is no longer permitted.
Revenue Budget Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no expectation that significant capital expenditure will be funded from the revenue budget in 2023/24.

Capital Programme – Revenue Budget Implications

89. As explained above, with the exception of earmarked Section 106 funds and some earmarked Housing capital receipts, the Council no longer has significant capital Reserves, therefore, while a small number of schemes will be continued to be funded from capital grants and other contributions, the majority of the approved Capital Programme must be funded through prudential borrowing. The costs of repaying this borrowing fall on the revenue budget as treasury management costs in Central budgets.
90. Treasury management budgets will be updated to reflect the costs of borrowing for the approved Capital Programme for 2023/24 onwards net of interest on forecast balances. Details will be confirmed in the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 that is reported to Audit Committee, Executive and Full Council for approval in March/April each year.

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91. The costs of managing and maintaining new capital assets will have to be taken into account in the revenue budget as new assets come into use. Budgets will also have to be established for any new income streams generated.

Capital Programme – Policy on Capitalisation of Salaries.

92. Costs incurred as a result of staff spending time on capital projects can be capitalised, provided that time can be linked to bringing a specific, separately identifiable asset into working condition, or substantially enhancing the working life of an existing asset.

STATEMENT OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER (CFO)

93. The Local Government Act 2003 places a duty on the Chief Finance Officer to advise the Council on the robustness of the proposed budget and the adequacy of balances and reserves supporting its budget. The Council is required to have regard to this advice when making the annual budget decisions.

94. The information set out in this budget report and the supporting Medium-Term Financial Plan Summary and other Annexes sets out how this Council plans to:

- assess and manage financial risks, including the risks relating to delivery of new income streams and commercial activities
- manage increased demand for services
- manage delivery of major capital schemes
- track proposed changes and volatility of Government funding
- deliver a balanced budget beyond 2023/24
- continue to deliver value for money to local taxpayers;
- continue to receive an unqualified audit report on the annual statement of accounts; and
- ensure that effective scrutiny of the Budget process is carried out and responded to.

CIPFA Resilience Index

95. The Council’s position against a range of financial measures compared to similar councils is available online through the CIPFA Financial Resilience Index at <https://www.cipfa.org/services/financial-resilience-index-2022>.

Table 19: CIPFA RESILIENCE INDEX INDICATORS at March 2021 and March 2022¹	This Council’s Relative Risk Compared to Similar Councils	This Council’s Prospects over the Medium Term
Reserves Sustainability – increase in reserves over recent years	Low	Planned use of previously un-allocated reserves (for example for investment in Housing) means that this position will be harder to maintain
Level of Reserves – compared to the annual revenue budget	Low	
Changes in reserves over recent years	Low	
Interest payable compared to recent budget	Low	Planned growth in the Capital Programme and associated borrowing means that this position will not be maintained.
Gross external debt	Low	

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Table 19: CIPFA RESILIENCE INDEX INDICATORS at March 2021 and March 2022¹	This Council's Relative Risk Compared to Similar Councils	This Council's Prospects over the Medium Term
Fees & Charges - as % of service budgets	Higher than Average	Implementation of the Fees & Charges proposals in the 2023/24 budget should improve the Council's position against this indicator as it results in new and/or increased sources of income.
Ratio of Council tax contribution to revenue budget	Low	Risk not expected to increase following the increase in the council tax referendum limit for 2023/24 and 2024/25.
Funding growth - compared to Government baseline	Increasing	This risk is expected to increase if Government funding reduces.

Note

1. Latest published results

CIPFA Financial Management Code

96. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA) Financial Management Code ('the FM Code') was published in October 2019. It is intended to support good financial management and stability and applies to all local authorities, including police, fire and other bodies.
97. The detailed requirements were set out in the MTFP that was approved in July 2022. In summary the FM Code is based on a series of principles and standards to provide the foundation for authorities to manage their short, medium and long-term finances, maintain resilience to meet demands and manage unexpected financial shocks. It does this by aiming to:
 - Support self-regulation in the local authority sector, by setting out non-prescriptive framework within which Councils can operate;
 - To promote a move away from short-termism to longer term strategic financial planning;
 - To reinforce the role of the whole leadership team in ensuring financial sustainability and good governance.
98. Authorities have been required to adopt the requirements of the FM Code with effect from April 2021.
99. Compliance with the FM Code will help provide further assurances on the supporting information that is relied on to produce annual budget estimates, MTFP forecasts and in-year monitoring reports.
100. The latest assessment of this Council's compliance with the requirements of the Code was included in the Medium Term Financial Plan report to Executive in July 2022.

Robustness of Reserves

101. As highlighted in the Service and Financial Planning report to Executive in November 2022 and in this Budget report both general and earmarked reserves remain relatively healthy. The planned use of reserves in 2023/24 year is appropriate as the Council addresses areas of financial risks and moves to a position where its finances rely less on Government grants and as it invests in delivery of its Strategies. The forecast remaining level of reserves will continue to provide sufficient cover to meet

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commitments and provide a strong 'safety net' for unplanned events. This report includes the outcome of the latest review of Reserves to ensure that they remain aligned with the most significant areas of risk in the budget and delivery of corporate priorities.

Budget Proposals – Issues, Uncertainties & Risks

102. As explained in this report, the budget proposals for 2023/24 are robust. There remain a number of uncertainties and risks which are summarised in the following paragraphs.

103. The Economy:

- The current economic slowdown nationally and globally - could result in lower income (through - for example - reduced discretionary spending or lower than anticipated recycle prices) and increases in demand (benefits and statutory duties such as homelessness).
- A reduction in the number of employers in the Borough could also have an impact on retained NNDR income.
- Cost inflation is now a significant risk, in particular with regard to fuel, energy and building costs.

104. Future Government Funding:

- The future of local government funding and business rates remains uncertain and an area of concern.
- The end of New Homes Bonus payments over the coming years will have an impact on available resources.
- The Homelessness Reduction Act requires Councils to provide more support to homeless people and people at risk of becoming homeless. The Government has continued to commit ring-fenced funding towards this duty but there remains a question mark over the longer term.

105. Revenue Budget Savings:

- Following the significant budget reductions in past years, it has become increasingly difficult to generate additional ongoing savings.
- Identification and implementation of new Financial Sustainability Programme initiatives will have to continue to be a priority over the next couple of years to address the forecast MTFP gap
- If we are to deliver financial sustainability then we will need to continue our efforts to become a more commercial organisation and fully explore income generating opportunities involving, for example, asset investment, partnership working and providing services for other organisations. However the increasing controls on 'borrowing in advance of need' has limited many of the options that might otherwise have been considered to deliver new commercial income streams.
- The ongoing review of Fees & Charges is helping identify new income generation opportunities. An updated Fees & Charges Policy is attached at Annex 7; it reflects the outcome of review work undertaken as part of budget setting.

106. Corporate Plan:

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- The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's vision and objectives over the medium term and will enable it to target its resources in the most efficient and effective way.
- The main challenge, as ever, will be balancing our ambitions as a high performing council with our ability to resource those ambitions.
- Prioritisation of services like Housing Delivery and Environmental Sustainability will place new demands on existing resources.
- A combination of careful stewardship and an innovative approach to service delivery will be required to ensure that we achieve our goals.

107. Budget Risks:

- The latest risk assessment is detailed in the MTFP and current Strategic Financial Risks to the Council's financial sustainability are reported at Annex 1 (Appendix 2).
- Given the uncertainty over future economic conditions and the business rates regime, it is prudent to maintain our capacity to protect services from unforeseen financial pressures. Once used, however, it may prove difficult to replenish Reserves.
- Despite significant improvements in recent years the Pension Fund remains a risk over the longer term as future economic downturns and recent case law may impact on the value of Fund investments and liabilities.

108. Overall, the Council has made prudent budgetary provision for its commitments for the 2023/24 financial year, within the legislative framework that governs its operations and within other constraints, such as the Council's policy framework.

OPTIONS

109. the following options are available to the Executive:

OPTION 1 - Approve the proposed budget and financial planning changes set out within the report.

This option is recommended for approval, to ensure that the Revenue Budget, Council Tax and Capital Programme are agreed in good time to adopt a balanced budget for 2023/24.

OPTION 2 - Only approve some of the proposed budget and financial planning changes set out within the report.

This option is not recommended, as it would undermine service plan delivery and would present a risk to setting the budget and council tax for 2023/24.

OPTION 3 - Reject the proposed budget and request that further work be undertaken to develop new proposals for consultation under the terms of the Constitution.

This option is not recommended as it leave the Council at risk of failing to adopt a budget and council tax for 2023/24.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

110. There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report subject to the Council adopting a balanced budget for 2023/24 by 11 March 2023 to meet the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

111. These are addressed throughout the report.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

112. The Council has a statutory duty to consider equality implications as part of the decision making process and demonstrate this. The Council's Corporate Equality Policy – setting out the Council's legal duties and responsibilities – is available at https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/6490/corporate_equality_policy_2020.pdf
113. An initial assessment was undertaken on each of the budget changes proposed in the November Executive report to determine whether it would impact on service delivery or service users in any way. This assessment identified that a number of the proposals may potentially have an impact on residents with protected characteristics. Those proposals were:
- Proposals to increase the Borough Council's element of Council Tax by the referendum limit
 - Proposals to increase fees for the issuing of summons and obtaining liability orders for Council Tax and Business Rates non-payment
 - Proposals to reduce some funding to some Voluntary and Community Sector Partners
 - Proposals to increase car park charges
 - Proposals to increase some community centre room hire charges
114. Draft equality impact assessments for these proposals were published to accompany the budget consultation (see below for more detail about the consultation). In all instances, consideration has been given to impact avoidance and mitigation measures and proposals for ongoing monitoring and review to ensure that if any negative impact is identified this can be responded to.
115. Since the draft budget proposals were published, consultation has been undertaken, and the equality impact assessments have been finalised. The final assessments are attached Annex 6 to inform Members' decision making.
116. In summary:
- Proposed Council Tax increase: Any potential negative impact on residents facing financial hardship (including those in protected characteristic groups) will be avoided by continuing to operate the Local Council Tax Support Scheme and the provision of discretionary support as appropriate.
 - Proposals to increase fees for the issuing of summons and obtaining liability orders for Council Tax and Business Rates non-payment: Any negative impact on those with protected characteristics will be avoided via the recovery process which provides residents with the opportunity to engage with the Council, bring their payments up to date and assist any residents who are financially vulnerable.
 - Proposals to reduce some funding to some Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Partners: Service providers have indicated that unless alternative funding can be found this will impact on the extent of services they are able to provide and/or the number of residents they are able to support (including those with protected characteristics). Impact avoidance / mitigation measures

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identified include the ability for each organisation to fundraise from other sources, the provision of non-financial 'in kind' support from the Council, the provision of information by the Council to residents about these and also other forms of support that are available locally, and a commitment to undertake more work to explore opportunities to launch other funding schemes. Regular monitoring will be undertaken and meetings will be held with all the organisations to track the securing of replacement funding and any residual impact on service provision and residents. This information will be able to inform future budget setting.

- Proposals to increase car park charges: The increases proposed are consistent with levels of inflation since charges were last reviewed, and car parks remain free to blue badge holders. Monitoring and/or surveys will be undertaken to identify if there is any disproportionate impact of the change in charges, and to inform any future proposals with respect of our car parks.
- Proposals to increase some community centre room hire charges: Charges have been reviewed to ensure that they are applied more equitably overall (improving fairness for all hirers), and the increases generally reflect inflation except where heavy discretionary discounts have been removed. Any potential negative impact on those with protected characteristics can be avoided by the hirer using an alternative venue or amending their own charging. However, monitoring will also be undertaken to assess the impact of the changes on room hirers and usage patterns, and charges will be reviewed regularly, with the option remaining to consider discretionary reductions in the event that a disproportionate negative impact is identified.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

117. The environmental sustainability implications of individual proposals within the draft budget have been considered. For the majority of proposals no environmental sustainability impact has been identified. Where potential impact has been identified this is as follows:

- Positive impact from proposals to move the emergency planning post into base budget, assisting the Council to respond to the increasing risk and impact of extreme weather events resulting from climate change; and
- Potential positive impact from the proposed increase in parking fees, encouraging car users to consider alternative modes of transport.

118. Although some consultation respondents raised concerns about a potential increase in fly-tipping, it is not anticipated that there will be any sustainability implications from the proposed fee increases in relation to allotments, garden waste and bulky waste as it is unlikely that the relatively small increases will adversely affect customer numbers; however impact on levels of service usage will be kept under review and any adverse environmental monitored and as appropriate measures to address this implemented.

COMMUNICATION IMPLICATIONS

119. The Council continues to offer value for money for Council residents – in 2023/24, the average household will pay just £4.78 per week to the Borough Council in Council Tax, which pays for the wide range of services that the Council delivers, including household waste and recycling collections, street cleaning, greenspaces maintenance, leisure and community centres, and statutory and regulatory services such as licencing, environmental health and planning.

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120. Central to Council’s communications and engagement strategy is not only to promote the good work that the Council does and the services it provides, but also to ensure residents and businesses are aware of and have the opportunity to input to our annual service and financial planning process. Development of the Corporate Plan was supported by extensive consultation with residents and other partners to inform priorities which remain relevant for the duration of the Plan.

RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 121. Service and financial plans are aimed at minimising risks and ensuring that the Council continues to deliver great services whilst managing budgets and other resources well. The Medium-Term Financial Plan and Capital Investment Strategy include analyses of forecast budget risks and the mitigating action that is planned.
- 122. The Council has strong risk management arrangements in place to ensure that any risks are identified and managed, with regular reports provided to the Audit Committee and the Executive.
- 123. The risks relating to the long-term financial sustainability of the Council remain on the strategic risk register, and as such controls and mitigating actions are regularly reviewed. They are set out in the MTFP at Annex 1. Commercial investment (where permitted), which is a key aspect of securing our long-term financial sustainability and can be affected by wider macro-economic circumstances, is also identified as a strategic financial risk for which controls are in place and mitigating actions being implemented.
- 124. Local Council Tax Support scheme risks: there are ongoing risks associated with not carrying out a review of the Scheme. It needs to reflect current circumstances and the costs of processing claims have to be managed as they all fall on this authority. The window of opportunity for consultation is growing ever smaller and significant changes will require wide consultation to avoid the risks of legal challenge, which again are borne entirely by this authority. This does not however prevent the Council from managing and controlling other areas of the Council Tax base, such as discounts and exemptions.

HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 125. The Council will need to maintain workforce capacity and skills to enable the organisation to diversify and deliver again Corporate Plan ambitions.
- 126. The service & financial planning proposals for 2023/24 result in an overall change in FTE numbers as set out in the table below.

Table 20: STAFF ESTABLISHMENT – FORECAST FTE MOVEMENTS 2022/23 TO 2023/24		
STAFF ESTABLISHMENT 2022/23 (including fixed term posts)		533.6
Net Permanent Posts to be created / (deleted) as part of 2023/24 Service & Financial Planning Savings and Growth proposals:		
November Report Annex		
3.1	Organisation	(4.6)
3.1	Management Team – Emergency Planning	1.0
FORECAST STAFF ESTABLISHMENT 2023/24		530.0

Table 20: STAFF ESTABLISHMENT – FORECAST FTE MOVEMENTS 2022/23 TO 2023/24	
STAFF ESTABLISHMENT 2022/23 (including fixed term posts)	533.6
NET INCREASE / (DECREASE)	(3.6)

127. The final budget proposals and Medium Term Financial Plan forecasts include provision for an annual cost of living pay award for staff. This award is subject to negotiations with staff representatives and will depend on a variety of factors, including economic conditions, inflation levels and staff recruitment and retention considerations. The budget forecast also includes an allocation for contractual pay increases for some staff (primarily incremental pay rises linked to achieving appraisal targets).

Pay Award

128. An increase of £1,500 for 2023/24 for all staff (with the exception of the most senior grades) has been offered and can be accommodated in the budget; consultation with the recognised trade unions was underway at the time of preparing this report. The budget also includes provision for contractual pay increases, such as incremental progression subject to a satisfactory appraisal outcome.

CONSULTATION

129. Public consultation: Consultation has been carried out in line with the Constitution. The 8 week public consultation ran from 21 November 2022 until 16 January 2023. An online survey was provided, with multiple choice options along with ‘free text’ questions, to allow respondents to give their views in their own words. Interested parties were also able to comment by email to a dedicated Council email address or via a ‘Freepost’ option.

130. The consultation was promoted through a press release, social media, Council e-newsletters to residents and businesses and by email to a list of approximately 330 stakeholders. Recognising that some residents may not be able to take part on-line, hard copy paper surveys were made available on request from the Customer Contact Team.

131. The Council received 198 surveys (63 of which were only partially completed), a further 3 representations by other means.

132. The results of the consultation on the draft budget proposals have been taken into account in finalising the proposals within this paper, and the accompanying equality impact assessments (see above). A summary of the consultation findings is included at Annex 5. Headline messages include:

- The proposal to increase Council Tax by the referendum limit was supported by a majority of respondents, receiving 59% of responses in agreement
- The majority of proposals for changes to fees and charges were supported, however only 36% of respondents supported proposed increases to waste & recycling fees (that is, the increase in garden waste fees, bulky waste fees, trade waste fees and container and sack prices). Views were mixed on changes to greenspaces and community centre fees, with opposition primarily related to allotments, community centres and outdoor spaces. (Note that some licensing charges and car park charges are subject to separate statutory consultation)

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- The proposed reduction in grant funding for some voluntary sector partners was opposed by 69% of respondents, with concerns particularly about the impact on residents who are supported by the organisations in question.

133. Consultation with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee: The Overview & Scrutiny Committee established a Budget Scrutiny Panel to support this work. The Panel met on 29 November 2022 and their report was considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 7 December and presented to the Executive on 15 December. The Committee is also due to consider the final Budget proposals on 19 January 2023.
134. Consultation with business representatives: Section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires the Council to consult representatives of those subject to non-domestic rates in the borough about its proposals for expenditure for each financial year. This was done as part of the public consultation exercise described above, including promotion of the consultation at business networking events and using the Council's business e-newsletter

POLICY FRAMEWORK

135. Service & financial planning: the budget proposals within this report form part of the Council's budget and policy framework. The annual budget is developed to ensure that the Council can deliver the Corporate Plan and services to residents and businesses.

Background Papers:

Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28, report to Executive on 21 July 2022

Capital Investment Strategy 2023/24, report to Executive on 21 July 2022

Service & Financial Planning 2023/24, report to Executive on 17 November 2022

Budget Scrutiny Panel Report, Service & Financial Planning 2023/24, report to Executive on 15 December 2022

Equality Impact Assessment: Service & Financial Planning 2023/24, January 2023.

List of Annexes:

1. Medium Term Financial Plan Summary
2. Additional Revenue Budget Growth & Savings Proposals
3. Forecast Revenue Budget Reserves at 31 March 2023
4. Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28 – All Schemes
5. Consultation Report – Budget Proposals 2023-24
6. Equality Impact Report - Budget Proposals 2023-24
7. Fees & Charges Policy

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - SUMMARY

2023/24 to 2027/28

January 2023

REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23 & 2023/24

REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21	Approved Budget 2022/23 £m	Recommended Budget 2023/24 £m
ORGANISATION		
Communications & Customer Service	1.151	1.104
Finance	1.260	1.235
IT	1.810	1.851
ICT - Reserve-funded growth for Strategy implementation	-	0.493
Legal & Governance	2.294	2.406
Organisational Development & HR	0.816	0.716
Corporate Policy, Projects & Performance (incl. environmental sustainability)	0.449	0.429
Property & Commercial	(1.203)	(1.222)
Property & Commercial – growth for issues & risks	-	1.350
PLACE		
Economic Prosperity	0.282	0.277
Neighbourhood Services	5.239	4.336
Place Delivery	0.371	0.326
Planning	0.718	0.593
PEOPLE		
Community Partnerships	1.312	1.184
Housing	1.026	0.926
Revenues, Benefits & Fraud	0.537	0.487
Leisure & Culture	0.538	0.335
SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM	0.943	0.988
SERVICE BUDGETS TOTAL	17.544	17.815
CENTRAL BUDGETS	2.437	5.380
NET EXPENDITURE 2020/21	19.980	23.194
Council Tax	15.222	16.293
National Non-Domestic Rates	1.710	3.994
Other Un-ringfenced Grants	1.271	1.930
Grants transferred to Reserves	0.668 (0.668)	0.686 (0.686)
Call on Earmarked Reserves ¹	1.565	0.977
Use of funds from the General Fund Balance to support the 2021/22 revenue Budget ¹	0.212	-
NET SOURCES OF INCOME 2020/21	19.980	23.194
BUDGET GAP	Nil	NIL

NOTE 1: The actual sum to be drawn from Reserves to support the budget will depend on the budget outturn position for the year.

MEDIUM TERM REVENUE BUDGET FORECAST 2023/24 to 2027/28

MEDIUM TERM REVENUE BUDGET FORECAST	Approved Budget 2020/21 £m	Cumulative Impact 2023/24 £m	Cumulative Impact 2024/25 £m	Cumulative Impact 2025/26 £m	Cumulative Impact 2026/27 £m	Cumulative Impact 2027/28 £m
2022/23 Budget Requirement	19.980					
Service Budgets – Pay & NI Increase		1.500	2.750	3.750	4.750	5.750
Service Budgets – net service growth / savings 2022/23		(1.547)	(1.547)	(1.547)	(1.547)	(1.547)
Service Risks, Issues & Opportunities		2.407	0.833	0.852	1.002	0.852
Net new sources of Income – Planned Developments (net)		0.000	(0.250)	(0.400)	(0.500)	(0.800)
Central Budgets - Treasury Management – net borrowing costs		(0.900)	(0.900)	(0.900)	(0.900)	(0.900)
Central Budgets – other changes		(0.136)	(0.136)	(0.136)	(0.136)	(0.136)
Central Budgets – Employer Pension Costs		1.890	1.869	1.919	1.919	1.919
Council Tax						
2.99% increase per Band D equivalent plus impact of forecast taxbase		(1.071)	(1.466)	(2.132)	(2.824)	(3.545)
Business Rates (NDR) including impact of ‘Negative RSG’		(2.284)	1.390	0.700	0.200	0.300
Grants and Reserves						
Net call on Grants and Reserves		0.141	0.499	0.480	0.330	0.480
Forecast Gap at November 2021 Compared to 2021/22 Budget¹	-	0	3.042	2.586	2.294	2.373
Annual Increase in Gap		nil	3.042	(0.456)	(0.292)	0.079
Gap as % of 2020/21 budget requirement		n/a	15.23%	12.94%	11.48%	11.88%

EXTRACT: STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER STRATEGIC FINANCIAL RISKS

SR2	Financial sustainability	RED
Description	<p>The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, coupled with current adverse macroeconomic conditions and the wider local government funding context, have created conditions of unprecedented financial uncertainty and challenge for the Council.</p> <p>The Council is therefore increasingly reliant on generating additional income and identifying savings and efficiencies from existing budgets. If not mitigated, these financial challenges risk an adverse impact on the Council's ability to deliver its Corporate Plan objectives</p>	
Owner	Portfolio Holder	Cllr Schofield
	Officers	Pat Main
Controls	<p>The Council will continue to ensure that strong financial management arrangements are in place and will continue investment in skills and expertise to support the delivery of the Council's financial and commercial objectives while managing risks.</p> <p>The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) sets out the forecast budget challenges over the coming five years and forms the basis for service and financial planning, while the Capital Investment Strategy provides an overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributes to the provision of Council services and how associated risk is managed.</p> <p>The budget pressures identified by the MTFP will be addressed by the Council's Financial Sustainability Programme. The Commercial Strategy sets out the commercial activity the Council will consider, provide a framework on option evaluation, and provide the basis on which commercial decision making will be made.</p> <p>The Annual Revenue Budget sets out funding allocations for the current year and confirms officer accountability for ensuring that expenditure and income are managed within limits approved by Members. In year budget monitoring reports confirm compliance with these limits and report any action required to manage budget variances.</p> <p>The Treasury Management Strategy helps ensure that investments achieve target returns within approved security and liquidity limits and that borrowing to fund the Capital Programme is affordable.</p> <p>Internal audit will be utilised to review the approach taken to secure financial sustainability.</p>	
Mitigating actions/progress	<p>In addressing its significant financial challenges, the Council has established a Financial Sustainability Programme. This programme</p>	

SR2		Financial sustainability	RED	
		<p>will take the form of a series of ambitious initiatives that reduce costs and/or increase income, enabling the Council to set a balanced budget reducing need to draw on reserves. Key to this will be looking at delivering services differently to realise savings and/or increase income, as well as embedding lasting cultural change across the organisation.</p> <p>The programme is premised on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Projects – new ideas and opportunities for generating income and/or making savings. 2. Service and financial planning (2023/24 onwards) – for all budget areas, reviewing the services delivered and the associated budgetary requirements. Ensuring that there is a clear justification for all services delivered and that budgets are set accordingly. Opportunities for delivering services in a different way to unlock savings will also be explored. 3. Fees and charges – carrying out a fundamental review to ensure the full application of the fees and charges policy across the Council. <p>Updates to the programme will be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Executive.</p> <p>An updated MTFP was reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Executive in November 2022 . This update confirmed that the risk of increasing costs, driven by inflationary pressures in the wider economy and disruption of the global supply chain, presents an increasing challenge to the Council's financial sustainability.</p> <p>This is especially notable for the goods and services that the Council relies on to maintain service delivery. The Council continues to ensure the most financially advantageous/sustainable option is selected when procuring goods and services and, wherever possible, the Council will ensure that increased costs are reflected in the fees and charges levied or compensating budget savings will be sought. Energy costs have also escalated following the most recent contract renewals and the extent of Government financial support to offset the impacts is currently uncertain.</p>		
Score	Likelihood	More than likely	Direction of travel	-
	Impact	Significant		
Status		Treat		
Last update		14 October 2022		

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**REVENUE BUDGET
ADDITIONAL SERVICE & CENTRAL BUDGET GROWTH,
INCOME AND SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2023/24**

Service & Central Revenue Budget Growth, Income and Savings Proposals 2022/23 (additional proposals – January 2023)

54

3.1 Services - Pay					
Head of Service	Service	Growth £M	Income / Savings £M	FTE Impact	Description
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Total					

Service & Central Revenue Budget Growth, Income and Savings Proposals 2022/23 (additional proposals – January 2023)

3.2 Services – Non-Pay					
Head of Service	Service	Growth £M	Income / Savings £M	FTE Impact	Description
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Total					

Service & Central Revenue Budget Growth, Income and Savings Proposals 2022/23 (additional proposals – January 2023)

3.2 Central – Non-Pay					
Head of Service	Service	Growth £M	Income / Savings £M	FTE Impact	Description
Pat Main	Banstead Commons Conservators	0.025	-	-	Additional funding support for 2023/24
Total		0.025	-	-	

Service & Central Revenue Budget Growth, Income and Savings Proposals 2022/23 (additional proposals – January 2023)

3.4 Government Funding Reductions					
Head of Service	Service	Growth £M	Income / Savings £M	FTE Impact	Description
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Total			-	-	

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FORECAST REVENUE RESERVE BALANCES AT 1 APRIL 2023

	Forecast Balance at 1.4.23 £m	Purpose
General Fund Balance	£3.500m	Acts as a buffer against unpredicted budget pressures. The minimum level required is £3.5m

Earmarked Revenue Reserves	Forecast Balance at 1.4.23 £m	Purpose
Housing Delivery Strategy Reserve	19.080	Established to support delivery of the Council's Housing Delivery Strategy. Funded from the equivalent of the balance on historic New Homes Bonus grant allocations.
Commercial Risks & Volatility Reserve	5.768	Earmarked for the purpose of mitigating the impacts of delays in delivery of new sustainable commercial income streams.
Homelessness Prevention	1.773	Established to account separately for the funding set aside for homelessness prevention.
Capital Schemes Feasibility Studies Reserve	1.746	Established to ensure that funding is available to prepare business cases and obtain external professional advice for new initiatives designed to deliver new sustainable commercial income streams.
Corporate Plan Delivery Fund (CPDF)	1.000	Provides time-limited funding to deliver key priorities, Corporate Plan objectives and invest-to-save initiatives, including investment in new technology.
Government Funding Reduction Risks Reserve	0.907	Earmarked for the purpose of mitigating the planned reduction in Government funding pending delivery of new sustainable income streams.
IT Strategy Reserve	0.700	Established to support implementation of the new IT Strategy.
Economic Development Initiatives Reserve	0.657	Established to fund initiatives to raise awareness amongst local people of quality local employment opportunities.
Insurance Reserve	0.500	Provides cover against uninsured losses.
Feasibility Studies (Infrastructure Initiatives) Reserve	0.250	Established to fund the Council's contribution to councils in Surrey collectively funding the development of infrastructure feasibility studies so that bids can be made for full project funding when bidding rounds become available.

Earmarked Revenue Reserves	Forecast Balance at 1.4.23 £m	Purpose
Family Support Programme	0.239	Established to carry-forward unused funding for use in future years.
Environmental Sustainability Reserve	0.170	Established to fund Investment in delivery of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy.
Economic Pressures Reserve	0.150	New – established as part of budget-setting for 2023/24 to provide additional discretionary support.
Pension Reserve	0.142	Established to set aside funds in anticipation of the next Pension Fund Revaluation.
Revenues & Benefits Fraud Prevention Reserve	0.106	Established to hold funds recovered following successful prosecutions
Contaminated Land Investigation Works Reserve	0.100	Established to fund costs that were previously capitalised where capitalisation is no longer an option
Flood Prevention Works Reserve	0.050	New – established as part of budget-setting for 2023/24 to fund costs that were previously capitalised where capitalisation is no longer an option
Business Engagement Funding Reserve	0.036	Established to carry-forward unused funding for use in future years.
Housing Repossession Prevention Reserve	0.030	Established to fund costs that were previously capitalised where capitalisation is no longer an option
Total Earmarked Revenue Reserves:	£33.404m	

COVID-19 Revenue Reserves	Forecast Balance at 1.4.23 £m	Purpose
COVID-19 – Council Tax Hardship Funding	0.255	Established to unused funding for use in future years.
COVID-Test & Trace Admin Funding	0.047	Established to unused funding for use in future years.

Total Reserves	£37.206m¹
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1. Subject to confirmation when the budget outcome for 2022/23 is reported

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 - 2027/28 - SUMMARY - ALL SCHEMES

ORGANISATION SERVICES

STRATEGIC PROPERTY	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	BFWD	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£m	£000
Pat Main								
Rolling Property Maintenance Programmes:								
Beech House, London Road Reigate	3,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,000
Forum House, Brighton Road Redhill	170	100	150	150	100	100	0	770
Unit 61E Albert Road North	62	200	12	12	12	75	0	372
Regent House, 1-3 Queensway Redhill	75	100	90	90	75	90	0	520
Linden House, 51B High Street Reigate	28	29	12	12	12	15	0	107
Units 1-5 Redhill Dist Centre Salfords	57	58	17	17	17	25	0	191
Crown House	210	75	75	75	75	75	0	585
Tenanted Properties	100	100	100	100	100	100	0	600
Tenanted Property Assets	60	76	76	76	50	76	0	414
Operational Buildings	260	110	95	80	69	80	0	694
Prory Park	213	10	10	30	10	50	0	323
Public Conveniences	17	4	10	20	10	95	0	156
Infra-structure (walls)	26	60	10	60	10	20	0	186
Allotments	30	12	12	22	12	12	0	100
Cemeteries & Chapel	60	20	20	40	20	20	0	180
Leisure Centre Maintenance	17	210	190	30	36	175	0	658
Existing Pavilions Programme	168	50	50	50	50	150	0	518
Pavilion Replacement - Woodmansterne	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
Car Parks Capital Works Programme	358	190	195	170	80	75	0	1,068
Earlswood Depot/Park Farm Depot	52	20	20	20	20	50	0	182
Community Centres Programme	34	75	67	65	32	125	0	398
Harlequin Property Maintenance	206	110	120	100	30	100	0	666
Building Maintenance - Capitalised Staff Costs	0	28	28	28	28	28	28	168
Massetts Road	0	21	21	21	21	21	21	126
Temp Accommodation Units	0	0	40	40	40	40	40	200
	5,223	1,657	1,419	1,307	909	1,597	89	12,202
CORPORATE RESOURCES								
Darren Wray								
Rolling Investment Programmes:								
ICT Replacement Programme	224	200	200	250	200	200	200	1,474
ICT Data Centre Refresh	0	0	0	0	0	0	250	250
Replacement Photocopiers/ Printers	0	0	60	0	0	0	50	110
	224	200	260	250	200	200	500	1,834
ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY								
Cath Rose								
Environmental Strategy Delivery	250	0	0	0	0	0	0	250
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT								
Kate Brown								
Great Workplace Programme - Phase 2	452	250	250	250	0	0	0	1,202

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 - 2027/28 - SUMMARY - ALL SCHEMES								
PEOPLE SERVICES								
HOUSING	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Richard Robinson	BFWD £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	£000
Grant-Funded Schemes								
Disabled Facilities Grant	0	1,134	1,287	1,287	1,287	1,287	1,287	7,569
Home Improvement Agency & Handy Person Scheme	0	120	125	132	132	132	132	773
Small Works Assistance	0	50	0	0	0	0	0	50
Housing Development								
Lee Street Bungalows	327	0	0	0	0	0	0	327
Cromwell Road Development	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	150
Unit 1 Pitwood Park Tadworth	43	0	0	0	0	0	0	43
	519	1,304	1,412	1,419	1,419	1,419	1,419	8,911
LEISURE & INTERVENTION	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Duane Kirkland	BFWD £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	£000
Rolling Maintenance Programmes:								
Harlequin - Service Development	172	100	100	100	100	100	100	772
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Justine Chatfield	BFWD £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	£000
Rolling Maintenance/Investment Programmes:								
CCTV Rolling Programme	75	30	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	104.6

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 - 2027/28 - SUMMARY - ALL SCHEMES								
PLACE SERVICES								
NEIGHBOURHOOD OPERATIONS	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Morag Williams	BFWD £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	£000
Rolling Maintenance/Investment Programmes:								
Vehicles & Plant Programme	182	1,056	582	681	837	562	3,668	7,568
Fleet Vehicle Wash-Bay Replacement	350	0	0	0	0	0	0	350
Play Area Improvement Programme	0	230	230	230	230	230	100	1,250
Air Quality Monitoring Equipment	0	40	40	40	65	65	40	290
Parks & Countryside - Infrastructure & Fencing	0	45	45	45	45	45	45	270
Workshop Refurbishment	0	160	0	0	0	0	0	160
Contribution to Surrey Transit Site	127	0	0	0	0	0	0	127
	659	1,531	897	996	1,177	902	3,853	10,015
PLACE DELIVERY	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Peter Boarder	BFWD £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	£000
Marketfield Way Redevelopment	6,986	15,100	0	0	0	0	0	22,086
Pay-on-Exit Car Parking at Central Car Park and Victoria Road Car Park, Horley	52	0	0	0	0	0	0	52
Preston - Parking Improvements	348	0	0	0	0	0	0	348
Horley Public Realm Improvements - Phase 4	575	0	0	0	0	0	0	575
Merstham Recreation Ground	1,419	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,419
Redhill Public Realm Improvements	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	30
	9,410	15,100	0	0	0	0	0	24,510
ECONOMIC PROSPERITY	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Simon Bland	BFWD £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	£000
Vibrant Towns & Villages	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	100
TOTAL APPROVED CAPITAL PROGRAMME	16,984	20,272	4,338	4,322	3,805	4,218	5,961	59,899

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Draft Budget Consultation 2023-2024

About the consultation

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council's constitution requires the organisation to consult on its draft budget proposals.

Prior to the 2022-2023 budget, consultation had been focussed on inviting comments from the business community and the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee. However, as budget proposals now include changes to a range of services, including making financial savings through reductions in some areas, the Council has increased the promotion of the consultation to reach a wider audience, using a survey format to make it easier for everyone to give their views.

This report provides an overview of this year's process and a summary of the consultation findings.

Key Findings

The consultation received a total of 201 responses, and the majority of budget proposals received a positive response from at least 60% of respondents. However, there were areas where responses were predominantly opposed to the proposed approach.

- The proposal to increase Council Tax was supported by a majority of respondents, receiving 59% of responses in agreement, with 36% opposed and 5% other.
- The majority of Fees and Charges proposals were supported, but increases to garden waste and allotment fees were opposed, and responses were mixed on increases to community centre room hire charges.
- For Service Budget proposals, the reduction in grant funding for some voluntary sector partners was opposed by a substantial majority of respondents (69% disagreement). Views on IT costs around software licensing were also mixed, but other proposals were generally supported.

- For changes to Staffing Costs, all proposals were supported by a majority of respondents.
- Many of the comments received reported on challenges around the cost of living, both on the respondent's own behalf and for others. There was also recognition of the impact of inflation upon costs for the Council and support for adequate funding of key services. A number of comments were concerned with the Council operating efficiently.
- Many comments expressed a desire to see community services and facilities supported, particularly those relating to sports and physical activity, and noted the associated wellbeing benefits.
- Protecting vulnerable persons and those in need was a common sentiment, often accompanied by observations that these should be prioritised, and that costs should be borne by less 'essential areas' or by those most able to pay.

Methodology

The consultation on the draft budget proposals for 2023-2024 was conducted primarily through a structured survey. The public were also invited to send any general comments relating to the 2023 – 2024 budget proposal to the Reigate and Banstead Borough Council engagement email inbox or via Freepost.

This survey deployed 'closed' questions for each budget proposal for 2023-2024. These 'closed' questions asked respondents to indicate if they 'agreed', 'disagreed' or had an 'other' view of each proposed policy amendment. These closed questions allowed for a decisive snapshot of respondent sentiment to each proposed budget policy amendment.

In addition, for each section of the budget 2023-2024 survey, 'free text' comment boxes were available. These qualitative 'free text' boxes enabled respondents to provide any comments, concerns and suggestions relating to the 2023-2024 budget.

These 'free text' comments and non-survey returns were analysed using the 'thematic analysis' approach. The 'thematic analysis' approach involved reviewing the 'free text' comments and assigning codes to each comment. A code is a label assigned to a piece of text. These codes were used to identify and summarise the frequent themes expressed within the 'free text' comment data. This approach allowed for a significant volume of 'free text' data to be structured into digestible findings.

The survey did not use 'mandatory questions', except for confirming in which capacity respondents were responding. This meant respondents could skip questions and choose to only give their sentiments on budget proposals relevant to them. This mitigated the risk of

‘survey fatigue’ (where respondents would be overwhelmed by the number of questions) and meant respondents were discouraged from ‘randomly’ selecting an answer to a question irrelevant to them.

This mixed method approach allowed for both an assessment of overall sentiment towards proposals and provided an awareness of specific concerns from individuals. In addition, this mixed method approach allowed for a deeper understanding of *why* respondents ‘agreed’, ‘disagreed’ or expressed an ‘other’ view towards each 2023-2024 budget policy proposal.

The consultation was promoted through a press release, social media, council e-newsletters to residents and businesses, emails to approximately 350 stakeholders, and posters at council sites. Deadline reminders were also provided in the closing weeks of the consultation period.

The survey was available online through the Council’s website, with accessible hard copies available upon request. Respondents were able to return completed surveys and comments online, by Freepost, or by email, and were also able to get in touch via telephone through the Council’s customer contact team.

Respondents to the survey were invited to provide information on the capacity in which they were responding and demographic information to inform the overall balance of respondents. This survey did not collect any identifiable personal data. This meant that the respondents were able to take part anonymously. More information on participation in the consultation is available in the participation section of this report.

The consultation was open from 21 November 2022 until 16 January 2023 and received 198 survey returns, and 3 others. The survey responses include partially completed surveys, as the optional nature of the questions allowed respondents to provide answers only for their areas of interest or concern.

Results

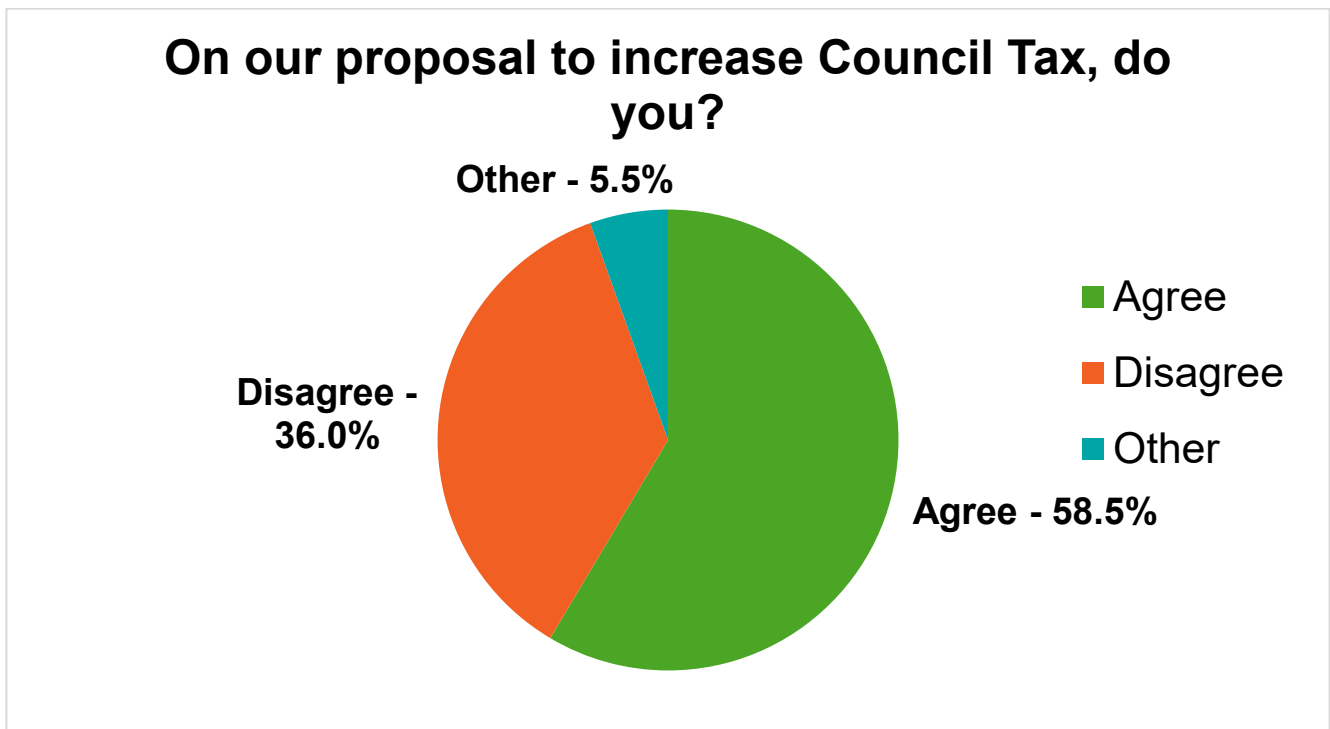
The survey was divided into sections, covering the main areas of the draft budget proposals – Council Tax, Fees and Charges, Service Budgets, and Staffing Costs. For each section, figures for overall sentiment and key themes of comments received are presented below. The feedback from other, non-survey, responses is also reflected in the results information below. The list of comments submitted is included as Appendix 1 to this report.

Council Tax

The draft budget proposed an increase of 3% to the Borough Council's component of Council Tax (affecting approximately 12% of total Council Tax, and representing an annual increase of approximately £7.25 for a Band D property.)

The majority of responses (58.5%) were in favour of the proposed increase.

Figure 1: Support for proposed increase in Council Tax



Key Comment Themes

- Concern about the impact of increases in costs for residents facing cost of living pressures
- Support for the increase as necessary for the Council to meet inflationary pressures and continue to deliver key services.

On balance, the consultation response supports the proposed increase in Council Tax, highlighting both the financial challenges faced by many residents and the need for the support services the Council provides.

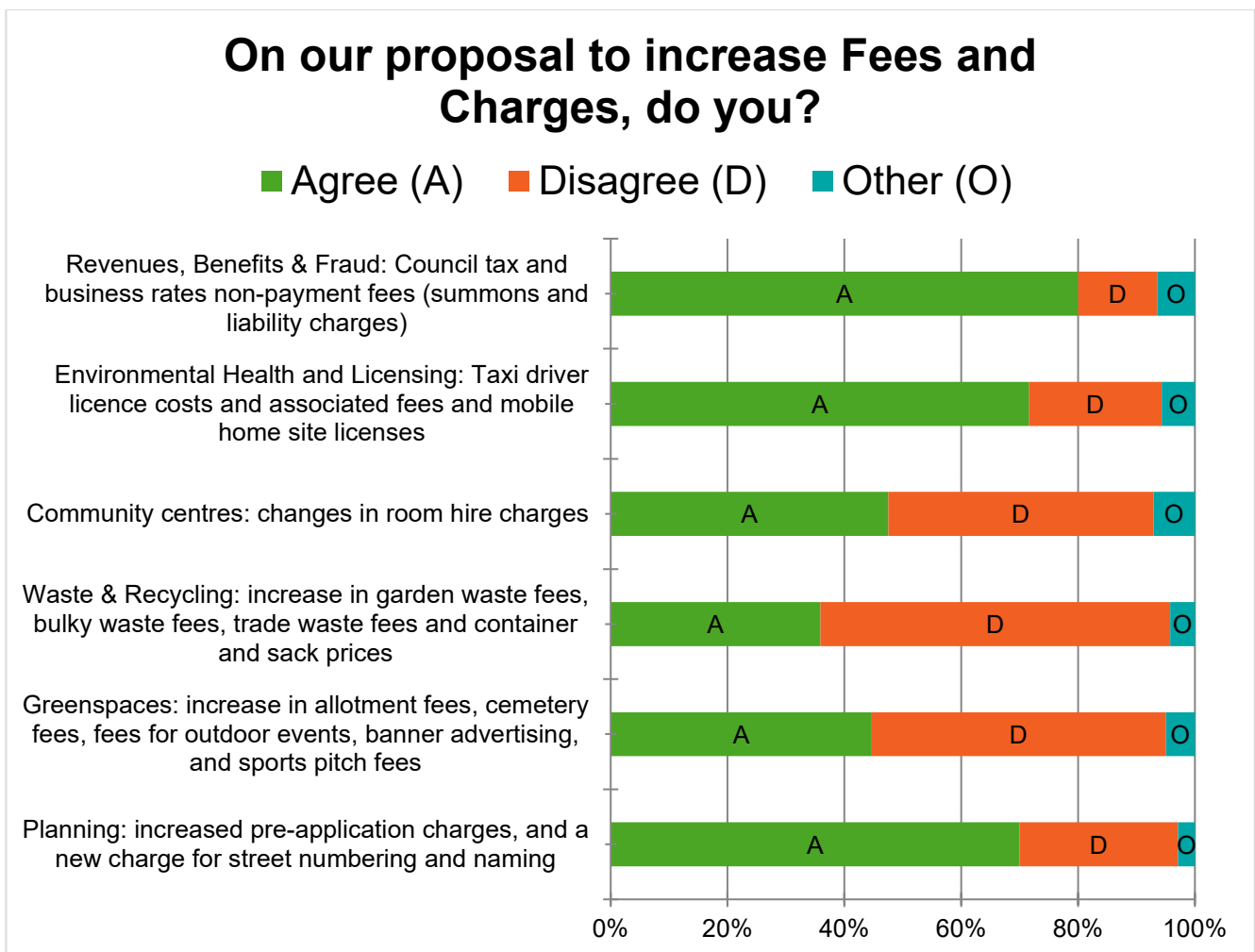
Fees and Charges

Proposed changes to fees and charges included increases across Community Partnerships, Neighbourhood Operations, Planning, and Revenues, Benefits and Fraud. These constituted:

- Increases to Council Tax and Business Rates non-payment fees (summons and liability charges)
- Increases to Taxi driver licence costs and fees, and to mobile home site licences
- Changes to room hire charges at the Council’s community centres
- Increases to fees for garden waste, bulky waste, trade waste and waste containers
- Increases in Greenspaces fees for allotments, cemeteries, outdoor events, advertising and sports pitches
- Increases to planning pre-application charges and the introduction of a new charge for street and numbering

A majority of respondents were opposed to the proposed increase to Waste and Recycling fees (60%) and to changes to Greenspaces and Community Centre fees (50%, with only 45% support), with comments suggesting that opposition was largely related to allotments, community facilities and outdoor spaces. Views were mixed on increases to community centre room hire costs.

Figure 2: Support for proposed increases to Fees and Charges



Key Comment Themes

- Disagreement with the increase to waste fees and concerns that this will lead to an increase in fly-tipping.
- Disagreement with community centre room hire increases, identifying concerns around fairness to community and voluntary partners and highlighting the wellbeing benefits of their use.
- Concern that increases to fees for allotments and sports pitches may discourage their use and reduce associated wellbeing benefits.

Proposals for increases to fees and charges relating to costs for business and industry were largely supported by the responses to the consultation. Some concerns around the overall level of business rates were expressed, but these are set by central Government and are outside of Council control.

Fees and charges relating to some Licensing matters (vehicle and operator licences), and parking charges were also proposed to be increased. Legislation requires that consultation on these matters be conducted according to separate statutory requirements, and there are therefore parallel consultations for these areas. Responses to these consultations will be considered separately and the approach to the proposed changes to the related fees and charges will then reflect these considerations.

Service Budgets

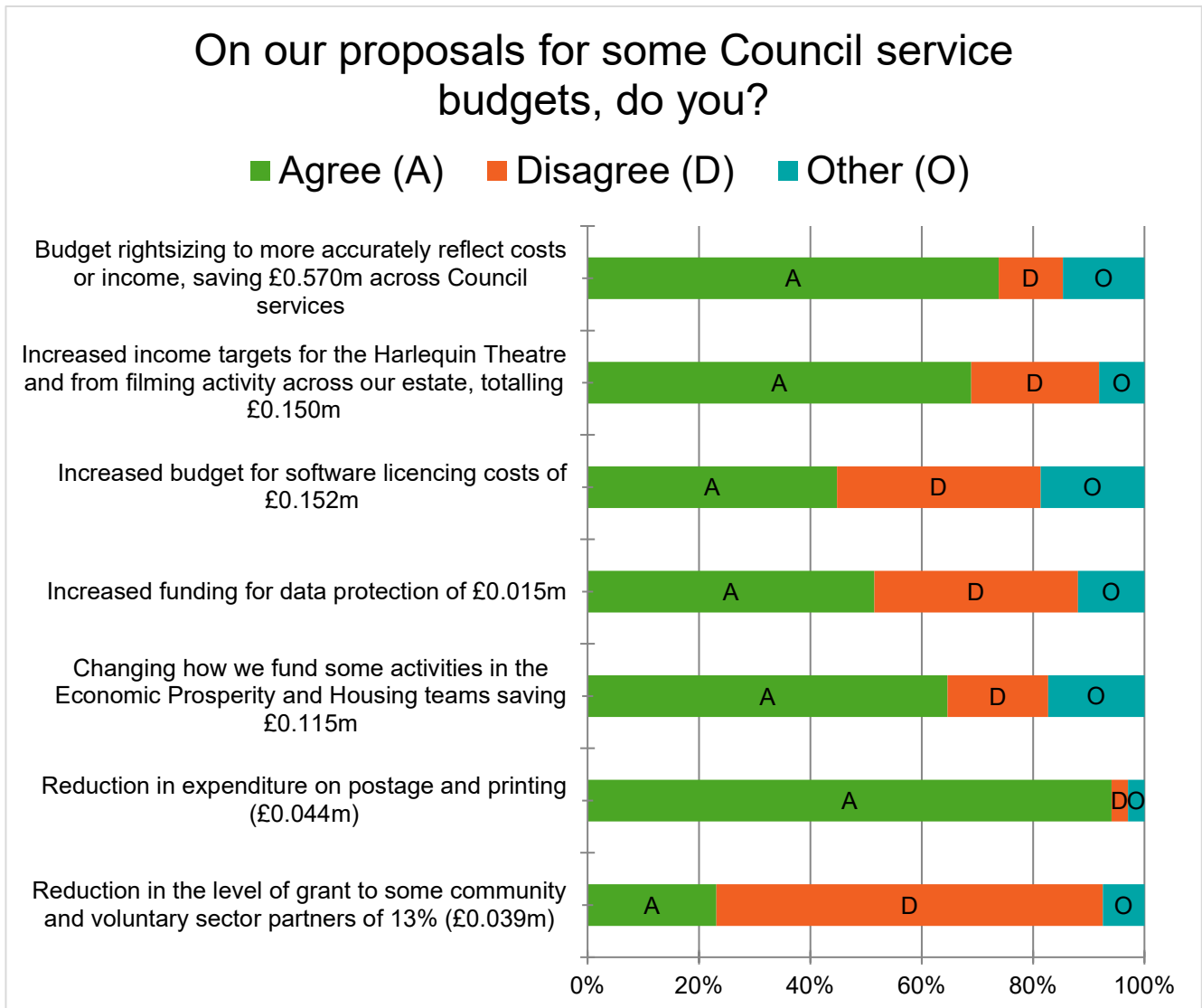
Proposals for changes to service budgets encompassed reductions in some grant funding, and a number of efficiencies and internal improvements. These constituted:

- An overall 13% reduction in the grant to some community and voluntary sector partners
- A reduction in expenditure on postage and printing of £44k
- Changes to the funding approach for some Economic Prosperity and Housing activities, saving £115k
- Improvements to IT for data protection and increases in software licencing costs, totalling £167k
- An increase to the income target for the Harlequin Theatre and filming across the Council estate of £150k
- Budget rightsizing to more accurately reflect costs and income across all service areas, representing a saving of £570k

Most disagreement was received regarding the reduction in community and voluntary sector grant funding, with 69% disagreeing with this proposal. There was more agreement than disagreement for the other proposals, but views were most mixed on the increases to IT

costs, with 37% disagreement for these, and only 45% agreeing with the increase to software licencing costs.

Figure 3: Support for changes to service budgets



Key Comment Themes

- Disagreement with the reduction in grant funding for some community and voluntary sector partners, stating the importance of these services
- Concern that the reduction in grant funding will cause harm to vulnerable service users, potentially also incurring greater costs in the long run
- Concerns and uncertainty regarding the costs and necessity of IT requirements around data protection and software licencing

The disagreement with the proposed reduction in community and voluntary sector grant funding is the most significant negative feedback from the consultation. Whilst the proposals seek to minimise the impact of these cuts and are accompanied by mitigation measures and monitoring, they are nonetheless clearly of significant concern to those responding to the consultation.

The comments on the proposed IT changes, particularly regarding software licensing, indicated that a number of respondents were unsure what these represented. Some responses disagreeing with the proposal may therefore not be fully representative of a more informed view. This indicates that additional information and clarity may be needed in future consultation on similar matters.

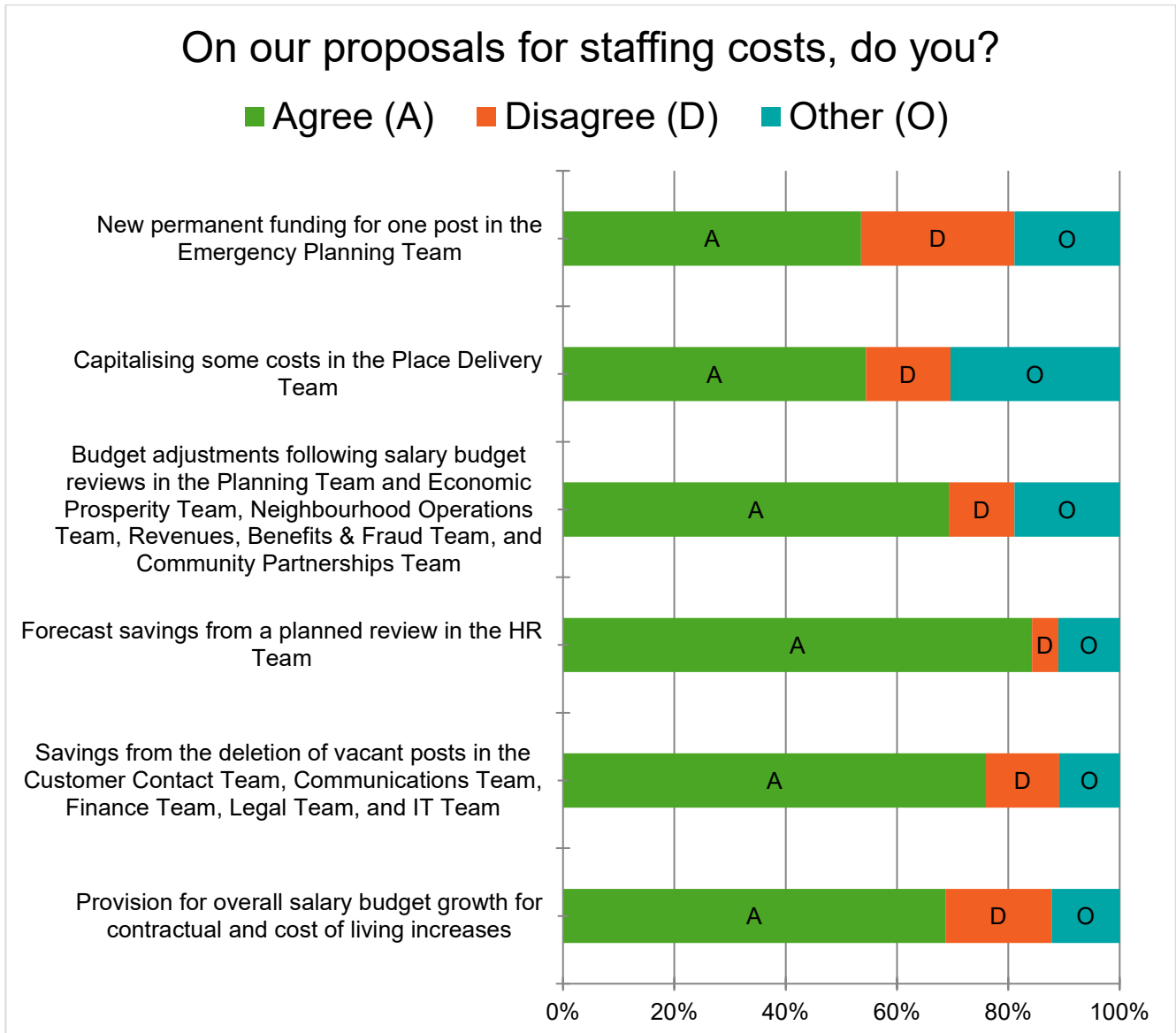
Staffing Costs

Proposals for changes to staffing costs reflected updates to salaries, savings from vacant posts and team reviews, budgetary adjustments and a new permanent post. These constituted:

- Provision for overall salary budget growth for contractual and cost of living increases
- Savings from the deletion of vacant posts across Customer Contact, Communications, Finance, Legal and IT
- Forecast savings from a planned review of the HR Team
- Budget adjustments from salary budget review across Planning, Economic Prosperity, Neighbourhood Operations, Revenues, Benefits and Fraud, and Community Partnerships
- Capitalising some costs in the Place Delivery Team
- New permanent funding for one post in the Emergency Planning Team

All of the proposals received support from a majority of respondents. Views were most mixed regarding the Emergency Planning post, with 28% disagreement, and there was some uncertainty around the capitalisation of some costs in Place Delivery, with 30% 'other' responses, many indicating that the question was not well understood.

Figure 4: Support for changes to staffing costs



Key Comment Themes

- Concerns that the Emergency Planning post may require only a part time role or may be redundant with efforts by county or national level organisation.
- Uncertainty regarding the meaning of capitalisation of some costs in the Place Delivery Team

Demographics

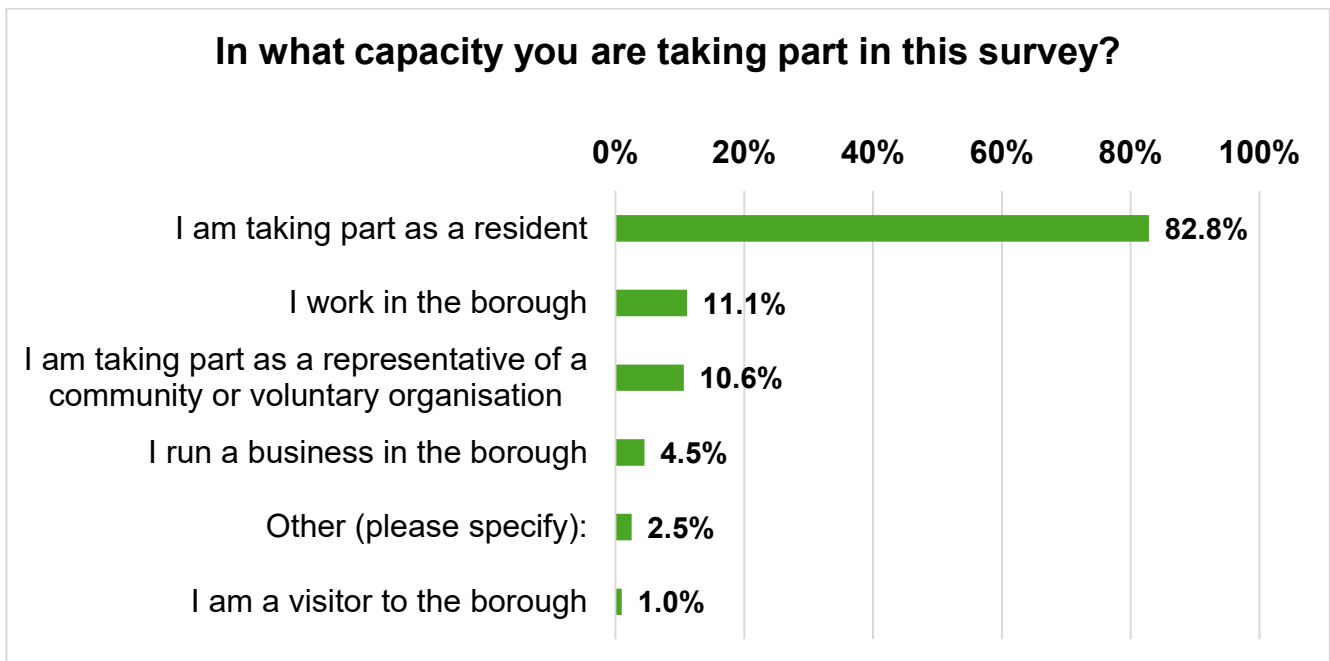
The Council received 201 responses to the consultation, including 135 completed surveys, 63 partial surveys and 3 other responses. All survey data was anonymised, and no personal

identifiable data was collected in the survey. Respondents were able to skip all questions other than regarding the capacity in which they were responding, or give a 'prefer not to say' response to any question.

Respondents

Survey participants were asked in what capacity they were responding.

Figure 5: In what capacity did survey participants take part in the consultation



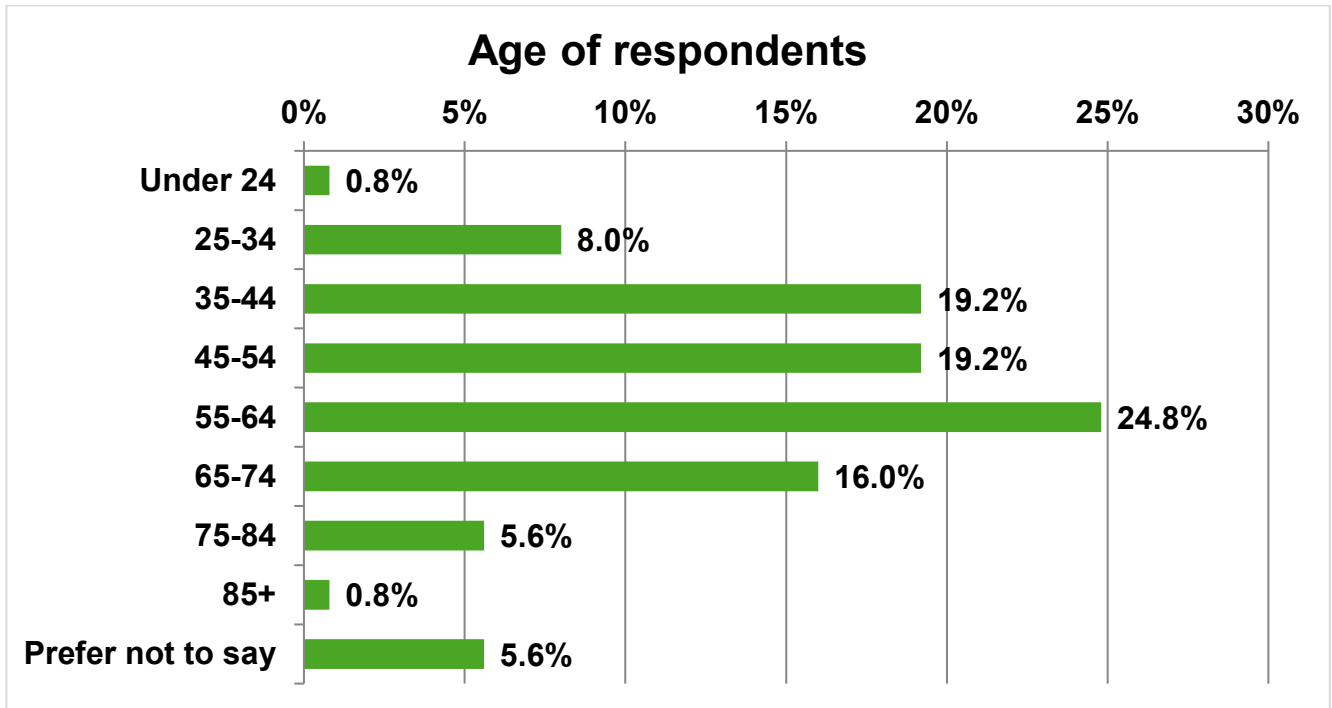
198 responses were provided to this question. Respondents were able to select multiple options, so the totals for each category sum to more than 100%.

The clear majority of respondents were borough residents, at 83% of survey participants. 21 responses were from representatives of community or voluntary sector organisations, comprising approximately 11% of the total.

Age

Survey participants were asked which age range they fell into.

Figure 6: Age of respondents

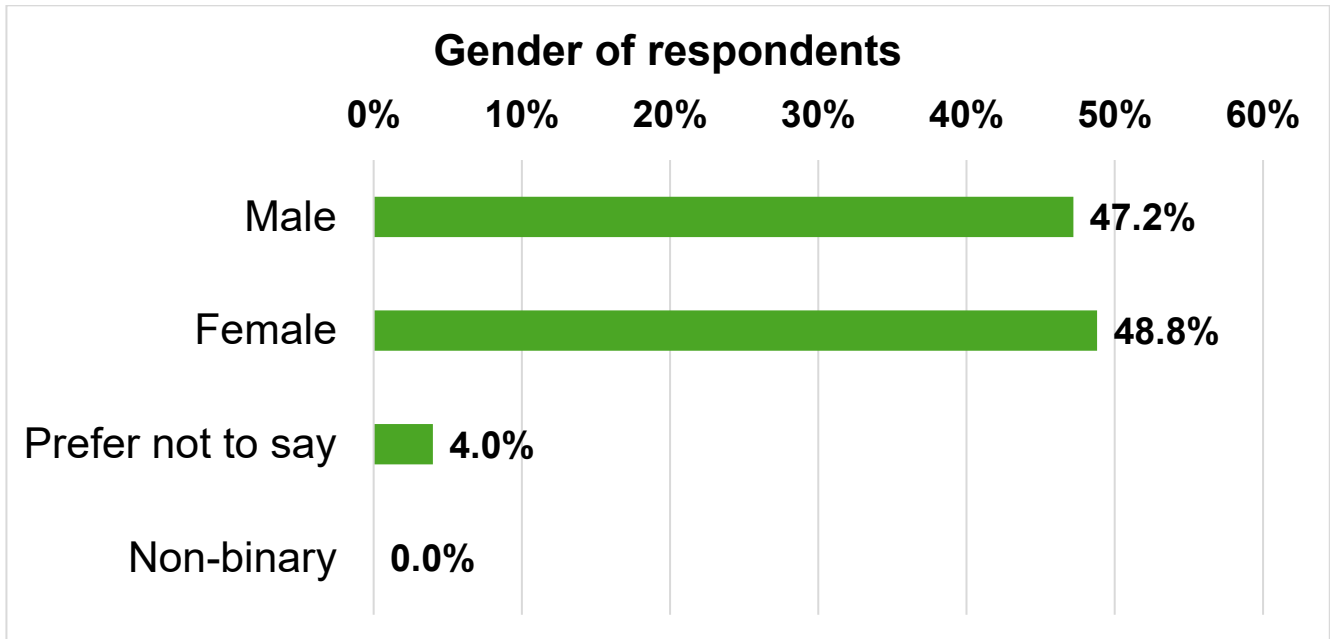


125 responses were provided to this question. Compared to population data from the 2021 Census, of those who provided an age range those aged 34 and under and those aged 85+ were underrepresented, whilst those age 35 to 74 were overrepresented in the responses received, with those aged 55-64 highly overrepresented, with a rate of response almost double the representative level.

Gender

Survey participants were asked to identify their gender.

Figure 7: Gender of respondents

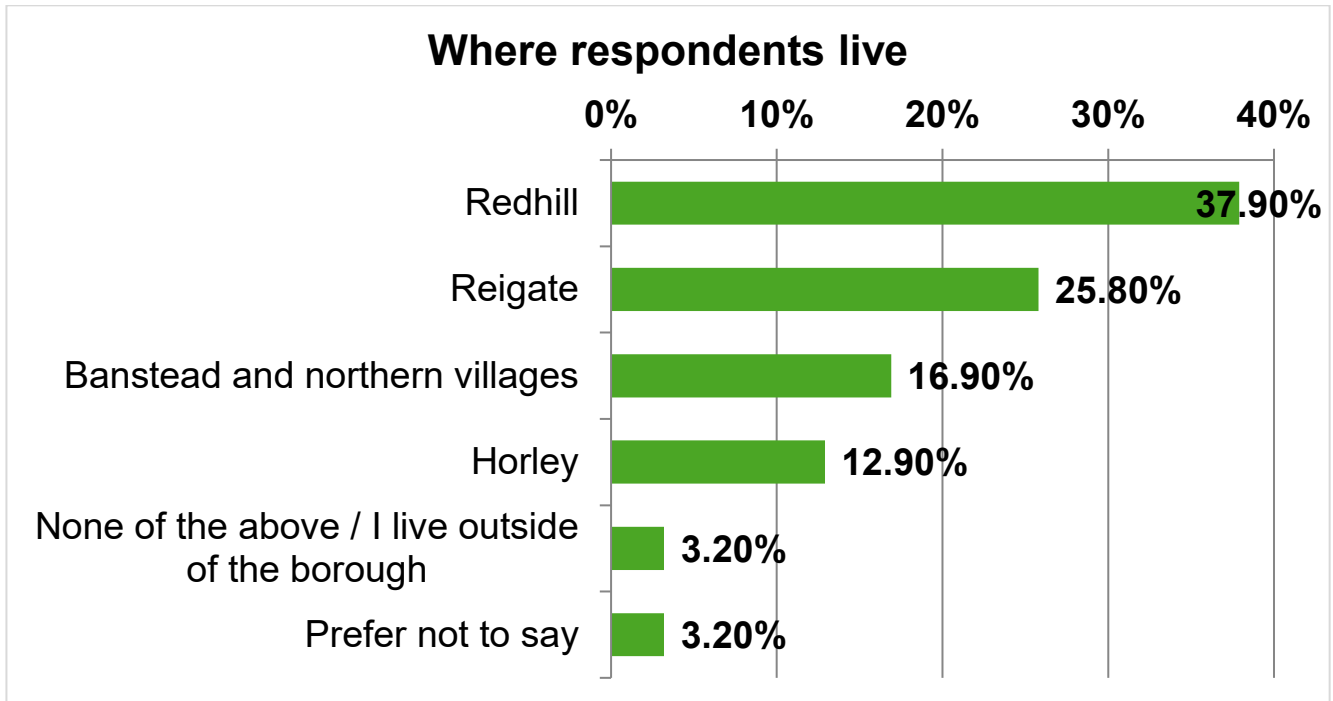


125 responses were provided to this question. This balance of responses is consistent with population data from the 2021 Census.

Area

Survey participants were asked which area best described where they lived.

Figure 8: Where respondents live

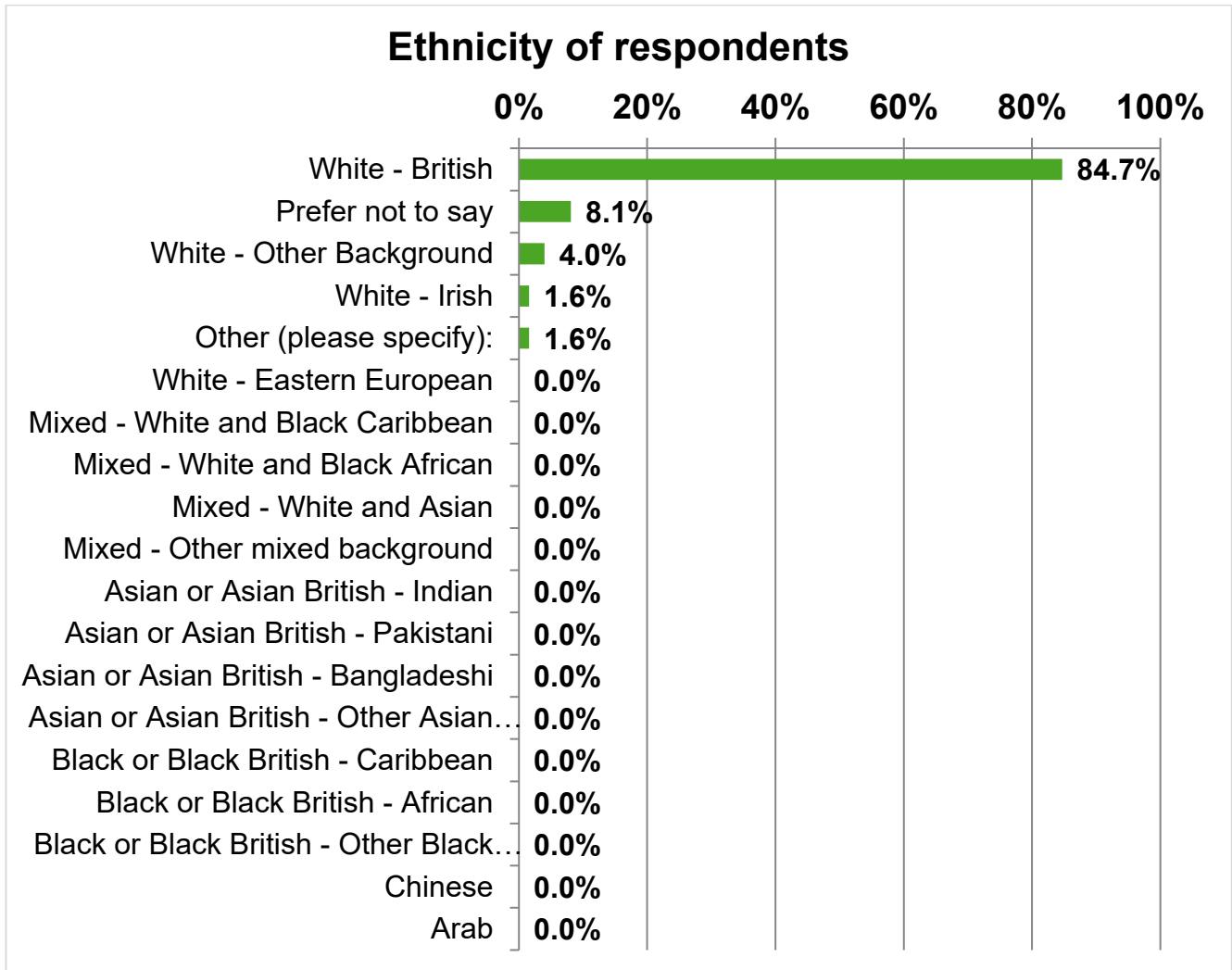


124 responses were provided to this question. As the boundaries of areas within the borough can be assessed in varying ways, the populations of each can be subject to interpretation. However, the responses provided suggest that Reigate is slightly overrepresented whilst Horley is underrepresented in the responses received.

Ethnicity

Survey participants were asked which description best described their ethnicity.

Figure 9: Ethnicity of respondents

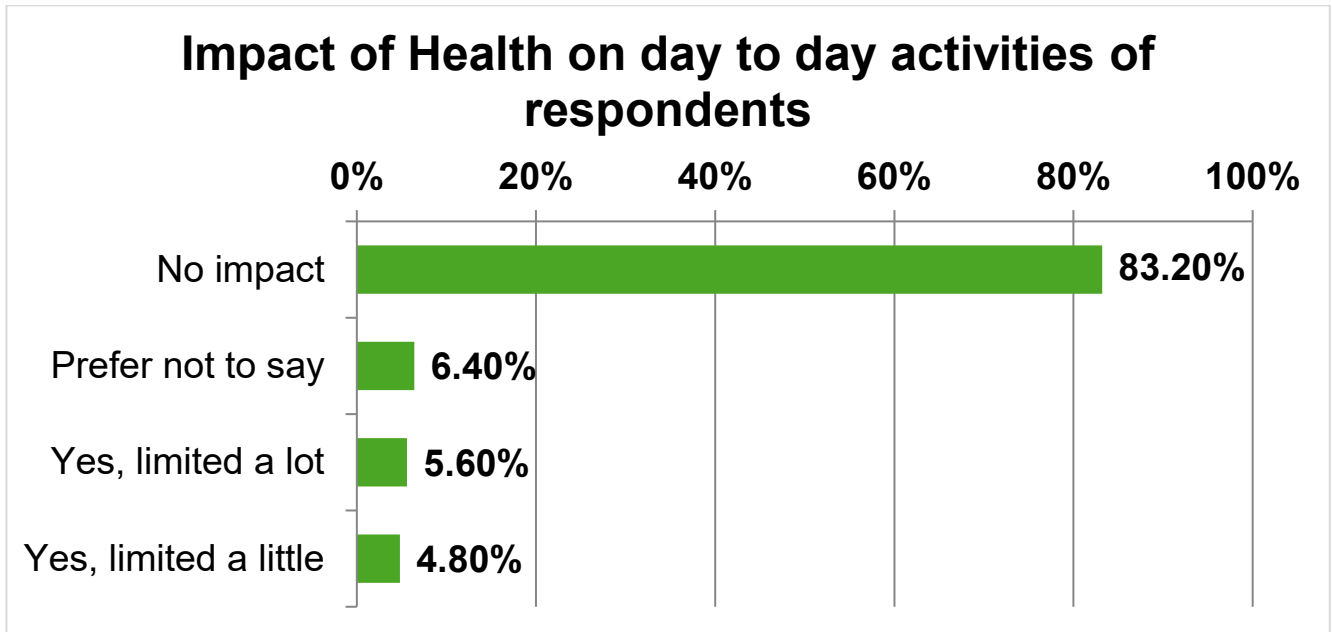


124 responses were provided to this question. Excluding those where preferred not to say, those identifying as White – British, White – Other Background, and White – Irish were overrepresented, whilst most other groups were underrepresented in the responses received. Data from the 2021 Census indicates that only approximately 84% of the borough falls within these groups, whilst 98% of respondents who provided an answer identified as one of these groups.

Health

Respondents were asked about the impact of health on their day to day activities.

Figure 10: Impact of health on day to day activities of respondents



125 responses were provided to this question. At the time of writing, information from the 2021 Census has not yet been released for health characteristics, but information from the previous census in 2011 indicates that those for whom health impacts on their day to day activities are likely slightly underrepresented in the responses received.



Draft Budget Consultation 2023-2024 – Appendix 1

Comments on the consultation

As part of the consultation on the draft Council budget for 2023-2024, respondents were invited to provide 'free text' comments. These qualitative 'free text' boxes enabled respondents to provide any comments, concerns and suggestions relating to the 2023-2024 budget.

These 'free text' comments and non-survey returns were analysed using the 'thematic analysis' approach, and the overall analysis of the comments was provided in the consultation report to which this document is appended.

In addition to this analysis, the full text of the comments on each topic of the consultation is provided within this appendix. Comments are presented as received, except where they would be personally identifiable, misleading or offensive, or where typing errors have been corrected or minor formatting changes made for clarity and readability.

Council Tax

The draft budget proposed an increase of 3% to the Borough Council's component of Council Tax (affecting approximately 12% of total Council Tax, and representing an annual increase of approximately £7.25 for a Band D property.)

The following comments were received in response to this topic:

1. Property bands need revision as we pay the same as owners of £1 million+ properties which makes no sense. Senior staff on RBBC are paid too high salaries and a more realistic level would save significant sums of taxpayers money.
2. I feel that the property tax bands are far too wide, expecting people in lessor properties to pay the same as those with much more expensive properties. CEO's are paid too high, looking at management could save money.
3. We pay enough already

4. Three percent? Not a lot in comparison with inflation. If you want a referendum then I would say yes.
5. Too many residents are in lower banding than they should be due to extensive refurbishments, ensuring houses are in the correct banding will provide the council with sufficient funding without penalising everyone with increased council tax bills
6. For the council to achieve good outcomes for resident and businesses it must have the financial resources available to achieve this, and whilst no increase is welcomed in these trying times the council must be able to fulfil its obligations to all Council Tax payers.
7. Council is being asked by Government to do more and more with less and less. Continuing in this direction is unsustainable and particularly unfair to many households that are just getting by. Go back to Government and tell them! The whole council tax system need restructure, including making sure those with very expensive properties pay more, but also that the split of services is more fairly geared and central Government / taxation picks up more of the cost, e.g. health and welfare, policing, infrastructure such as schools and such like required because of new housing / demographics. Also, elected officials should receive less pay and very limited expenses, and likewise and even more so for Members of Parliament.
8. Conduct a referendum
9. Needs to be in keeping with central rising costs
10. If it means voluntary partnerships are supported then fine
11. Whilst I don't want to see our clients struggling further I understand the need for the increase
12. I live in Merstham and it feels like we are forgotten about in this area, less money is spent on us, more is focused on the higher regarded areas like Reigate, yet we are paying for it
13. I sympathise with your plight. However you need to stop ignoring Merstham residents and our repeated concerns about our third world roads.
14. Households are already squeezed. Find more savings such as reducing management and freezing their bonuses and pay.
15. Cost of living is already too high. Plus a new home owner the banding of my council tax is already hugely excessive and unfair. I pay an additional service charge for many of the services the council would normally provide which is also unfair. New build non council managed estates should receive a tax discount.
16. This is just common-sense. Inflation is over 10% therefore 3% will either mean cuts or spend of any reserves.
17. Rather than max amount this should be lower
18. Reasonable in the present day financial climate.
19. With electricity bills set to rise again in the new year and the squeeze on individuals finances already this is going to add even more pressure to households' ability to keep

up with payments. We just cannot afford for things to keep going up and up. It may not seem like much but when everything is increasing it becomes impossible to cover it all.

20. I think this would be an affordable compromise if it helped to retain vital services.

21. I value the services RBBC provides and think the increase is justified. I would vote in favour of a larger increase if proposed.

22. It needs to be one

23. I am not in band D so have no immediate way of knowing how much you are increasing it. I am concerned that the per-capita government payment is lower than in London - just a short distance to the north of my home - and that the Conservative government should address this before the Conservative council come to the residents for more money.

24. No more than 3% please.

25. Council tax is already unaffordable

26. I think in the current financial climate 3% sounds the best it could be for residents.

27. £7.25 increase per year is the cost of 2 Costas!

28. The council services have not increased (see proposed decreases instead) and residents have not received pay rises of 3% to match this suggested increase.

29. The council should be cutting services and salaries of anyone being paid over £85,000 per annum rather than increasing taxes.

30. No comment

31. If the tax increases fund additional/maintain current services then I agree in an increase

32. The delivery of services is very important.

33. Cost of Living Crisis?!

34. Allotments charges already make it difficult for it to be cost effective. Especially for a limited income pensioner. It has health advantages but if it becomes more expensive I won't be able to continue. Also there are numerous empty plots this will increase thereby reducing any profit to the council as well as increased health care costs

35. With a normal full time job and lots of overtimes we can't even afford a normal healthy life and currently living like a poor [person] inside the house. Please don't do this. It is cruel.

36. We pay enough and times are difficult enough at the moment

37. Money could be saved by better budgeting and less admin and middle management council workers.

38. Fees brings increased for allotments will discourage people from continuing to work the allotments especially as many are on difficult ground or have been neglected so are now full of weeds

39. Hasn't the government removed the cap on the % that Council tax can be increased by? Why not increase more and not make cuts to services?
40. Already costs too much. Greater savings should be made. Lower Councillors allowance. Get rid of the Mayor. Reduce staff headcount.
41. Has an audit on waste at management level been made. Can cuts be made to the aesthetics of the borough.
42. Please refrain from increasing the council tax during a cost of living crisis. My landlord has already said the rent will increase by 10%
43. There should be a super higher tax band for bigger/higher value properties
44. Agree to them, that is about an extra 60-70p a month. Think the services provided by R&B are good
45. A 3% increase in the R&B Council element of Council Tax is reasonable in the current economic climate.
46. If it sticks to the raise of less than eight pound a year that's manageable for struggling people
47. I am a pensioner who is property rich cash poor. Moved to current property in 2017 smaller property than previous but higher band tax. Only a 2 bed bungalow but excruciating council tax.
48. At a time where the average trip to the grocery store has increased 20% or more, and gas/electric bills are doubling, I think this move is ill-timed.
49. We do not object to a 3% increase if the condition of the roads are improved i.e. less pot holes etc.!
50. I'm ok to increase if we see tangible benefits
51. In the current climate and cost of living crises every penny counts. This is a lot of money for some residents
52. We are struggling with increasing costs of living and inflation. Some of us simply cannot afford to spend more. I think the figure of £7.25 per year is incorrect. Surely this is a proposed monthly increase?
53. There should be a range of higher tax bands to take in the range of very large properties
54. It's already high enough. By increasing further you're making it impossible to live in the borough. More business are popping up and I'm sure you want to keep residents here otherwise those businesses go bust.
55. You want to increase what I'm being asked to pay at a time when the government has lost all control of budgets? Get a grip - do the right thing and freeze council tax this year - people will die and/or become homeless due to your reckless budget proposals.
56. Social care reasons

57. Whilst I agree on principle with a max 3% in general, I don't agree that Horley area has a higher council tax than other areas. As a resident of Horley, I do not see any benefit from this. Please remove the Horley premium.
58. I fear that just 3% is going to leave you with a deficit, although they promise us that inflation will have halved by mid-2023. We do need to keep pushing as the general grass clipping, leaf clearance and road sweeping service seems to significantly deteriorated this year. This makes a bit of a mockery of our efforts to improve the roads in Tadworth by tree planting.
59. People do not have enough money. That's why there's a cost of living crisis.
60. It will soon be impossible for us to afford to live in our current house due to rising costs on all fronts, this 3% rise will not be helpful
61. Ensure residents know the reasons for the increase and how the money will be spent.
62. During a period of financial hardship for many I support the increase being restricted to 3%.
63. We work with older, isolated residents, many of whom are struggling with the impact of the cost of living crisis. The increase in food costs, utility bills and general living is very real for the majority. An increase in Council Tax will add to their worries and increase their financial burden further.
64. I appreciate that Council Tax has to increase but it has to be used on services for our most vulnerable in society
65. All residents are having to carefully watch and control their day-to-day expenditure, some possibly resorting to using their savings where available. It is not the time for the Borough to be increasing their expenditure. They need to look inwards, cut out unnecessary funding to obscure causes, review salaries, particularly at the senior management level, review the need for some posts, ensure better value for money expended, improve the level of service provided, and improve productivity. They cannot merely expect to 'milk' the public as an easy way to fill the coffers.
66. Too much for a rise given how everyone is struggling with the cost of living
67. Time are very hard for everyone putting up taxes will bring more hardship
68. Every year council tax has gone up. Cumulative so one year it goes up example £5, then next year same percentage but say £5.50, then next year £6 and so on... cumulative. Do not see any improvement to services. Bin collectors still do a slap dash job chucking bins back not placing them, leaving rubbish for residents to pick up, blocking pathways, road markings shockingly poor, road surfaces falling apart, more houses/flats appearing and local businesses having to move. SEN teams who cannot reply to emails. I certainly do not agree with yet another increase. Been increasing every year for the last 11 years we have lived here.
69. Council tax is already ridiculously expensive and our services in this borough are appalling. Bins aren't emptied on time, street lights are turned off and the roads are absolutely appalling. We are not stupid, we all know the increase will line pockets rather than be put back into the community.

Fees and Charges

Proposed changes to fees and charges included increases across Community Partnerships, Neighbourhood Operations, Planning, and Revenues, Benefits and Fraud. These constituted:

- Increases to Council Tax and Business Rates non-payment fees (summons and liability charges)
- Increases to Taxi driver licence costs and fees, and to mobile home site licences
- Changes to room hire charges at the Council's community centres
- Increases to fees for garden waste, bulky waste, trade waste and waste containers
- Increases in Greenspaces fees for allotments, cemeteries, outdoor events, advertising and sports pitches
- Increases to planning pre-application charges and the introduction of a new charge for street and numbering

The following comments were received in response to this topic:

1. Agree with everything, just not the increased charges in refuse disposal for households.
2. Use of allotments, recycling of garden waste, sports pitch usage should be encouraged, not penalised
3. Garden waste service is not good, time and again we have had to ring up for missed bins over the years and is not encouraging recycling... trade waste is totally different. Sports pitches should be encouraging outdoor use... not penalising
4. We have paid too many years into this borough
5. I do not agree with an increase in garden waste fees, but agree with the other increases in Waste and Recycling
6. I see the effects of a diminished council. Put up fees or you will fade altogether.
7. Increasing waste fees will only encourage more fly tipping (already a major problem and expense for the borough). More aggressive crackdown on fly tipping.
8. Regarding Planning, people like me want to be able to discuss plans with someone before we submit them formally, but at present we cannot do this, and the current pre-application charge is off-putting - the whole system requires review, not an increase in charges. I very strongly disagree with increasing Greenspaces fees for any activity that involves getting people outdoors and into nature. Increasing Waste & Recycling fees, depending on the amount, will lead to an increase in fly-tipping that is such a blight on the landscape.
9. These are all essential for the smooth running of the Council and its business.

10. No increase for small self-build projects, or minor works by ordinary folk. Hit the large developer with the increase. Please don't increase garden waste fees, or fees that hit small scale community activities. Please be aware of possible increase in dumping and littering if waste costs increase.
11. Fit savings in your existing budget ... your gross expenditure increased by 8m from 2020 - 2021 which is ridiculous... you should give full transparency on all salaries not just senior managers: [Reigate & Banstead Council Management Team](#)
12. I disagree with increasing charges for waste because I suspect it will lead to an increase in fly tipping and hence an increase in clean-up costs. Plus a view that the council is impotent in dealing with fly-tippers.
13. A 10% increase would be in line with inflation.
14. Agree -Business rates non-payment, no to council tax non payments
15. Should encourage sports and physical activities. High waste disposal fees will encourage fly tipping, which costs far more to clear than regular organised clearance.
16. I agree with the increases to unessential services and the non-payment fees. However, I disagree with the increases for greenspaces, waste & recycling and environmental health because these are things people need, or affect people's livelihoods, or in the case of sports pitch fees, the grass roots sports programs, and if those fees go up so will the charges to families using those facilities. Also, I worry that there will be more fly tipping if the trade waste fees increase, and this will ultimately cost the borough more to clean up.
17. It needs to be done
18. This will just increase fly-tipping. Also you are increasing this because you can when a number of these waste items are just part of life and have been for many years.
19. I think use of green spaces is important and raising fees may reduce their use. I worry that raising waste fees may lead to more fly tipping.
20. I do not agree with an increase to the garden waste collection. It has increased almost every year since it started and I consider it high enough to be frozen at its current level. Allotment fees encourage residents to be more self-sufficient and be more active in the outdoors which is good for mental and physical health, so I do not agree with an increase here. Cemetery fees are already high. Sports pitch fees also encourage exercise which should be encouraged and that increased proposed income found elsewhere.
21. Sensible
22. There should not be any increased taxes during a cost of living crisis. Excess should be cut at the council.

23. Support needs to be given to community groups and residents who can least afford increases
24. Horley Town Council would like to see the parking charges for the short term stay in Horley car parks abolished if the other rates are to be increased.
25. The more fees are levied against waste and recycling the more likely fly tipping is to occur and as waste management companies are making revenue from the waste this feels like it should be subsumed into their costs. Community spaces and greenspaces are there for the community and provide enormous wellbeing benefits so should be protected as much as possible.
26. Increasing fees for garden and bulky waste may increase fly-tipping or issues with overgrown gardens. Increasing community centre charges may make it prohibitive to some individuals and organisations - have members been consulted?
27. I strongly disagree with increase in allotment fees and community hire services. Keeping an allotment has a positive impact on physical and mental wellbeing and can prevent health issues developing. Increase in fees could deter people, especially older ones from keeping them. I also disagree with increasing community room hire as they are very beneficial for voluntary and community groups."
28. Increased charges does not always lead to more income and possibly leads to other problems and expense
29. Increasing non-payment on business rates seems to work with the councils policy to not want small business. Most business in premises are closing due to business rates being so high already and all we get is the right to have a business in the Borough.
30. Any increase in waste disposal fees increases fly tipping.
31. No point in increasing fines on people who can't pay their bills.
32. Should be encouraging people to get outside and get moving, so don't increase fees for allotments etc"
33. Increase in waste disposal will lead to more fly tipping. Allotments are expensive enough already
34. Greenspaces, allotments need to run more efficiently, currently the price seems reasonable, but R&B does not appear to redistribute uncultivated plots, or sanction tenants of neglected plots. Income could be increased by running plot by the rules. Alternatively prices could be increased but the tenants need something in return, relaxation of the perennial tree quota, methods to redistribute surplus's for instance. Waste and recycling, don't increase the garden waste charge, but others yes, but being aware that will lead to more fly tipping and its associated cleaning up.

35. If you charge more for waste they will be more fly tipping. Business in the borough are already on their knees. If you charge more to business you will jeopardise jobs creating less opportunity in the area and unemployment.
36. Anything that promotes growth should be fixed. Community centre charges in council run centres are WAY too high. Whilst answering as a resident I also run a business and I don't use council facilities as they are too expensive. This not only stops me from growing my business but means locals miss out on activities which could support and enhance their lives. The same for business rates, you should be encouraging businesses not taxing them so highly.
37. Agree with increasing all, as long as they are reasonable and not excessive, everyone will be affected but it would be rare for one person to be affected by all increases.
38. I disagree with increasing charges for allotment, sports pitch and outdoor event fees. There is a local / national emphasis on healthy living & wellbeing. Poor living standards, lack of exercise etc all drive up the expenses of health and social care services so reducing access to the services which may counteract these seems short-sighted and counterproductive. I disagree with a blanket increase in fees for outdoor events and community centres. A more nuanced approach is needed. Charities and non-profits are facing funding cuts under this budget as well as national /local increase in demand and they can't cope with the council charging more as well as reducing funding support. Increase the fees for profit-making organisations by all means, but avoid a double edged sword of attack for the non-profit sector which is already propping up inadequate government investment in services for the most vulnerable in the community - and reducing the costs associated with social care and other locally funded services. It would be counter-productive. I disagree with a blanket waste fee increase. Garden waste is already costly to dispose of and could be used creatively as an environmental resource for councils and allotments. I think there is an argument for increasing bulky waste and trade waste fees - but again, a nuanced approach for no-profits (and an incentive for reducing waste could help to tackle the planetary crisis facing us.
39. It really depends on how much you are planning on putting prices up
40. Greenspaces and community centres provide some of the few remaining links between older residents and organised activities. Increasing the cost of these services is to increase the risk of isolating them socially.
41. Most are unacceptable
42. People have less money today than last year to provide entertainment or host events. Making it more difficult for them will strangle the option.
43. The Council need to stop giving in to developers & allowing them to build new houses or flats in peoples back gardens and take a more proactive approach. Often they are

inappropriate to the local community & environment. Obviously the Council have a vested interest in the planning process.

44. Room hire charges may disproportionately affect voluntary and community groups.
45. I agree costs need to increase but not at the current time with the cost of living increasing and people already under a lot of financial pressure
46. Allotment fees are ridiculously low and could easily be increased. We had one for years and thought so at the time. Increasing room hire costs in community centres will cause increased costs to some of the borough's most vulnerable residents.
47. Can I suggest you work with other small councils in Surrey and form a unitary council so money can be spent more wisely across a wider part of Surrey.
48. Your summons and liability charge should be based on the cost of your recovery costs, if your costs have gone up then this should increase
49. Not helpful to increase charges in the areas that I have disagreed with, especially Greenspaces and garden waste
50. Increase in room charges could impact on them being used by voluntary groups and elderly residents. Maybe concessions could be made for such groups. Allotments are used by many elderly, youth groups and those who use them as part of their recovery, maybe concessions could be made for such individuals and groups.
51. The Community Centre already charge higher room fees than other providers e.g. church centres, housing providers. An increase in room rates would make them prohibitively expensive for VCS organisations.
52. Having currently been searching for premises to hire within the borough recently I was out priced at most of these venues sadly and they were very expensive to hire - don't over price them any further
53. There is no justification in increasing any charges in the current economic climate
54. It's incredibly disappointing to see fee increases targeted at activities that I would expect the council to want to encourage, such as using sports pitches and allotments, while others, such as gambling licensing fees, are frozen. The cost to local clubs and individuals of hiring pitches is already quite significant and is ultimately paid for by club members, i.e. residents. The council is deluded if it thinks that all sports club members are wealthy. Similarly, allotment fees in are set to increase despite there being lots of evidence to show the health and wellbeing benefits of gardening and being outdoors. Why are betting shops avoiding fee increases while allotment holders and kids playing football (or their parents) being penalised? Similarly, it's depressing to see the increases to mobile home sites. Although these are relatively small increases, they will inevitably be passed onto residents in mobile homes who, I'd guess, generally aren't all that wealthy and have little choice - they can't necessarily just move somewhere

cheaper. This seems like an extra tax on those residents at a very tough time and I think it is unfair. For community centre room hire charges, although some of these equate to just a few pounds, some are very significant - to me, this undermines having what should be a great asset to people living in nearby. Instead, using the centre will become a bit less affordable.

55. Increase the costs for new buildings. No point increasing recycling fees as it counter intuitive as will lead to increase in fly tipping which costs more to clear up. Don't penalise people using community facilities
56. The high charges for things like community centres me as a business off from hiring. I know you've got empty rooms, which if lower fees would see more use. Garden waste collection etc should be encouraged, not charged even more for.
57. Where do you propose people using allotments etc will get extra money from?
58. We are in a cost of living crisis, this borough is so divided between rich and poor. Adding ridiculous charges to gain more money for the rich council workers is going to cause mass devastation to half of Surrey's population. We need to encourage more youth groups to prevent county lines and the gangs happening, increasing pitch fees will hinder sporting activities and cause more gangs and criminal activity.

Service Budgets

Proposals for changes to service budgets encompassed reductions in some grant funding, and a number of efficiencies and internal improvements. These constituted:

- A 13% reduction in the grant to some community and voluntary sector partners
- A reduction in expenditure on postage and printing of £44k
- Changes to the funding approach for some Economic Prosperity and Housing activities, saving £115k
- Improvements to IT for data protection and increases in software licencing costs, totalling £167k
- An increase to the income target for the Harlequin Theatre and filming across the Council estate of £150k
- Budget rightsizing to more accurately reflect costs and income across all service areas, representing a saving of £570k

The following comments were received in response to this topic:

1. Charities and voluntary organisations are taking up the slack where statutory services have been cut. Families are struggling across the borough and the council teams themselves make referrals to these charities and expect a high level of service. It is

short-sighted and insulting to take away the small amount of support that is provided to charities like Stripey Stork but to still expect so much of them.

2. The borough has a significant number of vulnerable residents, higher than many in Surrey & Sussex. The council must recognise the duty of care they have to these residents. Little help is on offer apart from via voluntary sector partners, therefore my reducing grants by 13% will leave your residents more vulnerable. Increasing expenditure in areas such as data protection & software licencing whilst leaving the increasing number of your residents who need help and advice stranded is shameful.
3. Historically councils have spent money at the year-end simply to justify keeping the same budgets or indeed increasing them, so ensuring this does not happen in future is essential.
4. I feel all budgets should be under the same roof and applied for as necessary rather than have a budget that they then need to use up, like we have known new equipment be bought or be installed just to use up the budgets, rather than wait another few years.
5. I think that the Harlequin provides a service for the community and therefore not have the pressure of increased targets
6. I have volunteered.
7. A lot of great value for the community comes from volunteers and the voluntary sector, it increases the quality of life for everyone. In these difficult times more volunteer work should be encouraged. It is probably some of the best value you get. Also, protect community partnerships, this kind of cooperation is likely more important to help sustain a level of service as things get worst due to the catastrophic mistakes of the ERG conservatives. Cut the cost of councillors, their pay and expenses, cut top level pay of senior executives etc. If they care about the job, they'll do it for less. If they don't then they are not worthy of the positions - same with councillors. It has to be affordable and not at the expense of hard-working normal folks.
8. Do everything possible to keep sport facilities operational. Vital for the health and wellbeing of residents
9. Very concerned about level of grants
10. The grants which you give to local community and voluntary sector partners are low in comparison to the value of the services these partners give back to the local community. It is a false economy to cut these grants and see a reduction in these services.
11. Don't understand what this means
12. I think some of these need more context/breakdown for normal users to understand what this means to us
13. Merely increasing an income target is not to be relied upon; I would treat it as a bonus. I agree that grants should be reduced. I would prefer eliminated. It should be up to

individuals to donate to good causes, not the council. Agree with software and data budgets. A false economy, not to spend money in these areas.

14. Hard to have full understanding of the effects of each proposal but I have applied common sense.
15. Utter lack of detail makes a considered reply or comment impossible! The last question lumps together a range of disparate activities. This is not professional or competent!
16. I profoundly disagree with the reduction in the grant levels to community and voluntary sector partners. Many organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to achieve their funding targets since the Coronavirus pandemic. There is simply not the funding available from Charitable Trusts and Foundations to meet the demand from the sector. Many small charities are already struggling and the reduction in the core funding grant will make it even harder. It will cost the Council far more if it has to pick up the pieces when the services are no longer financially viable and have no other option than to close. I believe that with some careful 'shopping around and sensible housekeeping', the council could achieve the software licensing requirements without resorting to an additional expense of £0.152m.
17. All areas including data protection and software licences need to be looked at or renegotiated to ensure the most effective use of funds.
18. Printing - use more electronic delivery - for example charge for the paper version of your news sheet. Use more open source software - follow the French model. Please expand the library service to cover more than the very basic types of books. For example restore ILL so that more obscure books can be sourced.
19. I would want to know more detail about the reduction in the level of grant to community and voluntary sector partners before agreeing or disagreeing.
20. Regulatory services must be supported to protect residents and increase public safety.
21. You should save on least important items, focus on efficiencies, remove parking charges because you could probably generate more income in town centre spending.
22. Horley Town Council is strongly against the reduction in the level of grant to community and voluntary sector partners and feel that this sector needs continues support. Horley Town Council would like to see an even greater reduction in the postage and printing budget if this is possible.
23. Reducing grants to voluntary sector partners in the midst of a cost of living increases is not right. This could put more people at risk of homelessness and may increase the numbers of children and families stuck in poverty. The voluntary sector is doing everything to support those in need and they themselves are feeling the impact of the cost of living rises. Reducing funding increases the pressure on them and could decrease the support they can provide. What will the council do to address the gap left by this funding reduction? Does increasing income targets make sense for the Harlequin when it is about to go into competition with the new cinema opening in

Redhill? Wouldn't make sense for the Harlequin to specialise in community theatre and events that provides a service to residents but may not be the biggest earner.

24. You do not supply sufficient information to allow a considered response
25. Reduction in grant to the voluntary sector, probably counterproductive, you may be relying on the voluntary sector to deliver services. Printing can be reduced by good procurement practice, and postage can be reduced by encouraging residents to accept email and text. Software, not sure what about without knowing software involved and use. Not sure what budget rightsizing is, but read poor budgeting practice is occurring.
26. If the council reduce funding to the voluntary sector, at a time when they are needed most, this will cause more pressure to the council services now and for years to come. Having a strong and Thriving voluntary sector is core to the 5 year plan, and a prosperous, healthy and supported community. It would be wrong to reduce this funding and we need to be showing support to our communities, not reducing it.
27. Fund the poorest groups as you will reap the benefits when they don't fall in the gaps and need more expensive intervention
28. More local police to be seen in Horley late at night
29. There is so much waste in so many areas of business. There are areas here that I don't understand. I can't see an explanation of what you mean by software licensing or data protection etc. This isn't clearly explained here.
30. Would like more info on software increases and benefit to residents
31. I don't feel well qualified to comment on all of these - but I do think reducing grant funding to community partners is short sighted and the council will end up facing increased costs in social care, increasingly poor CQC reports and the other consequences of under supporting the third sector at this time of crisis
32. The Council is proposing to reduce the Core Funding that is provided to Age Concern, Banstead (ACB) by £2,500 (25%) from £10,000 to £7,500. This proposal is short-sighted as such a funding cut will impact significantly and adversely on the ability of ACB to deliver its current level of services to its many elderly clients in the ACB catchment area and is likely to lead to an even greater corresponding increase in R&B Council costs, making the proposal entirely self-defeating. ACB is a small charity, the Trustees of which exercise great care in how its income is spent. Much of ACB's expenditure is allocated to providing services that would otherwise have to be provided directly by Reigate & Banstead Council. Thus, the likely outcome of this proposed 25% cut in core funding, if implemented, will be a reduction in the range or quantity of service provision to elderly, vulnerable clients, leading to increased costs for the Council which would need to step in and plug the service gaps created by this funding cut.

33. Funding on the Councils action for mitigation and adaptation for the Climate Emergency should be prioritised, with all spending using an internal Cost of Carbon to analyse the impact of the spend.
34. All changes should be seen as worthwhile and of benefit to the community at large. Some costs are essential i.e. data protection and software updates
35. You need to improve your Communications on this - you want to cut services but increase what you are asking residents to pay - either directly or indirectly? How many staff will you make redundant - and what will the cost of this be? I'm amazed you paid so much to get rid of your previous Chief Executive - was the cost inflicted on the council so significant that you have been unable to hire a proper Chief Executive to replace him? It's amazing how much previous mistakes have cost the council.
36. Strongly disagree with reduction of level of grant to some community & voluntary sector partners, they are struggling already. Also strongly disagree with increased funding for data protection and income targets for the Harlequin Theatre.
37. Many voluntary groups need support and reducing funding could have a detrimental effect on this valuable sector.
38. Below is a copy of the letter sent to the portfolio holder for VCS in October 2022
 - Dear Members and Officers at Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
 - Following our most recent meeting on 11th October where the proposed 25% cut to our funding from 1st April 2023 was outlined, please accept this as the response from MHA Communities East Surrey.
 - We understand the need for councils across the board to make savings (and appreciate that you have not sprung this upon us without notice) but feel that the benefits of services like ours to one of the most vulnerable sectors of our community more than justify the continuation of these grants at their full allocation.
 - If reduced, it could increase costs to both the council and local health services, which in the long run will cost more than it saves. Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (RBBC) appear to understand the importance of our delivery as highlighted in the Reigate and Banstead 2025 Five Year Plan where your vision and priorities include to commit to high quality core services and continued service improvement, and effective partnership working to create strong, safe and welcoming communities with targeted and proactive support for our most vulnerable residents.
 - The cuts will mean that Reigate and Banstead's growing older population are at risk of losing vital services like those provided by MHA Communities and Age Concern. These services include a wealth of activities that cater directly to identified older peoples' needs. The services offer an answer to prevailing loneliness issues: offering befriending, transport, exercise, lunch, dementia support, social and special interest groups and activities, each playing a key

part in helping the older population of Reigate and Banstead to lead healthy and fulfilling lives, including promoting social cohesion. For hundreds of older people across our area, many of whom are feeling isolated and on the cusp of beginning to need extra support, these services are an essential lifeline.

- More specifically these cuts will impact directly on our ability to deliver the established and popular weekly social group at Regent Hall in Horley (it is unlikely we will be able to afford the room hire rates), and our active engagement in local networks, which are so effective at sharing good practice and maximising opportunities for those most in need.
- MHA Communities East Surrey's most recent outcome monitoring show that 75% of older people engaged in our services show improved outcome scores (measures include loneliness, motivation and self-esteem) after initial involvement with us (improvement shown between baseline and up to one year of involvement).
- Our concern is that many older people across RBBC will be left without the wide range of support they need to live their later lives well; causing them to lean on GPs and the council for day-to-day enquiries which local surgeries and council officers may not have time to resource. As the daughter of one service user told us, "the effect on Mum when she could no longer attend the clubs due to Covid demonstrates that taking away or curtailing these services would be akin to a permanent lockdown for many of the older people who benefit from them so much." We fear these implications are being overlooked by the Council.
- Currently, for MHA services we match every £1 that RBBC contributes with an additional £6, which is provided by other sources of funding from charitable trusts, subscriptions and other donations. This is a positive, cost effective partnership for RBBC, which is providing very good value for money.
- We are aware that RBBC have been allocated £1,000,000 from the UK Shared prosperity fund. We would welcome consideration that the proposed cuts to the three commissioned older people service providers could be bridged by an award from this fund?
- In addition, we would appreciate further information on the likelihood of our local ICBs commissioning services such as the ones we provide in the longer term? We appreciate this was touched upon in our meeting on 11th October. However, it might be prudent if initial discussions regarding possible funding (and the mechanisms of) were firmed up prior to the proposed cuts being enforced.
- We believe that the activities and services provided in RBBC are exactly the kind that the Government's Social Care White Paper aspires to – preventative, people-focused, and seeking to delay the need for adult social care. They should serve as the inspiration for future preventative services across the

country's health and social care system, and RBBC should support these services to grow, not curtail them.

39. You should not be reducing grants to community or voluntary sectors these people impact daily on the lives of the most vulnerable and needy in our community who are still paying the price emotionally and physically from 2 years of lockdown
40. Local charity and community organisations offer invaluable services that can save the council money in the long run. To reduce their funding at a time of spiralling costs is counter intuitive and may lead to the closure of some of these invaluable organisations
41. The emphasis on all budgets should be to seek reductions or the status quo. No salary increases or bonuses, review need for some posts
42. I've no idea what budget rightsizing means. I'm sure you know this is jargon that a lot of us won't understand. I also suspect it's a vague term used to avoid having to give a better explanation. Please do not cut community and voluntary sector funding. Fundraising is becoming increasingly difficult for organisations and there is increasing need for the likes of Stripey Stalk and Citizens Advice. Your equalities impact assessment highlights both these points. Furthermore, they very much complement the services the council provides - the weaker the community and vol sector, the greater the demand on council services. It's short-sighted and shows an uncaring set of elected representatives. I also think the equalities assessment of Stripey Stalk misses some important points around age and sex - the people impacted by this will be disproportionately women (it's women who suffer most when child-related help is diminished) and particular age groups are affected most, namely babies, young children and people of parenting age, most likely under 35s and perhaps some very young parents. It's noteworthy that Stripey Stalk say their services won't be affected but there will be greater pressure on their fundraising - this simply speaks to their commitment to serve the people they help and not because they can easily absorb the reduced funding.
43. Why are you spending so much on postage and printing and software in the first place that you can make such big savings? Have a thorough review and go to tender on contracts.
44. No idea what some of these mean!
45. Surrey is quickly becoming a really horrible place to live. There's increased crimes and legal activities, thousands of drug dealers openly dealing and running round the streets, thefts, burglary, youth crime; homelessness. Increasing budget for data protection and software should be the bottom of the priorities, you should look for cheaper suppliers and use this money to fund worthwhile charities and to build more affordable housing for your people. Charities need more support. Mental health and suicide is at an all-time low.

Staffing Costs

Proposals for changes to staffing costs reflected updates to salaries, savings from vacant posts and team reviews, budgetary adjustments and a new permanent post. These constituted:

- Provision for overall salary budget growth for contractual and cost of living increases
- Savings from the deletion of vacant posts across Customer Contact, Communications, Finance, Legal and IT
- Forecast savings from a planned review of the HR Team
- Budget adjustments from salary budget review across Planning, Economic Prosperity, Neighbourhood Operations, Revenues, Benefits and Fraud, and Community Partnerships
- Capitalising some costs in the Place Delivery Team
- New permanent funding for one post in the Emergency Planning Team

The following comments were received in response to this topic:

1. Very internally focused - you have a high percentage of vulnerable & residents needing help (debt, financial difficulties, housing, immigration, poverty etc). What are you doing to address this and by cutting funding to the volunteer sector leaves your residents more vulnerable and stranded.
2. Cost of living increases at what rate? Should only apply to lower paid workers at the present time
3. Regarding cost of living, only the lower paid should be given this. People on high salaries need not have this increase.
4. In-house IT reduction at the same time as increased software budget? Not a good idea. At central government level this has proven catastrophic.
5. Difficult to comment on any of these individually.
6. Reduce costs at the top, cut the better paid, cut expenses at the top, including limiting car schemes (lower value vehicles), etc. and ensure those that actually deliver the services are protected as best as can be. Increase workload for the top level - the real workload that is, and reduce the number of top-level staff. Protect the front line.
7. I think the detail you provide is nowhere enough or clear enough for the general public to be able give an opinion
8. Obviously staff should be paid a fair living wage, as long as this increase is going to lower paid staff and not just into higher manager's salaries. And again, a lot of these questions mean nothing to the general public without context, seems deliberate confusion is a continuously used tactic by governments.

9. I disagree with cost of living increases. That policy isn't translated to council taxpayers!! Council salaries should be as much as it costs to employ the best person for the job plus an additional amount for performance above what is required.
10. Again without knowing more details some of these questions cannot be commented on!
11. It is unclear whether the budget adjustments following salary reviews (item 4 above) would result in a cost saving or increase, so unable to comment. Regarding capitalising some costs in the Place Delivery Team - more information regarding cost savings would be required to make a comment here. I would suggest the new permanent post in the Emergency Planning Team could be a part time position, I have attended one of the meetings and it would be difficult to justify a full time role.
12. Not sure what the emergency planning team would do in addition to Central Government and Surrey County Council, there should be no replication
13. I am concerned that contact service levels have already fallen too low with covid still an excuse.
14. I would want to know more about deleting vacant posts before agreeing or disagreeing. These vacant posts may be critical to service delivery but just vacant because you have not yet managed to fill them.
15. The focus should be on core staff. Any mid level manager should be cut, salary increases should be minimalist for office based staff. Any excess on "woke" should be cut. Make everything more efficient. Cut the number of planning constraints and officers who are jobsworths and that will improve that department.
16. Horley Town Council believes that there is a need for the Communication Team to be fully resourced to facilitate better and more proactive communication with residents and with the Town Council. We also feel that the Finance team needs to be fully resourced as both the Finance and Communication teams are key contacts for HTC.
17. Agree with the need to rationalise teams but providing this does not affect services provided and response times and can be sustainably managed hopefully through natural wastage.
18. I agree with all of the above as they appear to make economical sense. Emergency planning is very important for residents.
19. Senior council managers are overpaid against outside employment
20. First of all you have to increase the common man's salaries in order to increase yours. By cutting down those posts, you're actually reducing the services providing. So don't do anything that harms the common man.
21. Staffing costs should go down if you do not have the money rather than raising costs to people and businesses in the borough putting them at risk.
22. Only merit pay rises are appropriate at current time

23. I don't see why I should pay more council tax so others can be better off. Any disposable income I have will decrease so others goes up.
24. Better training for contact teams would be better than more staff. When I had to call the service has been so bad that I have had to repeat my call four times to get the information required. Employ staff who really want to be there.
25. Civil servants seem to be paid higher than average in the private sector. We are in a period of squeeze following the covid pandemic. The council should play its part by freezing salaries and not fuelling inflation, or sitting in their ivory tower.
26. Would like more info, working for a different council and going through the same. Deleting a vacant post means expecting the rest of the team to work harder, so needs to be done in line with resources and workloads.
27. I do not agree with the reduction in contact centre staff. It's crucial that residents have decent access to contact the council.
28. Savings need to be made wherever possible.
29. Savings on staffing costs will depend on the roles being cut and any resultant impact on the service the council provides.
30. No one is achieving full cost of living increase so something like 5% should be set.
31. There should be no salary increases, CEO and senior management salaries should be reviewed and reduced.
32. I feel the savings proposed from deleting vacant posts is very misleading to the point of being dishonest. At least some of these posts are where staff have left and the council has chosen not to recruit to replace them. They are not, therefore, posts that are not needed, which I think is what you are indicating. You have not evidenced this proposal with information about reduced demand for those services. There will simply be more burden on those staff who are left.
33. Salary growth needs to be below cost of living otherwise we continue to fuel inflation.
34. Bring someone in whose job it is to save the value of their salary. This saving will then be felt year on year.
35. Depends on how much people earn . Giving someone on £13k a 5% increase possibly but someone on £113k probably not. Cannot have one size fits all approach. Again no idea what some of this means.

Other Comments

A number of other comments were received via email or social media. These comments were incorporated into the thematic analysis supporting the consultation report.

The following additional comments were received:

1. Can we focus our funds on less projects/issues, so our funds have a greater impact on a few clearly valuable and 'important to many' projects/issues? Without seeing exactly how and what the Council spends its funds on, it is difficult to suggest ways forward. Plus, most people don't seem to be aware that the majority of their council tax goes to the county rather than the Borough I expect the county loves this.
2. I am very concerned to hear that the Banstead Day Centre grant of £10,000 has been reduced by £2,500. The day centre is an important community facility, relied on by many local people. I hope that this decision is reviewed and the whole grant/ allowance reinstated.
 - *Note: Funding for the Banstead Day Centre is not being reduced, the reduction is in funding for the organisation Age Concern Banstead.*
3. Stripey Stork are fortunate to have been a core funded project of the council for a few years now. Whilst we only receive a modest grant (currently £3,000 a year) it means we get full business rate relief on the warehouse which saves us a lot of money. The current budget proposal seeks to cut this funding, or drastically reduce it which is a worry to us and other local charities. Especially at a time with local referral partners (including many of the Council teams) ask more and more of the service we provide. Small charities are a lifeline for local residents and often fill the gaps that statutory services no longer provide. These grants provide such a significant return on investment, and directly benefit the most vulnerable in our community.



Equality impact of 2023/24 budget proposals: Summary

January 2023

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Overview

This document provides an assessment of the equality implications of the Council's budget proposals for 2023/24.

For those proposals where it has been identified that there may be an impact on those with protected characteristics, an Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared. These assessments are provided at Annex 1. They are provided to assist members in taking a decision on the final budget proposals, and reflect the outcomes of consultation on the draft budget.

List of budget proposals and summary of equality impact

Council Tax

Service or function	Description	Initial impact assessment
Revenues, Benefits & Fraud / Finance	To increase Council Tax by the referendum limit (which the Government has confirmed to be up to a 3% increase which equates to £7.25 per year for a Band D property)	May impact on those with protected characteristics, a full Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken.

Services: Pay

Service or function	Description	Initial impact assessment
Customer Contact	Saving from deletion of a vacant post	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Communications	Saving from deletion of a vacant post	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Finance	Saving from team restructure	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Human Resources	Forecast savings from planned review of team (FTE saving details TBC)	None identified at this stage, proposals will need to be assessed once more information is available.
Legal	Saving from deletion of a vacant post	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
IT	Saving from deletion of a vacant post	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided

Planning	Saving following salary budget review	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Economic prosperity	Growth as a result salary budget review	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Place Delivery	Capitalisation of salary costs	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Neighbourhood Operations	Growth as a result of deletion of historic capitalised salary budget	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Revenues, Benefits & Fraud	Saving following salary budget review	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Community Partnerships	Saving following salary budget review	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Emergency Planning	Growth as a result of confirmation of funding for Emergency Planning resource in the base budget	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided

Services: Non-Pay

Service or function	Description	Initial impact assessment
Communications	Growth to cover additional data protection expenses	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
IT	Growth to cover software licence fee increases	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Property	Rental grant subsidy budget alignment	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided

Property	Savings from reduction in printing / postage costs	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Electoral Services	Alignment of budgets with the forecast baseline cost of administering a borough Council election	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Democratic Services	Implementation of Independent Remuneration Panel recommendations 2023/24	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Corporate Policy	Sustainability budget saving	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Building Control	Reduction in this Council's Partnership contribution in line with the business plan	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Planning & Development	Income increase – planning performance agreements	None, optional service for developers
Neighbourhood Operations	Small works assistance scheme – transfer from capital programme to revenue budget	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Neighbourhood Operations	Licensing budget – alignment with forecast income	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Neighbourhood Operations	Budget saving from SCC's decision to cease the highways grass cutting contract	None identified – SCC will continue to maintain verges to statutory standards
Neighbourhood Operations	Off street parking – budget alignment with forecast income receipts	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided

Neighbourhood Operations	Garden waste – budget alignment with forecast income receipts	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Place Delivery	Various non-pay budget savings	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Economic Prosperity	Grants to local businesses – to be funded in future through a call on revenue reserves	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Community Partnerships	Voluntary and Community Sector funding review	May impact on those with protected characteristics, a full Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken
Community Partnerships	Various non-pay budget savings	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Leisure & Intervention	Increased Harlequin income target	None identified at this stage, individual proposals will need to be assessed.
Leisure & Intervention	Deletion of historic budget for contribution to a Surrey-wide initiative that is no longer required	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Leisure & Intervention	Income increase – location filming at Council premises	None identified at this stage, individual proposals will need to be assessed.
Leisure & Intervention	Income increase – contracted increase in the management fee received from the Leisure Management Provider	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Housing	Contribution from Homelessness Prevention grant funding	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided

Revenues, Benefits & Fraud	Reduction in the service's legal cost budgets	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided
Revenues, Benefits & Fraud	Software licence fee increase	None – will not impact on individuals or the overall service provided

Changes to fees and charges

Service	Description	Initial impact assessment
Planning & Development	Fee increase – pre-application fees	None, optional service for those considering development
Planning & Development	New charge – street naming and numbering	None, service primarily used by developers, optional service for residents
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – taxi and private hire licences (vehicle, operator and driver), includes some new (optional) charges	None, changes proposed to ensure cost recovery and to address inflationary costs
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase - Mobile home site licences	None, charges apply to owners and operators of sites which are generally run as commercial businesses
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – allotments	None, charge increase limited to lower than inflation and represents marginal increase overall.
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – cemeteries	None, changes proposed to ensure cost recovery and to address inflationary costs
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – outdoor events	None, changes proposed to ensure cost recovery and to address inflationary costs

Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – sports pitch fees	None, changes proposed to ensure cost recovery and to address inflationary costs
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase - banner advertising	None, optional service for organisations
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – car parking charges and permits	May impact on those with protected characteristic, a full Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken
Neighbourhood Operations	New charge – Town Hall pay and display on weekdays	None, car park is not currently available on weekdays
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – bulky waste collections	None, optional service
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – garden waste	None, optional service
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – waste containers and sacks	None, lower than inflation increase to cover rising costs
Neighbourhood Operations	Fee increase – trade waste	None, optional service for commercial businesses
Community Partnerships	Fee changes – Community Centres room hire	May impact on those with protected characteristics, a full Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken
Revenues, Benefits & Fraud	Fee increase – summons and liability orders	May impact on those with protected characteristic, a full Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken



Annex 1: Equality Impact Assessments

Proposal: To increase Council Tax by the referendum limit (up to a 3% increase which equates to £7.25 per year per Band D property)

Introduction

This document summarises – in an accessible format – the outcomes of the Council’s draft Equality Impact Assessment for the proposal to increase Council Tax by the referendum limit (up to a 3% increase which equates to £7.25 per year per Band D property) for 2023/24, including the outcome of the Stage 1 Relevance Screening Assessment and the Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

The proposal was assessed by the Revenues, Benefits & Fraud Service in November 2022 and finalised in January 2023.

Summary of the proposal

To increase the Reigate & Banstead Borough Council element of Council Tax by the Government-set referendum limit from 1 April 2023. This is anticipated to be £7.25 for the average Band D property.

Council Tax is reviewed annually as part of the Service & Financial Planning exercise. The increase for the financial year 2023/24 is being proposed due to the financial challenges being faced by the Council due to the withdrawal of government revenue support grant and the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on Council income streams and inflationary increases on costs. Further explanation of the funding pressures faced by the Council is included in the draft budget report provided to the Executive in November 2022.

Assessment of Relevance

The Stage 1 Relevance Assessment has concluded the following:

- The proposal will not introduce a change which will affect how services or functions are delivered
- The proposals will affect people – for example service users, employees or the wider community

The group of people which will be affected by the proposal has been identified as all residents.

This proposal affects all persons who are liable to pay Council Tax in respect of their home (residential address), including those properties which are currently empty. The list of liable parties is maintained in the Council Tax system. The Borough Equality Profile on the Council website provides information about the protected characteristics of all residents within the borough.

The proposal will affect any resident who pays Council tax, including any residents with one or more of the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act.

The following Equality Duty aims have been identified as being relevant for this assessment:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.

Overall, the relevance assessment has concluded that this proposal has a relevance to equality of Moderate. The outcome of the relevance assessment is therefore that a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Equality Impact Assessment

It has been identified that:

- The proposal in question does not intentionally target one or more protected characteristic groups.
- The proposal does not intentionally exclude one or more protected characteristic groups.
- The proposal does not have the potential to reduce inequality or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups (although note that support is available for some residents in respect of Council Tax payments).

Information about the protected characteristics of the intended audience and/or people who might be affected

In summary, the following information is available about the protected characteristic groups of the intended audience and / or people who might be affected by the proposal

Age

General information about the age profile of borough residents who are owner occupiers is available from the Census and ONS mid-year estimates and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report, which is available on the Council's website at www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/equality.

Disability

General information about the disability characteristics is available from the Census and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Gender reassignment

General information about the representation of trans-people in the population generally is available from national and regional annual population survey data from the ONS, however is not currently available at a borough level. National and regional data is reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Marriage and civil partnership

General information about borough residents' partnership arrangements is available from the Census and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Pregnancy and maternity

General information about live births and lone parents in the borough is available from the Census and other ONS data sources and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Race or ethnicity

General information about the ethnicity of the borough's residents is available from the Census and the ONS Annual Population Survey and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

General information about the religion and/or beliefs of borough residents is available from the Census and the ONS Annual Population Survey and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Sex

General information about the gender profile of borough residents is available from the Census and ONS mid-year estimates and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Sexual orientation

General information about the representation of trans-people in the population generally is available from national and regional annual population survey data from the ONS. National and regional data is reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report, although the 2021 report did not have access to the most recent census results and these figures are therefore estimates.

Other vulnerabilities

Information about the geographic spread of deprivation across the borough is available from the Index of Multiple Deprivation, which is reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report. Specific information about those receiving Council Tax support is also held by the Council.

Consultation

The Council conducted a public consultation on its draft budget proposals between 21 November 2022 and 16 January 2023, inviting responses from community members and local organisations on the proposals.

Overall, 59% of respondents supported the proposal. The results of the consultation and the feedback provided are captured within an annex to the budget report.

Comments made in response to the consultation drew attention to the potential for Council Tax increases to increase burdens on those already facing pressures around the cost of living, which might include those identified as otherwise vulnerable. There were also a number of comments on the need for Council services to be properly funded to support those in need.

Action to increase positive equality impacts or reduce negative equality impacts

The proposed Council Tax increase will affect all residents who have a liability for Council Tax. For those residents on low income, the Local Council Tax Support scheme is in place to provide support in the form of reductions in the liable amount, and further reductions can also be applied under discretionary powers contained in Section 13(1)(C) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. Children and persons under the age of 18 are not legally liable for Council Tax and therefore not affected by this proposal

Assessment of potential impact

This section summarises our assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on protected characteristic groups.

Age

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to age, and no positive impact in relation to age. Elderly residents facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Disability

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to disability, and no positive impact in relation to disability. Disabled residents facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Gender reassignment

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to gender reassignment, and no positive impact in relation to gender reassignment. Trans residents facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Marriage and civil partnership

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership, and no positive impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership. Regardless of their partnership status, residents facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Pregnancy and maternity

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity, and no positive impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity. Pregnant women and mothers facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Race or ethnicity

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to race or ethnicity, and no positive impact in relation to race or ethnicity. Residents from ethnic minority groups facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to religion or belief, and no positive impact in relation to religion or belief. Residents with religious beliefs

or none facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Sexual orientation

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to sexual orientation, and no positive impact in relation to sexual orientation. Residents of any sexual orientation facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Other vulnerabilities

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to other vulnerabilities, and no positive impact in relation to other vulnerabilities. Vulnerable residents facing financial hardship may be supported by the Local Council Tax support scheme or other discretionary powers.

Monitoring and review

The Local Council Tax Support scheme is in place to support all residents who are on a low income and experiencing financial hardship. Residents that already receive support through this scheme will see their support increased in line with the increase. Additionally, reductions of Council Tax liability can also be made at the discretion of the Council under relevant legislation.

The Council will monitor numbers of residents in receipt of Council Tax support to ensure their continued effectiveness. Council tax rates are reviewed annually.

Proposal: Savings from a reduction in Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) funding (Stripey Stork)

Introduction

This document summarises – in an accessible format – the outcomes of the Council’s draft Equality Impact Assessment for the reduction in funding to Stripey Stork, including the outcome of the Stage 1 Relevance Screening Assessment and the Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

The proposal has been assessed by the Community Partnerships Team in November 2022 and finalised in January 2023.

Summary of the proposal

The proposal is to reduce the Council’s annual £3000 grant funding for Stripey Stork to £1000 from 2023/24. Stripey Stork is a ‘baby bank’ providing clothing, baby essentials and equipment such as pushchairs, cots, school bags etc to families in financial difficulty. They can provide clothing and essential items for children 0-18 and some maternity clothing.

The Community Partnerships Team has reviewed voluntary sector grants and identified potential savings as part of the Council Financial Sustainability Programme. The reduction in annual grant that Stripey Stork receive has been identified as one of the savings proposals.

Assessment of Relevance

The Stage 1 Relevance Assessment has concluded the following:

- The proposal will not introduce a change which will affect how Council services or functions are delivered but may impact the delivery of third party VCS services, which may in turn affect people who rely on those third party services.

The groups of people which might be affected by the proposal have been identified as – directly - Stripey Stork as an organisation, which will receive less funding from the Council.

Stripey Stork has indicated that it will need to fundraise further to fill the gap of this reduction. The organisation has indicated that the VCS funding landscape is currently reduced and competitive. In addition, donations are down as a reflection of the wider cost of living crisis. This may mean that filling this funding gap is a challenge. If they were unable to fill this gap this could mean they can only respond to fewer referrals and/or have reduced stock to supply

to families. Several Council teams (Housing, Family Support, Community Development) refer residents to Stripey Stork so a reduction in funding could have an impact on these referrals

The following evidence, information and/or engagement has been used to assess the proposal for its relevance to equality:

- Information provided to the Council by organisations about the people that use their services.

The protected characteristic groups that could be affected by the proposal are:

- Pregnancy and maternity
- People with other vulnerabilities

It is recognised that parents (whether male or female) may benefit from the support provided by Stripey Stork, as will their children.

The following Equality Duty aims have been identified as being relevant:

- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Overall, the relevance assessment has concluded that this proposal has a relevance to equality of Moderate. The outcome of the relevance assessment is therefore that a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Equality Impact Assessment

The proposal in question does not directly target one or more protected characteristic groups, however families and children experiencing deprivation and pregnant women on low incomes access the support from Stripey Stork. A reduction in their funding may have an impact on the number of people they are able to support and reduction to their offer, unless the funding gap can be filled.

The proposal does not intentionally exclude one or more protected characteristic groups. It has been identified that the proposal does not have the potential to reduce inequality or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups.

Information about the protected characteristics of the intended audience and/or people who might be affected

In summary, the following information is available about the protected characteristic groups of the intended audience and / or people who might be affected by the proposal.

The services Stripey Stork provide are demand led. That demand has increased over recent years and if they are unable to fill the funding gap caused by this proposal it could have an impact on keeping up with demand. We are aware that funding streams for VCS has reduced and competition has increased so there is a possibility that other funding streams will be harder to come by for this organisation. All referrals to Stripey Stork will be for children and families in need and they will be on low incomes and likely to be living in areas of deprivation. We cannot say the numbers of service users that would have protected characteristics, but we anticipate a significant proportion would be likely to fall into a protected group or be otherwise vulnerable.

Age

Essential items and goods supplied are predominately aimed at babies and children. Therefore, a funding reduction – if Stripey Stork is unable to fill the funding gap -would have greatest impact on goods for young children.

General information about population ages and children in the borough is available from the Census and other ONS data sources and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Pregnancy and maternity

In 2021/22 Stripey Stork received 3498 referrals. General information about live births and lone parents in the borough is available from the Census and other ONS data sources and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report. It is recognised that any parents may benefit from the charity's services.

Other vulnerabilities

In 2021/22 Stripey Stork received 3498 referrals and provided goods worth a total of £240,200 to families on a low income.

Consultation

A meeting was held with all voluntary sector commissioned services in July 2022 to let them know about the context of a funding review and to ask for their input into the process. Stripey Stork along with the other commissioned organisations were asked to complete a funding

review survey to better understand how they might manage a funding reduction. Stripey Stork told us that the immediate impact of this funding reduction would be the pressure to fill the gap with additional fundraising. It would not cause any services to reduce or end but would increase the pressure on fundraising.

The Council conducted a public consultation on its draft budget proposals between 21 November 2022 and 16 January 2023, inviting responses from community members and local organisations on the proposals.

Overall, only 23% of respondents supported the proposal to reduce funding to some VCS partners. Feedback from the consultation drew attention to the particular potential impacts of the proposal in relation to children, and the implications regarding the protected characteristic of age were therefore further reviewed.

Comments also expressed concerns regarding the general impact of reductions in voluntary and charitable sector funding for the vulnerable people at a time of wider financial pressures.

The results of the consultation and the feedback provided are captured within an annex to the budget report.

Action to increase positive equality impacts or reduce negative equality impacts

A £2000 reduction in funding to Stripey Stork will increase the need to secure other external funding or fundraising to maintain their current response level. The funding provided by the Council represents 0.3% of their gross income (based on 2021 accounts). The task of fundraising has become more difficult due to the wider pressures on funding for the voluntary sector nationally in part due to the cost-of-living pressures. In 2023/24 the Council will seek to develop plans to launch other funding schemes to support the local VCS such as a local lottery model. This could potentially offer another source of future funding. The Council will continue to offer Stripey Stork other in-kind support such as access to meeting rooms, low cost printing and storage space for the Santa Stork project.

Assessment of potential impact

This section summarises our assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on protected characteristic groups.

Age

Whilst the items Stripey Stork provide are mainly focused on babies and children, the funding reduction is at a level that the organisation anticipates that the reduction could be filled by other donations or fundraising.

Disability

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to disability.

Gender reassignment

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to gender reassignment.

Marriage and civil partnership

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership.

Pregnancy and maternity

The assessment has indicated a potential disproportionate negative impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity.

It is hard to identify the scale of impact this funding reduction could have as it will be dependent on operational decisions and the success of alternative fundraising, therefore monitoring and regular review will be important. The funding provided by the Council is a small percentage of their overall income (approximately 0.3% of gross income based on 2021 accounts) so it would be hoped this funding gap could be filled.

In terms of action to address any potential negative impact the Council will continue to offer other support to Stripey Stork including property during Santa Stork and Discretionary Rate Relief.

Race or ethnicity

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to race or ethnicity.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to religion or belief.

Sex

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to sex, it is recognised that any parents may benefit from the services provided by Stripey Stork.

Sexual orientation

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to sexual orientation.

Other vulnerabilities

The assessment has indicated a potential disproportionate negative impact in relation to other vulnerabilities, specifically those on lower incomes.

It is hard to identify the scale of impact this funding reduction could have as it will be dependent on operational decisions and the success of alternative fundraising, therefore monitoring and regular review will be important. The funding provided by the Council is a small percentage of their overall income (approximately 0.3% of gross income based on 2021 accounts) so it would be hoped this funding gap could be filled.

In terms of action to address any potential negative impact the Council will continue to offer other support to Stripey Stork including property during Santa Stork and Discretionary Rate Relief.

Monitoring and review

The Community Partnerships Team will go back to Stripey Stork next year to understand if the funding reduction has had negative consequences such as a reduction in number of families supported or the amount of goods they are able to provide. The Community Partnerships Team holds regular meetings with Stripey Stork and receives monitoring data in a quarterly scorecard. This data will be used to help identify any negative consequences of the funding reduction at an early stage.

The Community Partnerships team will continue to meet with Stripey Stork to monitor the impact of funding across the year. The Council's Community Partnerships team will explore the possibilities of developing other funding sources such as a community lottery or crowdfunding. This may offer alternative funding that Stripey Stork could apply for.

Proposal: Savings from a reduction in Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) funding (Citizens Advice Reigate & Banstead)

Introduction

This document summarises – in an accessible format – the outcomes of the Council’s draft Equality Impact Assessment for reduction in funding to Citizens’ Advice Reigate & Banstead (CARB), including the outcome of the Stage 1 Relevance Screening Assessment and the Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

The proposal has been assessed by the Community Partnerships Team in November 2022 and finalised in January 2023.

Summary of the proposal

To reduce the annual £111,000 grant for Citizens Advice Reigate & Banstead (CARB) by 15% to £94,500 from 2023/24. CARB provide information, advice and guidance free of charge to residents of the borough. This is delivered, online, over the phone, face to face and via outreach work. CARB provide advice on a huge variety of legal and financial concerns and provide advice on benefits, employment and debt.

The Community Partnerships Team was tasked with reviewing voluntary sector grants and identifying savings as part of the Council Financial Sustainability Programme. The annual grant that Citizens Advice Reigate & Banstead receive has been identified for a 15% reduction.

Assessment of Relevance

The Stage 1 Relevance Assessment has concluded the following:

- The proposal will not introduce a change which will affect how Council services or functions are delivered but may impact the delivery of third party VCS services, which may in turn affect people who rely on those third party services.

The groups of people which might be affected by the proposal have been identified as – directly – CARB as an organisation, which will receive less funding from the Council.

CARB offers advice and guidance to all residents of the borough, free of charge. Their services are most commonly accessed by residents in financial hardship or isolated from other services due to ill health or disability. CARB service users will be likely to fall into multiple protected characteristic groups. CARB have told us that this funding reduction will lead to a reduced staff and volunteer offer across the week and a reduced offer will impact access to this service. In the past year CARB responded to 17,480 issues and demand has increased year on year across the past 3 years. Partner agencies and Council departments may also be impacted by the funding reduction as other services will frequently refer residents to CARB.

The following evidence, information and/or engagement has been used to assess the proposal for its relevance to equality:

- Information provided to the Council by organisations about the people that use their services.

The protected characteristic groups that could be affected by the proposal are vulnerable residents who may need services from CARB.

The following Equality Duty aims have been identified as being relevant:

- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Overall, the relevance assessment has concluded that this proposal has a relevance to equality of Moderate. The outcome of the relevance assessment is therefore that a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Equality Impact Assessment

The proposal in question does not directly target one or more protected characteristic groups, however proposal will reduce the funding of CARB. CARB have told us that this reduction in funding will lead to reduced staff/adviser hours and thus a reduced service unless they are able to fill the funding gap. If there is a reduced/limited service, this will indirectly impact residents with protected characteristics that are in need of advice and guidance

The proposal does not intentionally exclude one or more protected characteristic groups. It has been identified that the proposal does not have the potential to reduce inequality or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups.

Information about the protected characteristics of the intended audience and/or people who might be affected

In summary, the following information is available about the protected characteristic groups of the intended audience and / or people who might be affected by the proposal.

In 2021/22 CARB supported 4456 residents with 17,480 issues. The most common needs are benefits advice, universal credit support, debt and employment advice and guidance. CARB has estimated that the reduction in funding will mean they reach 200 fewer clients per quarter, a reduction of 800 across a year. This is because the funding reduction will lead to a reduction staffing and therefore a reduction in volunteers that can work at one time and a reduction in centre opening times. In the past year the Council provided 25% of CARB's overall income but this will vary this year as other funding streams are coming to an end.

It is likely that residents with a variety of protected characteristics use CARBs services. Information from CARB's 2021 annual accounts indicates that 24% of clients had long term health conditions and that 22% were from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities; both of these percentages are higher than the overall levels for the borough as reported in the census.

It is difficult to fully assess the impact of this funding reduction. CARB may be able to access additional funding or find operational efficiencies, but we know that other funding sources for VCS have reduced or will be targeted to new projects rather than core costs. CARB have told us that this funding reduction would therefore lead to a service reduction as they would need to reduce staff and volunteer time. At this stage we are unable to be specific amount the number of residents with protected characteristics that could be impacted but we know that the service is likely to be used by residents with a variety of needs.

Consultation

There was a meeting with all VCS Commissioned Services in July 2022 to tell them about the funding review and seek their input into the impact of a funding reduction. All commissioned organisations including CARB were asked to complete a survey to tell us about the likely impact of funding reductions. In October a meeting was held with CARB to tell them about initial proposals for a funding reduction and the next steps. CARB have informed the Council that a reduction in funding will lead to reduced adviser and volunteer hours unless they are able to access additional funding to use for core costs.

Overall, only 23% of respondents supported the proposal to reduce funding to some VCS partners. The Council conducted a public consultation on its draft budget proposals between 21 November 2022 and 16 January 2023, inviting responses from community members and local organisations on the proposals.

Comments in response to the consultation on the draft budget expressed concerns regarding the risks of long term harm to those unable to access essential services or without adequate access to financial and accommodation support, particularly those who were otherwise vulnerable. Attention was also drawn to the timing of the proposed grant reductions coinciding with wider financial pressures being faced by many, and to concerns that the reductions in funding might be counterproductive in leading to additional support needs in future.

The results of the consultation and the feedback provided are captured within an annex to the budget report.

Action to increase positive equality impacts or reduce negative equality impacts

The Council will be exploring other opportunities to create funding for the local voluntary sector such as developing a local lottery. This may be able to offer some future funding to CARB if it is established. The Council will continue to offer in-kind support to VCS organisations such as meeting room hire and low cost printing.

The Council can also ensure that support and advice services (including CARB) are widely advertised so that residents still have services they can contact free of charge for advice across the week.

Assessment of potential impact

This section summarises our assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on protected characteristic groups.

Age

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to age.

Disability

CARB has identified that 24% of its clients have long term health conditions. This is higher than the borough average, however it is not possible to gauge the specific impact on the funding reduction on those with disabilities as the specific service impact is not fully known at this stage.

Gender reassignment

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to gender reassignment.

Marriage and civil partnership

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership.

Pregnancy and maternity

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity.

Race or ethnicity

CARB has identified that 22% of its clients are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. This is higher than the borough average, however it is not possible to gauge the specific impact on the funding reduction on minority ethnic groups as the specific service impact is not fully known at this stage.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to religion or belief.

Sex

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to sex.

Sexual orientation

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to sexual orientation.

Other vulnerabilities

The assessment has indicated a potential disproportionate negative impact in relation to people with vulnerabilities generally, which may include residents with one or more protected characteristics. All residents are able to access universal advice and guidance via CARB but they specifically support vulnerable residents with low income that may not have access to other sources of support.

CARB has indicated that without alternative funds being found they will have to reduce paid adviser time by 3 days and this will mean that 12 volunteers will be unable to offer advice on those days. It also means that the Redhill centre will be closed two days a week and the Banstead centre one day a week. CARB estimates that they will be able to help 800 fewer people across the year. We know that CARB is used by residents with vulnerabilities including residents with protected characteristics so they may face delays in receiving support. Demand for citizen advice services is increasing nationally due to the impact of cost of living increases.

CARB provides universal advice to residents free of charge and there is no other equivalent universal service locally. However, there are some other money advice and debt advice services that residents can access. We know these services are also seeing increased demand but they may offer an alternative for some residents. The Council will continue to work with CARB and support the local advice service offer via networking groups that can identify common issues and seek collaboration on key areas of development. Monitoring will be important to ensure that the impact of the removal of funding on service provision and residents is fully understood and can be responded to if necessitated.

Monitoring and review

The impact of the proposal and progress towards the delivery of identified actions will be monitored as follows.

The impact will be monitored via quarterly meetings with CARB and review of their monitoring scorecard. Grant monitoring tracks the number of clients, those with protected characteristics and issues as well as types of need so it will be possible to see if client and issue numbers reduce as a result of this funding reduction. CARB also share staff and volunteer hours so it will be possible to see how these are impacted by the proposed funding reduction.

A service reduction is known to have already been put in place as other funding streams have come to an end. This will lead to an impact on the service offer and will need to be closely monitored across the year.

Monitoring information will help us identify issues, needs and gaps. The Council Partnerships team will research options for creating other funding sources such as a community lottery or crowdfunding. These models may be able to provide additional funding for CARB in the future if our review identifies a negative impact.

Proposal: Savings from a reduction in Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) funding (services provided by Age Concern Banstead, Age Concern Merstham, Redhill & Reigate, and MHA East Surrey Communities)

Introduction

This document summarises – in an accessible format – the outcomes of the Council’s draft Equality Impact Assessment for the reduction in funding for older people’s services (Age Concern Banstead, Age Concern Merstham, Redhill & Reigate, and MHA East Surrey Communities), including the outcome of the Stage 1 Relevance Screening Assessment and the Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

The proposal has been assessed by the Community Partnerships Team in November 2022 and finalised in January 2023.

Summary of the proposal

The proposal is to reduce the amount of funding paid to the commissioned older people’s service providers (Age Concern Banstead, Age Concern Merstham, Redhill & Reigate, and MHA East Surrey Communities) by £10,000 in total. Proposed reductions per organisation are as follows:

- Age Concern Banstead: Reduction from £10,000 to £7,500 – a reduction in £2,500 or 25%
- Age Concern Merstham, Redhill & Reigate: Reduction from £15,000 to £11,250 – a reduction in £3,700 or 25%
- MHA East Surrey Communities: Reduction from £15,000 to £11,250 – a reduction in £3,700 or 25%

The three organisations provide services, accessible to all people over the age of 55 years, to help reduce loneliness and isolation as well as volunteering opportunities to support residents to remain active and engaged with the local community.

The Community Partnerships Team has been tasked with reviewing voluntary sector grants and identifying savings as part of the Council Financial Sustainability Programme. The reduction in annual grant that the three older people’s service providers receive has been identified as one of the savings proposals

Assessment of Relevance

The Stage 1 Relevance Assessment has concluded the following:

- The proposal will not introduce a change which will affect how Council services or functions are delivered but may impact the delivery of third party VCS services, which may in turn affect people who rely on those third party services.

The groups of people which might be affected by the proposal have been identified as – directly – the three organisations, which will receive less funding from the Council.

Indirectly, the proposal may therefore impact older residents who use the organisations to access support and friendship, helping maintain independence, improve well-being and reduce isolation and loneliness. In 2021/22 the organisations delivered 2684 befriending sessions, there were 4293 attendances at group sessions and 5463 journeys were provided. There were 9321 volunteer hours given to the older people's services. In year membership increased by 288 people. As of September 2022, there had been 153 new members access services. The average age of the members is 75+, the majority of whom are frail and with limited alternative support.

The following evidence, information and/or engagement has been used to assess the proposal for its relevance to equality:

- Quarterly monitoring meetings are held with each of the three commissioned services. They are each required to produce a scorecard providing data on financial viability, paid & volunteer hours, number of service users for both group and individual activities, new referrals, promotion of their services and contribution to the sector. They also report on their successes, customer insight / needs analysis as well as risks, challenges and concerns. These quarterly reviews provide valuable insight into the provision of service and unmet need in the borough. The three partners each have different operational models. With some services being more in depth whilst others are light touch. Some services are able to recover costs whilst others are delivered free of charge e.g. information and advice, befriending, bereavement and dementia support

The protected characteristic groups that could be affected by the proposal are Age and Disability, along with older residents with other vulnerabilities.

The following Equality Duty aims have been identified as being relevant:

- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Overall, the relevance assessment has concluded that this proposal has a relevance to equality of Moderate. The outcome of the relevance assessment is therefore that a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Equality Impact Assessment

The proposal in question does not directly target one or more protected characteristic groups, however proposal will reduce the funding of older persons' services.

The proposal may impact indirectly on people with the protected characteristic of age, disability and vulnerability. A reduction in funding may have an impact on the range of services that the organisations are able to provide, especially those that do not generate income e.g., bereavement support, befriending. The majority of service users are frail elderly residents who require support to maintain social interactions, thereby reducing loneliness and isolation.

The proposal does not intentionally exclude one or more protected characteristic groups. It has been identified that the proposal does not have the potential to reduce inequality or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups.

Information about the protected characteristics of the intended audience and/or people who might be affected

In summary, the following information is available about the protected characteristic groups of the intended audience and / or people who might be affected by the proposal.

The services provided by the three older people's service providers are demand led. That demand has increased over recent years and if they are unable to fill the funding gap caused by this proposal it could have an impact on keeping up with demand. We are aware that funding streams for VCS have reduced, and competition has increased so there is a possibility that other funding streams will be harder to come by for these organisations. Most referrals to these older people's service providers will be for frail elderly people in need and they are likely to be on low incomes and likely to be living with limited support from family and friends.

Age

The RBBC Equality Information: Borough Characteristics 2021 indicates that 18.3% of borough residents are age 65 or over (27,296 residents). Projections suggest that the older population will increase considerably over the next 20 years

It is estimated, based on service user data for the first six months of 22/23, that 1,660 unique service users will engage with the 3 service providers during the year. This is in addition to the 250 volunteers who find a sense of fulfilment and connectivity through volunteering with the services. (In total 7% of the population over 65 years of age are either service users or volunteers).

In 2021/22 the income generated by the three organisations was:

- Age Concern Banstead - £31,362
- Age Concern Merstham, Redhill and Reigate - £133,033
- MHA -£65,170

The proposed reduction in funding is equivalent to:

- Age Concern Banstead – 8% of annual income
- Age Concern Merstham, Redhill and Reigate - 3% of annual income
- MHA – 6% of annual income

Disability

The RBBC Equality Information: Borough Characteristics 2021 provides general information about the disability characteristics of the borough's population.

Monitoring of service users by the three organisations suggests that a significant number of service users have long term health conditions associated with old age, including mobility, frailty and hearing and sight loss.

Other vulnerabilities

The RBBC Equality Information: Borough Characteristics 2021 provides general information about the distribution of deprivation across the borough.

Monitoring of service users by the three organisations suggests that a significant number of services users live alone and do not have local family support available to them. A reduction in service provision may increase their isolation and vulnerability.

Consultation

The three older people's service providers were made aware of the potential cut to their budgets and were asked to say what the impact of this may be on service delivery.

- Age Concern Banstead report that a 25% cut in Council funding would result in reduced hours of the visiting staff, which is a service which cannot self-fund (some

services are chargeable but never recovers full costs (e.g., lunch clubs) and some are non-chargeable (e.g., information /advice). The cuts would impact on activities such as lunch clubs, befriending, benefit support, bereavement support and dementia support. More time would need to be given to fundraising activities and bid writing as opposed to service delivery and partnership working

- Age Concern Merstham, Redhill and Reigate has indicated that any reduction in RBBC funding would need to be sought from other external funding bids, as the option to increase charges for their services would exclude people who are already severely struggling financially.
- MHA Communities has indicated that a 25% cut would mean they would have to stop their weekly lunch club at Horley Community Centre and reduce the hours for their Horley focussed Community Coordinator which would impact on other Horley activities (twice monthly pub lunches in Horley and matching members with volunteers for active face to face companionship). MHA Communities is advocating for a tapered cut if a cut has to happen. The organisation has also indicated that any cut will reduce the ability to focus on partnership working with other older people's organisations as more focus will need to be on fundraising.

The Council conducted a public consultation on its draft budget proposals between 21 November 2022 and 16 January 2023, inviting responses from community members and local organisations on the proposals.

Overall, only 23% of respondents supported the proposal to reduce funding to some VCS partners. Comments in response to the consultation on the draft budget expressed concern that the reductions in funding for voluntary and charity sector organisations would prevent vulnerable people from receiving necessary support, and would lead to additional difficulties for those affected in future. Concern was also expressed regarding reductions in support being made at the same time as residents and organisations faced other increases in costs.

The results of the consultation and the feedback provided are captured within an annex to the budget report.

Action to increase positive equality impacts or reduce negative equality impacts

The three older people's service providers could seek to close the funding gap from increased fundraising activities or by reducing costs by reducing the services they offer or a combination of both.

The Council can help to publicise and promote other service providers operating within the borough, including the three council owned community centres.

The Council maintains a webpage providing [details of support for Older People](#). It will also continue to provide support in kind for VCS organisations.

Assessment of potential impact

This section summarises our assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on protected characteristic groups.

Age

The assessment has indicated a potential disproportionate negative impact in relation to age. The proposed funding cuts will impact the organisations capacity to offer services for frail, elderly people who are experiencing loneliness and isolation and do not have alternative resources to meet these needs.

The following action will be taken to address this potential impact:

- The 3 commissioned services will signpost to other providers working across Surrey.
- The organisations will seek to increase their fundraising.
- The three Council Community Centres will continue to offer and develop free and low-cost activities for older people.
- The older people services steering group will continue to work on identifying and addressing common issues that will support and develop the local offer to older people.
- The Council maintains a webpage with information about [services for vulnerable and older people](#).

Disability

The assessment has indicated a potential disproportionate negative impact in relation to disability. A significant number of service users have long term health conditions associated with old age, including mobility, frailty and hearing and sight loss.

The services provided, by the 3 older people's services providers, are universal. With the exception that, service users must be capable of entering and exiting the building, and where provided transport, with minimal support and are not in need of personal care (they can take themselves to the toilet), there is no assessment of disability when providing services.

The following action will be taken to address this potential impact:

- The 3 commissioned services will signpost to other providers working across Surrey.

- The organisations will seek to increase their fundraising.
- The three Council Community Centres will continue to offer and develop free and low-cost activities for older people including those with disabilities.
- The older people services steering group will continue to work on identifying and addressing common issues that will support and develop the local offer to older people including those with disabilities.
- The Council maintains a webpage with information about [services for vulnerable and older people \(including those with disabilities\)](#).

Gender reassignment

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to gender reassignment.

Marriage and civil partnership

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership.

Pregnancy and maternity

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity.

Race or ethnicity

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to race or ethnicity.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to religion or belief.

Sex

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to sex.

Sexual orientation

The assessment has indicated no impact in relation to sexual orientation.

Other vulnerabilities

The assessment has indicated a potential disproportionate negative impact in relation to other vulnerabilities, specifically vulnerable older residents.

A significant number of services users live alone and do not have local family support available to them. A reduction in service provision may increase their isolation and

vulnerability. Whilst data exists on the number of older people claiming single person Council tax discount over the age of 65, we do not have the data on the number of people who live alone and access these services.

The following action will be taken to address this potential impact:

- The 3 commissioned services will signpost to other providers working across Surrey.
- The organisations will seek to increase their fundraising.
- The three Council Community Centres will continue to offer and develop free and low-cost activities for vulnerable older people.
- The older people services steering group will continue to work on identifying and addressing common issues that will support and develop the local offer to vulnerable older people.
- The Council maintains a webpage with information about services for vulnerable and older people https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20074/health_and_wellbeing/1264/support_for_older_people_or_vulnerable_people/10

Monitoring and review

The Partnerships Team will continue to meet with the three older people's service providers to monitor the impact of funding cuts across the year. The organisations have quarterly monitoring meetings and provide data in a scorecard, so it will be possible to identify the impact of the proposed funding reduction through these meetings. The Partnerships Team will also explore opportunities to create a local lottery fund to support VCS organisations.

Monitoring information will help us identify issues, needs and gaps. If there are concerns about the impact of this change we can work with the older people's service providers and other older people's service providers, via the Older People Services Steering group to propose changes or developments that could be considered as part of future service development. The Council Partnerships team will seek to explore other funding models such as a community lottery or crowdfunding model. This may provide additional funding pathways that could provide funding to these organisations if negative impact to local older people was identified in the review.

Proposal: Changes to room hire charges in community centres

Introduction

This document summarises – in an accessible format – the outcomes of the Council’s draft Equality Impact Assessment for proposals to change room hire charges at its Community Centres, including the outcome of the Stage 1 Relevance Screening Assessment and the Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

The proposal has been assessed by the Community Partnerships service in November 2022 and finalised in January 2023.

Summary of the proposal

The proposal is to update the charges for room hire at the Council’s three community centres (Horley, Woodhatch and Banstead) in order that there is greater transparency and consistency in the charges (including private and community hire rates), that the charges where possible fully recover associated costs, and that the levels of charges are set with an understanding of the hire costs of competitor facilities.

The community centres returned to the Council in April 2020, having been outsourced to a charity from 2016 – 2020. Fees and charges have not been reviewed since the centres have returned to back to the Council. Historically there has been a lot of local discretion at centre level, which dates back to the charity-run period, and even to the period pre-2016 where whilst the centres were funded by the Council, they were operationally managed by management committees.

The community centres have been through a transformation programme since their insourcing in 2020. As a result of the disruption of the Covid pandemic, a review of fees and charges has not happened until now. The transformation, approved at Executive in July 2021, set out the vision for the centres to be community centres for all rather than centres focussing on an older age group. As the centres evolve to meet this political direction, it is timely to review fees as there is a particular focus on new hirers, as well as ensuring that longer established hirers are paying an appropriate fee for the space that they use.

Assessment of Relevance

The Stage 1 Relevance Assessment has concluded the following:

- The proposal will introduce a change which will affect how services or functions are delivered
- The proposals will directly affect existing and potential hirers of the spaces, which includes private individuals, small businesses (often sole traders such as exercise instructors), and partner organisations.
- The proposal also has the potential to indirectly affect individuals if:
 - through the changes to fees and charges any current hirers choose to cease their use of the community centres. In such circumstances, the activity may relocate to a non-RBBC premises which may be equally accessible to current service users. If the activity does not relocate (or does not relocate to an equally accessible non-RBBC premises) then there may be some impact on individuals.
 - The hirers choose to pass on any increased hire costs to their individual service users

The groups of people which might be affected by the proposal have been identified as:

- Residents
 - Residents on occasion privately hire spaces within our community centres and we are aiming for this to happen more in future.
 - Residents also are users of our centres and the activities within them. Where those activities are run in spaces hired by private or community users, residents would be indirectly impacted by the changes in hire fees if the hirer sought to pass these higher costs on to their service users or if the hirer stopped running the activity at the community centre. The impact would potentially be minimal if the activity relocated to a competitor premises in the locality.
- Local businesses
 - Local businesses such as sole trading exercise instructors, beauticians, etc currently hire spaces in our community centres. The majority of hire charges will be increasing by between 5% and 10%, with charges decreasing in a few instances, and a few instances where increases will be above 10%. In these instances it reflects a heavy discretionary discount having been applied to the advertised hire charge by the previous charitable operator.
- Partners (including voluntary/community/faith sector organisations)
 - Partner organisations including NHS organisations, food banks, older people's organisations and young people's charities currently hire spaces in our community centres. The majority of hire charges will be increasing by between 5% and 10%, with charges decreasing in a few instances, and a few instances where increases will be above 10%. In these instances it reflects a heavy

discretionary discount having been applied to the advertised hire charge by the previous charitable operator

Information about current room hirers has been used to assess the proposal for its relevance to equality.

Anyone who currently hires a room may be impacted by the changes, regardless of whether or not they have any protected characteristics. However, evidence indicates that organisations supporting older people and that support disadvantaged residents currently hire rooms.

The following Equality Duty aims have been identified as being relevant:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act

Overall, the relevance assessment has concluded that this proposal has a relevance to equality of Moderate, and therefore a stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Equality Impact Assessment

The proposal in question does not intentionally target one or more protected characteristic groups.

The proposal does not intentionally exclude one or more protected characteristic groups.

It has been identified that the proposal does have the potential to reduce inequality or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups, as the proposal addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for current hirers.

Information about the protected characteristics of the intended audience and/or people who might be affected

In summary, the following information is available about the protected characteristic groups of the intended audience and / or people who might be affected by the proposal. We have limited information about the specific protected characteristics of all those who hire rooms although good information about the groups and businesses that hire rooms regularly. It may be possible to collect further equalities data on an 'opt in' basis.

Age

Information about who currently hires the rooms suggests that partner organisations including NHS organisations, food banks, older people's organisations and young people's charities current hire spaces in our community centres. Currently there is a high proportion of activity users who are older people, although a growing number of newer family focused activities in particular at Woodhatch Community Centre.

Disability

Information about who currently hires the rooms suggests that partner organisations including NHS organisations, food banks, older people's organisations and young people's charities current hire spaces in our community centres. Currently there is a high proportion of activity users who are older people, who may have some mobility issues or other disabilities.

Gender reassignment

Those that hire the spaces includes a range of residents, activity providers and businesses but no specific information is available about the gender reassignment characteristics of current room hirers.

Marriage and civil partnership

Those that hire the spaces includes a range of residents, activity providers and businesses but no specific information is available about the partnership characteristics of current room hirers.

Pregnancy and maternity

A growing number of newer family focused activities are using our community centres in particular the centre at Woodhatch.

Race or ethnicity

Those that hire the spaces includes a range of residents, activity providers and businesses but no specific information is available about the race or ethnicity characteristics of current room hirers.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

Those that hire the spaces includes a range of residents, activity providers and businesses but no specific information is available about the religion / belief characteristics of current room hirers

Sex

Those that hire the spaces includes a range of residents, activity providers and businesses but no specific information is available about the sex or gender of current room hirers.

Sexual orientation

Those that hire the spaces includes a range of residents, activity providers and businesses but no specific information is available about the sexual orientation of current room hirers.

Other vulnerabilities

Partner organisations including NHS organisations, food banks, older people's organisations and young people's charities currently hire spaces in our community centres. Some of the hirers, in particular food banks, support disadvantaged residents.

Consultation

The Council conducted a public consultation on its draft budget proposals between 21 November 2022 and 16 January 2023, inviting responses from community members and local organisations on the proposals.

Overall, 48% of respondents supported the proposed change to fees and charges. Comments in response to the budget consultation expressed concerns that increased costs of room hire would disproportionately affect voluntary and community sector groups and organisations using the facilities, and that the potential to reduce access to community facilities would undermine the wellbeing benefits they would otherwise provide.

The results of the consultation and the feedback provided are captured within an annex to the budget report.

Action to increase positive equality impacts or reduce negative equality impacts

The transformation programme implemented by the Council aims to make our community centres welcoming for all rather than just focusing on the older age group. The proposal addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for current hirers.

Assessment of potential impact

This section summarises our assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on protected characteristic groups.

Age

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to age.

Although partner organisations providing services for older and younger people currently hire spaces, and residents who may be older or younger may also currently hire spaces, no disproportionate impact has been identified.

The majority of hire charges will be increasing by between 5% and 10%, with charges decreasing in a few instances, and a few instances where increases will be above 10% due to a heavy discretionary discount having previously been applied.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends.

The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Disability

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to disability.

Although partner organisations providing services for older people who may have disabilities currently hire spaces, and residents who may have disabilities may also currently hire spaces, no disproportionate impact has been identified.

The majority of hire charges will be increasing by between 5% and 10%, with charges decreasing in a few instances, and a few instances where increases will be above 10% due to a heavy discretionary discount having previously been applied.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends.

The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Gender reassignment

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to gender reassignment.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may well relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends. The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Marriage and civil partnership

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to marriage or civil partnership.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may well relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends. The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Pregnancy and maternity

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to pregnancy or maternity.

Although partner organisations providing services for young or growing families currently hire spaces, and residents who have families may also currently hire spaces, no disproportionate impact has been identified.

The majority of hire charges will be increasing by between 5% and 10%, with charges decreasing in a few instances, and a few instances where increases will be above 10% due to a heavy discretionary discount having previously been applied.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends.

The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Race or ethnicity

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to race or ethnicity.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may well relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends. The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to religion or belief.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may well relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends. The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses

inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Sex

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may well relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends. The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Sexual orientation

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to sexual orientation.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may well relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends. The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers

Other vulnerabilities

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to residents with other vulnerabilities.

Although partner organisations providing services for disadvantaged residents currently hire spaces, no disproportionate impact has been identified.

The majority of hire charges will be increasing by between 5% and 10%, with charges decreasing in a few instances, and a few instances where increases will be above 10% due to a heavy discretionary discount having previously been applied.

If a hirer chooses to no longer hire the space in our community centres as a result of the increase in charges, the hirer may relocate that activity to another premises, meaning that those people with protected characteristics could still access that service, albeit in an alternative venue. If a hirer chooses to pass on an increase in room hire costs to activity users, this could impact on the affordability of the activity to some users. However, any cost increases that are passed on should be modest and proportionate when compared against inflationary trends.

The proposal may also have a positive impact as it addresses inconsistencies in the current charging arrangements which will improve fairness for all current hirers.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring will be undertaken of the impact of the changes to hire charges on patterns and users of room hire.

Charges will be regularly reviewed to ensure that they comply with the Council's fees and charges policy – as part of this, the results of monitoring (patterns and users of room hire). If this monitoring suggests a disproportionate negative impact on any protected characteristic groups, it would be possible for the Council to consider discretionary reductions.

Proposal: Increase in car park charges

Introduction

This document summarises – in an accessible format – the outcomes of the Council’s draft Equality Impact Assessment for changes to car park charges, including the outcome of the Stage 1 Relevance Screening Assessment and the Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

The proposal has been assessed by the Neighbourhood Services team in October 2022 and reviewed in January 2023.

Summary of the proposal

The proposal is to increase the fees and charges in the off-street car parks owned and managed by the Council. This relates to the amounts charged for pay and display tickets and the amount charged for season tickets. On average prices are proposed to increase by 10% however due to rounding of figures the exact % increase for different time periods may be slightly higher or lower than this. In real terms, the price increase (as it is a % increase) is greater for longer term stays, therefore the cost increase to residents wishing to use council car parks for short stay trips (eg to run errands) will be small (on average 10p for a stay of up to 1 hour).

Off street parking and season ticket fees and charges have not been increased since 2016, a potential increase in 2019 was delayed by the pandemic, which affected revenue severely as people worked from home for the duration.

Assessment of Relevance

The Stage 1 Relevance Assessment has concluded the following:

- The proposal will not introduce a change which will affect how services or functions are delivered
- The proposals will affect people who normally use council car parks for their parking.

The group(s) of people which might be affected by the proposal includes residents and businesses that may use the Council’s pay and display car parks. Additionally local businesses near the car parks may be affected.

Information is not held about the demographic or equality characteristics of pay and display car park users. However it is possible that those with limited mobility or with childcare

responsibilities are more reliant on private car and therefore our car parks. Blue badge holders are not required to pay for any parking in the RBBC car parks. Those on lower or no incomes may have a reduced ability to pay additional costs.

A detailed breakdown of the real cost of the % increase has been undertaken to determine the cost implication for different stay lengths at different car parks.

The protected characteristic groups that could be affected by the proposal have been identified as older people, those with disabilities, pregnant women or parents/carers with small children, along with residents with other vulnerabilities.

The following Equality Duty aims have been identified as being relevant:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Overall, the relevance assessment has concluded that this proposal has a relevance to equality of Low however a stage 2 equality impact assessment has been undertaken to consider any potential issues or mitigation arising.

The reason for a conclusion of low is:

- Those who hold a blue badge and who would therefore fall within the protected characteristics of age and/or disability are not required to pay for any parking.
- Parking charges have not been increased since 2016 and the proposed increases therefore do not exceed inflationary trends over this period. The real cost increase for short-stay trips (for example to enable residents to carry out errands) is on average 10p for a 1 hour stay. It remains the case that other parking and transport opportunities are also available for those who do not wish to pay this increased charge.

Equality Impact Assessment

The proposal in question does not intentionally target one or more protected characteristic groups.

The proposal does intentionally exclude one or more protected characteristic groups, specifically the changes will not impact those with Blue Badges who are exempt from paying charges in the Council's off street car parks.

It has been identified that the proposal does not have the potential to reduce inequality or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups. Whilst it could be considered that those with Blue Badges (ie with disabilities) could be better off as a result, this is because everyone else will be required to pay slightly more for parking.

Information about the protected characteristics of the intended audience and/or people who might be affected

In summary, the following information is available about the protected characteristic groups of the intended audience and / or people who might be affected by the proposal

Age

ONS mid-year estimates suggest that there are 27296 RBBC residents aged 65 or over (18.1% of the total population). More information about ward level distribution is provided in the Borough Equality report available at www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/equality.

Disability

1.6% of the population of the South East hold blue badges, so based on population of RBBC (149243) there are approximately 2388 blue badge holders eligible for free parking in RBBC car parks.

Gender reassignment

General information about the representation of trans-people in the population generally is available from national and regional annual population survey data from the ONS, however is not currently available at a borough level. National and regional data is reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Marriage and civil partnership

General information about borough residents' partnership arrangements is available from the Census and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Pregnancy and maternity

General information about live births and lone parents in the borough is available from the Census and other ONS data sources and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Race or ethnicity

General information about the ethnicity of the borough's residents is available from the Census and the ONS Annual Population Survey and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

General information about the religion and/or beliefs of borough residents is available from the Census and the ONS Annual Population Survey and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Sex

General information about the gender profile of borough residents is available from the Census and ONS mid-year estimates and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Sexual orientation

General information about the representation of trans-people in the population generally is available from national and regional annual population survey data from the ONS, however is not currently available at a borough level. National and regional data is reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Other vulnerabilities

The Index of Multiple Deprivation - in 2019, Reigate & Banstead borough was ranked 276 out of 317 local authorities (where 1 = the most deprived). There are areas of RBBC where deprivation appears in the top 20% nationally.

Consultation

The process of raising fees and charges for off street parking includes a four week consultation period published in the local press (Surrey Mirror), online and notices placed at the car parks. Comments raised as a result are considered prior to implementation of any rise.

This consultation will be taking place following the consideration of the main annual budget report. Any equality implications identified regarding the proposals to increase car parking charges emerging from this consultation will therefore be reviewed by officers in consultation with relevant Members of the Council and as necessary an updated equality impact assessment will be undertaken. Where any additional mitigation or monitoring requirements

are required, these will be addressed through powers set out in the Officer Scheme of Delegation, as set out in the Council's constitution.

Action to increase positive equality impacts or reduce negative equality impacts

In preparing the proposal, the following actions have been taken to increase the positive impacts for people with protected characteristics:

A survey of car park users for the various sites could be considered to tease out the information on car park usage by the protected and vulnerable in future.

In preparing the proposal, the following actions have been taken to reduce potential negative impacts on people with protected characteristics:

Any rise in price is carefully considered so that as few people as possible are excluded from the car parks, this does however affect those with the least disposable income, a group not included within protected characteristics.

The Council will continue to enable those with Blue Badges to park for free, meaning that less mobile older people or those with disabilities will be unaffected by the price rises.

More generally, the Council is continuing to work with Surrey County Council to encourage walking and cycling as an alternative means of travel to reduce reliance on the private car, and to promote and support public transport usage. This includes through the provision of new walking/cycling infrastructure in town centres and other support to encourage behaviour change. This will provide more viable alternatives for those on lower incomes to avoid or minimise fuel and/or parking costs

Assessment of potential impact

This section summarises our assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on protected characteristic groups.

Age

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to age. Disproportionate negative impact is avoided by the continuation of fee Blue Badge parking for older residents with mobility issues as well as continued work with SCC to encourage active travel as an alternative to the private car. It remains the case that other parking and transport opportunities are also available for those who do not wish to pay this increased charge

Disability

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to disability. Disproportionate negative impact is avoided by the continuation of fee Blue Badge parking for residents with disabilities.

Gender reassignment

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate impact in relation to gender reassignment.

Marriage and civil partnership

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership.

Pregnancy and maternity

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity. It remains the case that other parking and transport opportunities are available for those who do not wish or are not able to pay the increased charge. In real terms the price increase for essential short (1hr) stays is small (10p on average). Continued work is ongoing with SCC to encourage active travel as an alternative to the private car.

Race or ethnicity

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate impact in relation to race or ethnicity.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate impact in relation to religion or belief.

Sex

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate impact in relation to sex.

Sexual orientation

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate impact in relation to sexual orientation.

Other vulnerabilities

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate impact in relation to other vulnerabilities, specifically those facing financial hardship. It remains the case that other parking and transport opportunities are available for those who do not wish or are not able to pay the

increased charge. In real terms the price increase for essential short (1hr) stays is small (10p on average). Continued work is ongoing with SCC to encourage active travel as an alternative to the private car.

Monitoring and review

The parking team will continue to monitor levels of car parking usage / ticket sales to understand the overall impact of the proposals.

Consultation provides the opportunity for all car park users, businesses and residents to comment on the proposed rises. A survey of car park users will allow better understanding of the demographics and protected characteristics of those who use our car parks and further consideration within a new EIA carried out soon after. This will also inform any future proposals with respect of our car parks including impact mitigation measures.

Proposal: Increase in fees for issuing of Summons and obtaining Liability Orders for Council Tax and Business Rates

Introduction

This document summarises – in an accessible format – the outcomes of the Council’s draft Equality Impact Assessment for an increase in fees for the issuing of summons and obtaining liability orders for Council Tax and Business rates non-payment, including the outcome of the Stage 1 Relevance Screening Assessment and the Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

The proposal has been assessed by the Revenues, Benefits & Fraud service in November 2022 and finalised in January 2023.

Summary of the proposal

The fees and charges for Summonses and Liability Orders for non-payment of Council Tax and NNDR have not been increased since 2016. The charges are being increased to reflect the increased costs to the Council for producing Summonses and progressing the outstanding debts to Magistrates Court. Costs are proposed to be increased by 9.1%.

Assessment of Relevance

The Stage 1 Relevance Assessment has concluded the following:

- The proposal will not introduce a change which will affect how services or functions are delivered
- The proposals will affect people. Specifically the proposed increase in costs will put a further burden on impacted residents and businesses. However, prior to the summons stage, the Council issues bills, reminders and final notices to those residents who are not paying their council tax or business rates.

The groups of people which might be affected by the proposal are residents and businesses. In 2021/22 Summonses were issued to 2,938 residents and 167 businesses. Due to the closure of the Courts during 2020/21, this number will increase in 2022/23 as the Council looks to take recovery action against non-payers of Council Tax and Business Rates.

This proposal affects all persons who are liable to pay Council Tax and Business Rates in respect of their home (residential address) or business address, including those properties which are currently empty. The list of liable parties is maintained in the Council Tax & Business rates system. The Borough Equality Profile on the Council website provides

information about the protected characteristics of all residents within the borough. For Businesses, this will affect both individuals as well as limited companies.

The proposal could potentially impact individuals in any protected characteristic group.

The following Equality Duty aims have been identified as being relevant:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act

Overall, the relevance assessment has concluded that this proposal has a relevance to equality of Moderate. The outcome of the relevance assessment is therefore that a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Equality Impact Assessment

The proposal in question does not intentionally target one or more protected characteristic groups.

The proposal does not intentionally exclude one or more protected characteristic groups.

It has been identified that the proposal does not have the potential to reduce inequality or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups.

Information about the protected characteristics of the intended audience and/or people who might be affected

In summary, the following information is available about the protected characteristic groups of the intended audience and / or people who might be affected by the proposal

Age

General information about the age profile of borough residents who are owner occupiers is available from the Census and ONS mid year estimates and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report, which is available on the Council's website at www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/equality.

Disability

General information about the disability characteristics is available from the Census and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Gender reassignment

General information about the representation of trans-people in the population generally is available from national and regional annual population survey data from the ONS, however is not currently available at a borough level. National and regional data is reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Marriage and civil partnership

General information about borough residents' partnership arrangements is available from the Census and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Pregnancy and maternity

General information about live births and lone parents in the borough is available from the Census and other ONS data sources and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Race or ethnicity

General information about the ethnicity of the borough's residents is available from the Census and the ONS Annual Population Survey and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

General information about the religion and/or beliefs of borough residents is available from the Census and the ONS Annual Population Survey and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Sex

General information about the gender profile of borough residents is available from the Census and ONS mid-year estimates and reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Sexual orientation

General information about the representation of trans-people in the population generally is available from national and regional annual population survey data from the ONS, however is not currently available at a borough level. National and regional data is reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report.

Other vulnerabilities

Information about the geographic spread of deprivation across the borough is available from the Index of Multiple Deprivation, which is reported in the Council's annual Borough Equality Information report. Specific information about those receiving Council Tax support is also held by the Council.

Consultation

The Council conducted a public consultation on its draft budget proposals between 21 November 2022 and 16 January 2023, inviting responses from community members and local organisations on the proposals.

Overall, 70% of respondents supported the proposal. No additional impacts of the proposal were identified by the responses to this consultation in relation to any protected characteristics or other vulnerabilities. The results of the consultation and the feedback provided are captured within an annex to the budget report.

Action to increase positive equality impacts or reduce negative equality impacts

The increase in fees for Summonses and Liability Orders will affect any residents that do not maintain payments of Council Tax or Business Rates. Before this stage, there is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date. There are measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability under Section 13(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Children and persons under the age of 18 are not legally liable for Council Tax or Business Rates and therefore not affected by this proposal.

Assessment of potential impact

This section summarises our assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on protected characteristic groups.

Age

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to age. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Disability

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to disability. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Gender reassignment

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to gender reassignment. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Marriage and civil partnership

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Pregnancy and maternity

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Race or ethnicity

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to race or ethnicity. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Religion or belief (or lack of)

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to religion or belief. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the

Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Sex

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to sex or gender. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Sexual orientation

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to sexual orientation. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Other vulnerabilities

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to other vulnerabilities. There is a recovery process in place to give people the opportunity to engage with the Council and to bring their payments up to date and measures in place to assist any residents who are financially vulnerable including the discretion to reduce Council Tax liability.

Monitoring and review

The Local Council Tax Support scheme is in place to support all residents who are on a low income and experiencing financial hardship. Residents that already receive support through this scheme will see their support increased in line with the increase. Additionally, reductions of Council Tax liability can also be made at the discretion of the Council under relevant legislation. The Council will monitor numbers of residents in receipt of Council Tax support to ensure their continued effectiveness.

The Summons stage is towards the end of the recovery process, and prior to this all residents and businesses receive bills and reminders where Council Tax and Business Rates remain unpaid, thereby giving all groups the opportunity to engage with the Council.

The Council will monitor the number of Summonses and Liability Orders granted, as well as the levels of residents receiving Council Tax Support.

FEES & CHARGES POLICY

Our Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) sets out our financial objectives to support delivery of the Corporate Plan. These plans remain challenging in the context of an uncertain economic future, cost of living pressures on residents, significantly reduced funding from Government and the move towards more locally-generated income streams.

We need to continue to move towards being financially self-sufficient. Maximising the potential for increased income will be integral to supporting delivery of the MTFP.

Seeking opportunities for income generation is a priority for the Council, alongside broader proposals for the trading and commercialisation of some services, and continuing to delivery high quality and essential services to residents.

This Fees & Charges Policy outlines the key principles to be considered in charging for Council services in a transparent and consistent manner.

Scope

This Policy applies to the setting and reviewing of all fees and charges for Council services, where the Council has discretion to apply a charge and discretion over the level of charge applied.

The Policy excludes:

- Charges that are determined by Central Government and external regulatory bodies
- Council Tax
- Business Rates
- Property rents
- Any charges where there are legal or contractual reasons for exclusion
- Any charges levied by Trading Companies or other third parties delivering services on behalf of the Council.

Application

Services should refer to this Policy when reviewing current charges or proposing new charges as part of the service & financial planning process for the forthcoming financial year, and for any other in-year consideration of service charging.

Understanding the relationship between cost and charges is vital when determining charges for services and support and advice should be sought from the Finance team when applying this Policy.

Aims and Objectives

The overarching aim of the Policy is to embed a financially sustainable approach to setting fees and charges. One of the requirements of financial sustainability is to ensure the Council thinks consistently in a business-like manner and clearly articulates the costs and benefits associated with the activities it carries out.

The objectives of the Fees & Charges Policy are:

- To promote efficiency and support the financial sustainability of our business in order to support the MTFP and deliver the Corporate Plan and its supporting strategies and programmes
- To minimise the draw on local taxpayers of discretionary services and promote fairness by fostering a culture where discretionary services are supported largely by users rather than the council tax payer
- To set a clear, flexible and equitable framework of standards and procedures for applying charges and fees to relevant Council services for both individuals and organisations. The level of charge will reflect the cost plus a return where this is permissible/appropriate.
- To meet the aim of being 'business like' through service areas understanding and reviewing the costs and charges for their service areas.

Charging and Trading Legislation

The legislation and case law that governs Councils' ability to charge and generate income is complex. Specific powers to charge for services are contained in a variety of local government statutes.

These include:

- Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970 – introduced powers for councils to enter into agreement with other Local Authorities and public bodies for the supply of goods and services. Any agreement may contain such terms as to payment or otherwise as the parties consider appropriate.
- Local Government Act 2003 – added further opportunities to the above. This act enables council's to trade in activities related to their functions on a commercial basis and make a profit, which may be reinvested in services, through a trading company.
- Localism Act 2011 – the General Power of Competence (GPC) introduced a power to allow councils to do anything that an individual may do. However, for the purposes of charging, this should not exceed the cost of provision of the service in question, as operating for a commercial purpose (i.e. to make a profit) must be done through a trading company.

Standard Charging Principles

Standard principles will be applied to all fees and charges (within the scope of this Policy) set by the Council. Where a service plans deviate from these principles, the basis and reason for variation will be clearly documented and approved in accordance with the Council's Constitution/scheme of delegation.

Services that have discretion over charging are encouraged to operate more commercially in order to maximise efficiency and reduce dependence on corporate funding support. The ability of services to operate in this way is dependent on services being able to set and amend their charges with a level of flexibility, including consideration of current market rates and demand for the service. The Policy will also make decision making simpler and more timely.

This Policy enables us to apply differential charging, discounting and alternative pricing structures in order to maximise commercial benefit and target service take-up. Individual service areas can vary charge rates on a case by case basis, taking into account relevant market rates and the need to maximise income and operate efficiently.

All fees and charges will:

- Demonstrate how they contribute to the achievement of corporate and service objectives
- Maximise potential income, to support financial sustainability, unless there is an explicit policy decision to subsidise a service
- Take account of the user base and the potential impact on users and service demand of changes to the service
- Be subject to equality impact assessment screening and consultation where appropriate
- Minimise the costs of collection
- Utilise an appropriate and justified charging model
- As a minimum be reviewed for increase annually from 1 April each year in line with Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation increases (rate published for the preceding July each year)
- Be updated either annually where appropriate following review, or cumulatively at least every 3 years where more frequent change would be disruptive to customers
- Be subject to a full review at least every 3-5 years.

Charging Models

When introducing or reviewing a charge the Council will follow one of three models:

Charge	Definition	Application
Full Cost recovery	<p>Full Cost Recovery is defined in this Policy as the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounts' (CIPFA's) 'total cost' model.</p> <p>When charging 'total cost' the Council is aiming to charge the user the full cost to the Council of providing that service. The 'total cost' to the Council is calculated following CIPFA methodology.</p> <p>The cost of the charge will include, in addition to the direct cost of providing the service, costs such as fair and appropriate proportion of the cost of premises, central services and other overheads</p>	<p>This is the Council's 'default' charging principle.</p>
Direct Cost Plus	<p>As a minimum the Council would recover the direct cost of providing the service plus wherever possible, a contribution to overheads.</p> <p>The level of overhead contribution is an operational decision, and will be dependent upon the particular circumstances and objectives.</p>	<p>This allows flexible pricing decisions to take account of external market conditions. For instance, there are circumstances where setting charges at a level more than full cost recovery may be appropriate (e.g. when trading with other local authorities or public bodies the Council is not limited in the amounts it can charge).</p> <p>This charging model also allows charges to be set below full cost recovery to achieve a particular objective – for example entering into a new market or attracting new business. However, in line with the Standard Charging Principles, the aim will always be to recover the full cost of a service over time.</p>
Subsidised	<p>A subsidised charge requires the Council to contribute to the direct cost of the service. Where the Council is not covering the direct costs of the service, it will require a contribution from the Council. All subsidies will be subject to the approval of the Executive.</p>	<p>This model provides the Council with the option to provide a service with full or partial subsidy. The level of subsidy will be determined by reference to the nature of the service and the rationale for any subsidy for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing a public good • encouraging service take up • the user group's ability to pay. <p>The financial impact of subsidy decisions on the budget will be identified both individually and collectively, and actively managed and reviewed.</p>

Authority to Set and Vary Charges

The decision on charging levels will be based on the relevant charging method: full cost recovery, direct cost plus or subsidised.

All charging decisions must be made in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Budget and Policy Framework, Scheme of Delegation and Financial Procedure Rules) and be able to demonstrate consistency with our strategic priorities, policies and statutory obligations.

The decision to vary charges for existing chargeable services which are not subsidised is an operational decision, which will be taken by the appropriate Director or Head of Service in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer.

Publication of Fees and Charges

The schedule of established Council fees and charges will be published on an annual basis, accompanying the Council's annual budget report. This information will also be made available on the Council's website.

Where it is necessary to change fees or charges during the year, these changes may not be reflected in the published annual schedule, but will be clear to service users at the point of use.

Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed periodically, taking into account developing Council policies and priorities and any changes in legislation.

January 2023

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SIGNED OFF BY	Chief Finance Officer
AUTHOR	Jacque Aboagye, Finance Manager
TELEPHONE	
EMAIL	Jacqueline.aboagye@reigate-banstead.gov.uk
TO	Executive Council
DATE	Thursday, 26 January 2023 Thursday, 9 February 2023
EXECUTIVE MEMBER	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance

KEY DECISION REQUIRED	Y
WARDS AFFECTED	(All Wards);

SUBJECT	Council Tax 2023/2024
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RECOMMENDATIONS	
<p>(i) It be noted that on 1 December 2022 the Council calculated:</p> <p>a) the Council Tax base 2023/24 for the whole Council as 63,495.31 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the “Act”)] and,</p> <p>b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horley Town Council 10,991.72 • Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council 1,443.97 <p>The ‘tax base’ is the number of Band D equivalent dwellings in a local authority area.</p> <p>Detailed calculations of the Council Tax are set out in Annexes 1, 2 & 3.</p> <p>(ii) Calculate that the Council Tax requirements for the Council’s own purposes for 2023/24 (excluding Parish precepts) is £15,855,416</p> <p>(iii) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2023/24 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:</p>	

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- a) **£70,033,431** – being the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils
- b) **£53,610,084** – being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3) of the Act.
- c) **£16,423,347** – being the amount which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year (item R in the formula in Section 32(4) of the Act).
- d) **£258.65** – being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish Precepts).
- e) **£567,931** - being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached Appendix).
- f) **£249.71** - being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.
- g) Horley Town Council **£297.47**
Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council **£279.43**

Being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 3(f) above the amounts of the special items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

- (iv) It be noted that the figures in the attached Appendix being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3(f) and 3(g) above by the number which, in the proportions set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.
- (v) Having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts 1 to 5, above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Act, hereby sets the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2023/24 for each of the categories of dwellings shown in Annex 3.
- (vi) It be noted that for the year 2023/24 Surrey County Council and Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner have not yet stated amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown in Appendix 2.

- (vii) Authorise the Chief Finance Officer to make any amendments to the Council Tax demands as might prove necessary as the result of changes to the estimated demands issued by preceptors on the Council's Collection Fund.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The *Local Government Finance Act 1992* sets out the requirement for local authorities to set a budget for the next financial year. This report provides the information to fulfil that requirement. Under the Constitution the Executive considers a proposed budget and Council Tax, before then making a recommendation on the appropriate level of Council Tax to full Council. Following consideration, Council may then authorise the budget and Council Tax.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report will enable this Council to collect Council Tax for 2023/24 on behalf of itself and its precepting bodies.

At the time of writing the final precepts from Surrey County Council and Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner are not finalised. They are holding their budget setting meetings in early February. All information relating to the precepts presented in this report is based on the latest available estimates, for illustrative purposes, and may therefore be subject to change.

Recommendations 1-7 are subject to approval by the Council.

STATUTORY POWERS

1. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (the Act) sets out the requirement for local authorities to set a budget for the next financial year. The full Council of the authority is formally required to approve the budget and for Council Tax to be levied. Under the Council's Constitution the Executive considers a proposed budget and Council Tax, in order to make a recommendation on the appropriate level of Council Tax to the full Council.

BACKGROUND

2. Reigate & Banstead Borough Council, in common with other District and Borough Councils, acts as a Council Tax collection agent for other organisations, known as "preceptors", on the Council's Collection Fund. Reigate & Banstead's preceptors are Surrey County Council, Surrey Police, Horley Town Council and Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council. The majority of Council Tax paid by residents of the borough is collected on behalf of these precepting authorities.

KEY INFORMATION

3. The purpose of this report is to propose the technical recommendations which Council will need in order to comply with the Act and set a legally compliant budget.

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4. Annex 1 sets out, in accordance with the legislation, the calculation of the Borough's and the Parish/Town Councils' basic amounts of tax. That is, the taxes for a Band D property.
5. The calculations below have been based on the assumption that the Executive will recommend a budget at that level for acceptance by Council. Any changes by the Executive will, of course, be incorporated into the recommendation to Council in February.
6. Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council set their budget on 12 December 2022 based upon an amount of £29.72 for a Band D dwelling which is the same charge as 2022/23 for a Band D dwelling.
7. Horley Town Council set their budget on 6 December 2022 based upon an amount of £47.76 for a Band D dwelling which is an increase of £4.59 for a Band D dwelling.
8. Reigate and Banstead Borough Council's proposed annual Band D Council Tax rates are as follows:
 - £249.71 (or £4.80 per week) in non-parish areas (i.e., the Borough's Council Tax)
 - £297.47 (or £5.72 per week) in the Horley Town Council area
 - £279.43 (or £5.37 per week) in the Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council area.
9. The Council has previously decided to treat all its expenditure as a general expense on the whole of the Borough and not to designate any special expense areas (for example, for parish/town Council areas) (minute no. 5(i)(5), page 623 1993/94 refers). All residents therefore pay the same basic amount for borough services for a Band D property, subject to statutory exemptions, reliefs and discounts.
10. Surrey County Council is due to set its budget on 7 February 2023. For the purposes of this report a 4.99% increase in their council tax rate has been assumed. This equates to a Band D Council Tax of £1,710.69 The calculations in Tables 1, 2 and 3 are illustrative only, in order to show what the Band D Council Tax might look like. The Executive is recommended to authorise the Chief Finance Officer to make such amendments as are necessary to this report in order to reflect the final demand from the County Council in the report to Council on 9 February 2023.
11. Surrey Police & Crime Commissioner is due to set its budget on 3 February 2023. For the purposes of this report a £10.00 increase in their council tax rate has been assumed. This equates to a Band D Council Tax of £305.57. The calculations in Tables 1, 2 and 3 are illustrative only, in order to show what the Band D Council Tax might look like. The Executive is recommended to authorise the Chief Finance Officer to make such amendments as are necessary to this report in order to reflect the final demand from the Surrey Police in the budget report to Council on 9 February 2023.
12. The 2023/24 Council Tax for each area of the Borough is as detailed in Annexes 1, 2 and 3.

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Table 1: Analysis of Council Tax by Preceptor				
Authority	£000	% share		
Surrey County Council ¹	108,620,800	75.20%		
Surrey Police & Crime Commissioner ¹	19,402,265	13.43%		
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	15,855,416	10.98%		
Horley Town Council	524,965	0.36%		
Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council	42,915	0.03%		
	144,446,361	100.00%		

Table 2: Analysis of Council Tax Changes by Preceptor				
Authority	2022/23 Band D £	2023/24 Band D £	Increase	
			£	%
Surrey County Council ¹	1,629.39	1,710.69	81.30	4.99
Surrey Police & Crime Commissioner ¹	295.57	305.57	10.00	3.38
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	242.46	249.71	7.25	2.99
Horley Town Council	43.17	47.76	4.59	10.63
Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council	29.72	29.72	0.00	0.00
	2,240.31	2,343.45	103.14	4.6%

Table 3 Amount payable Band D			
Area	Borough and Parish Services £	County and Police Services £	Total Payable at Band D £
Horley Town Council	297.47	2,016.26	2,313.73
Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council	279.43	2,016.26	2,295.69
Rest of Borough	249.71	2,016.26	2,265.97

OPTIONS

13. The 2023/24 budget is based on a recommended Council Tax rise of £7.25 (2.99%) increase. A decision to adopt a different council tax will require revision of the budget proposals. The budget has to be approved by Council by March 2023.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

14. The legal implications of this report are fully covered in the statutory powers section.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

15. The financial implications of this report are set out in the report.

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EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS
16. These are covered in the Budget 2023/24 report elsewhere on the agenda
COMMUNICATION IMPLICATIONS
17. These are covered in the Budget 2023/24 report elsewhere on the agenda
RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS
18. These are covered in the Budget 2023/24 report elsewhere on the agenda
CONSULTATION
19. The approach to consultation is covered in the Budget 2023/24 report elsewhere on the agenda
POLICY FRAMEWORK
20. Approval of the Budget and determination of the Council Tax is a function of full Council under the Council's constitution (Article 4.12)
BACKGROUND PAPERS
<i>Council Tax Base 2023/24, report to Council, 1 December 2022</i> <i>Budget 2023/24, Executive, 26 January 2023</i>

COUNCIL TAX 2023/24

REIGATE AND BANSTEAD & PARISH/TOWN COUNCILS - BASIC AMOUNTS OF TAX

	RBBC average including parishes	RBBC excluding parishes	Horley Town Council area	Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council area
Tax base	63,495.31	63,495.31	10,991.72	1,443.97
	£	£	£	£
Gross expenditure (Borough)	67,350,000	67,350,000	67,350,000	67,350,000
Income (Borough)	(44,156,000)	(44,156,000)	(44,156,000)	(44,156,000)
	<u>23,194,000</u>	<u>23,194,000</u>	<u>23,194,000</u>	<u>23,194,000</u>
Contribution from other Reserves	(977,000)	(977,000)	(977,000)	(977,000)
Contribution from General Fund	0	0	0	0
Contribution to Specific Earmarked Re Balancing figure	686,000	686,000	686,000	686,000
NET BOROUGH BUDGET	<u>22,903,000</u>	<u>22,903,000</u>	<u>22,903,000</u>	<u>22,903,000</u>
Horley TC precept	525,016	0	525,016	0
Salfords & Sidlow PC precept	42,915	0	0	42,915
NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT	<u>23,470,931</u>	<u>22,903,000</u>	<u>23,428,016</u>	<u>22,945,915</u>
Business Rates Relief Grants				
Business Rates (NNDR)	(3,993,746)	(3,993,746)	(3,993,746)	(3,993,746)
Lower Tier Services Grant	0	0	0	0
Services Grant	(93,000)	(93,000)	(93,000)	(93,000)
Council Tax Surplus	(437,838)	(437,838)	(437,838)	(437,838)
Homelessness Prevention	(686,000)	(686,000)	(686,000)	(686,000)
New Homes Bonus	(1,034,000)	(1,034,000)	(1,034,000)	(1,034,000)
Minimum Funding Grant	(803,000)	(803,000)	(803,000)	(803,000)
NNDR & NON SPECIFIC GRANT	<u>(7,047,584)</u>	<u>(7,047,584)</u>	<u>(7,047,584)</u>	<u>(7,047,584)</u>
COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT	<u>16,423,347</u>	<u>15,855,416</u>	<u>16,380,432</u>	<u>15,898,331</u>
BAND D COUNCIL TAX	<u>258.65</u>	<u>249.71</u>	<u>297.47</u>	<u>279.43</u>

COUNCIL TAX 2023/24

SETTING OF TOTAL COUNCIL TAX (INCLUDING BOROUGH & ALL PRECEPTING AUTHORITIES) - BASIC AMOUNT (BAND D)

AUTHORITY	AREA		
	Reigate & Banstead	Horley TC	Salfords & Sidlow PC
	£	£	£
Reigate & Banstead ⁽¹⁾	249.71	297.47	279.43
Surrey County Council ⁽²⁾	1,710.69	1,710.69	1,710.69
Surrey Police ⁽²⁾	305.57	305.57	305.57
TOTAL	2,265.97	2,313.73	2,295.69

(1) Including Parish and Town Council where appropriate

(2) Draft figures: the bodies are not required to have set their Council Tax levels yet.

COUNCIL TAX 2023/24

VALUATION BANDS

COUNCIL AREA	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
1. AMOUNTS OF TAX FOR REIGATE AND BANSTEAD BOROUGH COUNCIL, HORLEY TOWN COUNCIL AND SALFORDS AND SIDLOW PARISH COUNCIL								
Horley Town Council area	198.31	231.37	264.42	297.47	363.57	429.68	495.78	594.94
Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council area	186.29	217.33	248.38	279.43	341.53	403.62	465.72	558.86
Rest of Borough	166.47	194.22	221.96	249.71	305.20	360.69	416.18	499.42
2. AMOUNTS OF TAX FOR SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL AND SURREY POLICE								
Surrey County Council precept	1,140.46	1,330.54	1,520.61	1,710.69	2,090.84	2,471.00	2,851.15	3,421.38
Surrey Police precept	203.71	237.67	271.62	305.57	373.47	441.38	509.28	611.14
3. TOTAL AMOUNTS OF COUNCIL TAX 2023/24								
Horley Town Council area	1,542.48	1,799.58	2,056.65	2,313.73	2,827.88	3,342.06	3,856.21	4,627.46
Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council area	1,530.46	1,785.54	2,040.61	2,295.69	2,805.84	3,316.00	3,826.15	4,591.38
Rest of Borough	1,510.64	1,762.43	2,014.19	2,265.97	2,769.51	3,273.07	3,776.61	4,531.94

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Signed off by	Chief Executive
Author	Tara O'Hara, Housing Register and Prevention Team Leader
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Email	Tara.OHara@reigate-banstead.gov.uk
To	Executive
Date	Thursday, 15 December 2022
Executive Member	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Support

Key Decision Required	N
Wards Affected	(All Wards);

Subject	Social Housing Downsizing Support Scheme
----------------	--

Recommendations

- (i) **Approval to ringfence £68,240 from the Homelessness Prevention Grant to proceed with a pilot social housing downsizing support scheme.**
- (ii) **The Head of Housing be authorised, in consultation with the:**
 - **Chief Finance Officer**
 - **Strategic Head of Legal & Governance**
 - **Executive Member for Housing & Support**
 - **Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance & Governance**
 - a) **To continue with the scheme if successful after the 12-month pilot period and continue to fund from the annual Homeless Prevention Grant subject to the Grant being available.**

Reasons for Recommendations

This scheme will enable the Council to assist under-occupying social tenants to downsize into more affordable properties. Large properties are in urgent demand and each void will be used to house homeless households, thereby releasing temporary accommodation and allowing movement out of expensive nightly paid emergency accommodation.

Executive Summary

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A shortage of family sized social housing is creating a costly backlog in temporary and emergency accommodation, hampering the Council in discharging its homelessness duties and leading to long waiting times for applicants on the housing register.

As pressures on both the homelessness system and housing register increase, this situation is set to deteriorate further and additional targeted intervention is required.

Many existing homes in this category are currently under occupied, presenting an opportunity to reallocate them through downsizing.

The Housing Team is seeking approval to conduct a 12-month pilot scheme to enable 10 such occupants to downsize into smaller social rented homes, benefitting them and also the homeless households the released properties will subsequently be allocated to.

This workstream requires a budget of £68,240 to be ringfenced from the Homeless Prevention Grant and delivers on Action 10 of the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2022-2027: Investigate ways to assist and / or incentivise social housing tenants under occupying larger family homes to downsize.

Executive has authority to approve the above recommendations.

Statutory Powers

1. In accordance with homelessness legislation, Part 7 Housing Act 1996 (as amended), the Council has a statutory duty to provide suitable accommodation to homeless households whose homeless application is accepted. Housing is also required to provide households with emergency accommodation whilst their application is investigated and, if accepted, until they are housed.
2. Additionally, local housing authorities are required to set up and maintain an allocations scheme under Part 6 of the same Act. Section 20 of the statutory guidance 'Providing social housing for local people' (2013), is clear that housing authorities should assist in tackling under-occupation, for example allowing tenants to move if they wish to downsize to a smaller social home.

Background

3. The combined impact of rising goods and energy prices, inflation and cost of living pressures following the Covid-19 pandemic and the invasion of Ukraine is far-reaching. This has led to increased demand on the homelessness and housing allocation systems.
4. The housing team recorded 326 homeless approaches in quarter 1 of this financial year, rising to 370 in quarter 2. Of these, 145 were related to affordability in quarter 1, and 183 in quarter 2.
5. Raven Housing Trust's income team report that an increasing number of tenants are falling into rent arrears with many struggling to pay even a minimum amount towards them in a repayment plan.

6. The number of households in nightly paid emergency accommodation has risen to above 40 and shows no sign of reducing. The number of households accepted onto the housing register is rising. During the first half of this financial year an average of 46 applicants per month were accepted onto the waiting list, whilst the average number of allocations to social housing has been 23 each month. The list will continue to grow and waiting times increase.
7. There is a shortage of larger social rented family accommodation in particular, with over 100 such homes required just to discharge the Council's current homelessness duties.
8. Delivering a project to facilitate under occupying social housing tenants to downsize will meet a Homeless Strategy objective to assist the Council to manage the costs of using emergency accommodation. Facilitating under-occupiers in social housing to downsize will not only benefit them financially, it will also release much needed family sized accommodation for homeless households in temporary accommodation, and in doing so reduce the need for nightly paid emergency accommodation. The net cost to the Council for a family in EA ranges from £175.39 to £490.39 per week.

Key Information

Register waiting times and numbers of under occupiers

9. Demand for family sized (2 bedroom plus) social housing within the borough is extremely high. Almost 700 households (of the over 1200 on the register) are waiting for this accommodation in register bands A-D (waiting list & transfer list combined), and over 100 further such properties are required in order to discharge the main homelessness duty owed to those Band H homeless clients currently in temporary accommodation.

	Bands A-D	Band H
Requiring 2 bedrooms	400	50
Requiring 3+ bedrooms	300	50
Total	700	100

10. Supply of these larger properties, however, is very limited. During the financial year 2022-23 Housing have so far received just over 100 for allocation from registered providers (80 x 2 bedroom and 20 x 3+ bedrooms). This number includes the 16 x 2-bedroom properties let at Wheatley Court.
11. This shortage leads to several issues. Without sufficient suitable voids in the permanent stock to move households out of temporary accommodation, a blockage is created and the number of nightly paid emergency bed and breakfast accommodation placements rises, at significant cost to the Council. This in turn contributes to a shortage of local emergency accommodation options for newly homeless households, meaning vulnerable people must sometimes be placed further afield, away from friends, family and other support networks.

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12. It also means that average waiting times are long for those on the register, leaving many households in crowded or otherwise unsuitable accommodation. Latest waiting list data shows the following approximate waiting times (figures are years / excludes transfer list and sheltered lets):

	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band H
Requiring 2 bedrooms	1.5	1	3	4	2.5
Requiring 3 bedrooms	1.5	1.5	5	n/a	4

13. Unfortunately our expectation is that these waiting times will increase, for a variety of reasons. Household finances are being severely stretched by the current cost of living crisis. Availability in the private rental market is diminishing as many landlords choose to sell, either due to higher taxes, the cost of living or concerns around future legislative changes. Market rents are increasing with no corresponding raise in benefit payments, rendering this sector unaffordable for many. There may also be a reduction in social housing stock as registered providers work towards net zero carbon targets. These and other factors are likely to drive an increase in homelessness levels as well as general applications to the housing register, leading to longer waiting times for all.
14. Critically, many existing larger social homes are under occupied by residents with lifetime tenancies. Many have lived in their homes for long periods of time, perhaps raising families there. As a result of their under-occupation, they may face higher than necessary rents and household bills. Some are also affected by the under-occupancy charge or 'bedroom tax'. Downsizing to a smaller social rented property could therefore deliver significant benefits to them as individuals.
15. Some under occupiers are looking to downsize and have registered with the Council to do so. Downsizers are awarded high priority band B on the transfer list, reflecting the importance to us of obtaining these larger homes. There are currently 45 active applications in this category (21 in 2 bedroom homes, 16 x 3 bed, 3 x 4 bed, 5 x to be confirmed). Raven Housing Trust operate a similar list which provides details of more than 50 of their own tenants who have registered their interest in downsizing (only 7 of the 45 on our own list are duplicated on the Raven document). Looking more broadly, Raven have approximately 750 3 bedroom or larger homes that are occupied by 3 people or less (over 80% of these contain no children under age 16). They also have over 1,000 2-bedroom properties with only 1 or 2 occupants (over 75% of these contain no children under age 16). Other potential downsizers may be identified via external agencies such as the CAB and Health partners.
16. Housing therefore understands the need for these large social homes and there are households who could or are potentially willing to vacate them. To date, the actual downsizing rate has been frustratingly low, with little resource available to invest in unpicking and improving this. Since June 2021 only 2 households identified as downsizers on the Council's transfer list have successfully downsized.

Proposed approach

17. Given the pressures described above, the Housing Team believes tackling this problem in earnest should now be prioritised. A 12-month pilot scheme with the aim of releasing 10 larger social rented properties through downsizing is proposed. These properties will be allocated to Band H homeless households, currently 'blocking' temporary accommodation. Undertaking the pilot against the background of the cost of living crisis may work to our advantage by making a cost-saving move particularly attractive to under occupiers.
18. Housing have recently conducted in-depth qualitative telephone interviews amongst approximately 20 potential downsizers from our transfer list. This has enabled us to understand their real intentions, motivators and the barriers which have prevented them from moving to date. Other local authority housing teams in Surrey have also been consulted on their experience and work in this area.
19. This preparatory research and our inherent knowledge of our housing register applicants has enabled us to develop a tailored downsizing offer which Housing believe will give us the maximum chance of influencing potential downsizers to accept a nomination to a smaller property. Whilst the team are confident that some may be interested, it is important to acknowledge that others will remain unswayed and choose to stay in their homes.
20. The offer constitutes the following, where required:
 - a packing and removals service which includes disposal of unwanted items, furniture disassembly and reassembly (if necessary to facilitate the move this service will be gifted)
 - difficulty organising a move was one of the main barriers to downsizing identified in our research
 - support of a personal assistant, who will be responsible for ensuring that moves go smoothly for residents by, for example, liaising with removers, setting up utilities and assisting with benefit claims
 - the idea of an experienced and friendly person in authority supervising the move was well received by prospective downsizers in our research and is likely to help convince some to progress their moving plans
 - access to 'DIY' type assistance in the new home, for tasks such as putting up shelves or connecting appliances (proposed gifted limit is 5 hours over the initial 3 months)
 - this again tested well in research
 - a one off 'home setup payment' intended to be spent on the setting up of the new home. This will be £1000 per bedroom released, up to a maximum of £3000
 - the cost of setting up a home was a clear barrier in our research. Properties are generally let without carpets and curtains, with

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replacement furniture often required. This payment is intended to ease this financial burden for low-income households.

21. This is the level of support the Housing Team believes will be required to achieve our downsizing pilot objectives.

Resources

22. The project will require the recruitment of a new post on a 12-month fixed term, part-time (18h/pw) basis. The new 'Underoccupancy Transfer Officer' will be responsible for delivering the pilot, including:
 - identifying potential downsizers and gaining their trust, explaining to them the realities of social housing availability and the likely need to compromise versus expectation
 - creating necessary explanatory communications materials and general documentation
 - matching downsizers to available properties
 - organizing/supervising moves in their capacity as 'personal assistant' to the resident
 - establishing relationships with external suppliers such as removals companies and relevant tradespersons
 - contributing to the development of any future downsizing scheme

Policy considerations

23. Our intention is to make 'direct lets' of suitable smaller social rent properties to downsizers, rather than advertise in the usual way via HomeChoice. Section 9.4 of the housing register & allocations policy permits this discretion: "The Council retains the right to exercise its discretion in exceptional circumstances, where in the Council's view a combination of circumstances requires a direct let or a sensitive let or a property to be withdrawn from advertising or where a direct let will bring a household's prevention or relief duty to an end. A record of the decision and reasons for exercising the discretion will be kept on file."

Pilot evaluation

24. Progress against the pilot objectives will be monitored throughout the 12-month period. The overall success of the scheme will be assessed in terms of the number of households that downsize and by examining take up of different elements of the offer to understand the most effective support. Customer feedback will be gathered and the impact on timescales for homeless households will be analysed. If successful, the Housing Team would continue with the scheme to continue to release larger properties subject to the continued availability of the Homelessness Prevention Grant.

Options

25. Option 1 (recommended) – Proceed with the pilot, assist downsizers to move and nominate homeless families in temporary accommodation to these homes, unblocking temporary accommodation and saving on emergency accommodation costs.
26. Option 2 – do not proceed with the pilot, continue to wait for larger homes to become available in the usual way whilst emergency accommodation costs and waiting times increase.

Legal Implications

27. Homes obtained will be used for homeless applicants in the discharge of the Council's homeless duties under the Housing Act 1996 as amended.
28. The pilot aims also reflect adherence and compliance to the requirements under The Homelessness Act 2002 requiring local housing authorities to take strategic responsibility for tackling and preventing homelessness.

Financial Implications

29. The budget required for the pilot is £68,240. This comprises the salary costs for the additional post plus the cost of moving up to 10 downsizers in line with the proposed package of assistance, including home setup payments.
30. It is proposed that the pilot is funded from the annual Homeless Prevention Grant, which is ringfenced to prevent homelessness, therefore no revenue budget growth is required.
31. Each void property created by the scheme will be offered to a homeless household in temporary accommodation, freeing up a vacancy to move a household out of nightly paid emergency accommodation.

Equalities Implications

32. The Equalities Impact Assessment undertaken in connection with this pilot did not identify any potential negative impact for any of the protected characteristic groups.
33. In terms of positive impact, any household who moves home as a result of this initiative could be deemed vulnerable by virtue of their reliance on social housing or the homelessness system. They will all experience improved living circumstances in their new homes. Some, such as older, pregnant or disabled people, may particularly benefit if they can be matched to more suitable homes. They may also gain in particular from the assistance offered with removals and setting up the new home.

Communication Implications

34. The Communications Team is aware of the scheme and Housing will work with them to develop a communications plan and create explanatory communications materials and scheme documentation to communicate with potential downsizers and other target audiences identified.

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Environmental Sustainability Implications

35. The pilot scheme proposed relates to occupancy of properties and therefore does not include any substantive work to properties to improve their energy efficiency and reduce domestic carbon emissions, however the proposed assistance element could support residents to make small scale changes to their new home to improve its energy efficiency or reduce energy usage.
36. The scheme will however lead to a reduction in the individual carbon footprints (and energy bills) of individuals who do downsize, via the reduction in unnecessary heating of a larger underoccupied home.

Risk Management Considerations

37. Despite the advantages of downsizing to eligible households, it is possible that some barriers may prove too difficult to overcome and limit our ability to obtain larger properties in some cases. Examples include where applicants are interested only in a very specific location or type of property, or where a move would necessitate rehoming pets. The potential 'pool' of downsizers is sufficient to mitigate this risk.
38. Costs for removals and assistance from tradespeople were obtained during summer 2022 and may have risen/rise during the interim period. The proposed budget allows for 10 x payments of the maximum home setup payment based on each downsizer releasing 3 bedrooms; realistically however a mix of bedroom numbers is more likely to occur. This anticipated saving could therefore be used to accommodate any increase in costs.
39. The success of the pilot will be largely dependent on attracting and retaining the right person for the role. The Housing Team will carefully construct the employment pack, advertise widely, and provide as much relevant training and support as possible to the staff member.

Consultation

40. Executive Members have been consulted and support the proposals.

Policy Framework

41. This project helps to meet Corporate Plan objectives to make the borough a great place to live, work in, do business in and visit. Specifically, it supports the People theme and Housing objective to continue to secure accommodation through the social housing sector to prevent homelessness.
42. The Homeless Strategy Action Plan, part of the Council's Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2022–2027: Action 10 specifies that Housing will 'Investigate ways to assist and / or incentivise social housing tenants under occupying larger family homes to downsize'.

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Background Papers
None.

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Signed off by	Director of People
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To	Executive
Date	Thursday, 26 January 2023
Executive Member	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Support

Key Decision Required	Y
Wards Affected	(All Wards);

Subject	Council's Social Landlord Functions - Supporting Policies
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Recommendations

- (i) That the Rent Policy at Annex 1 be approved and the Executive authorise the Head of Housing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Support to make any necessary minor amendments of the Rent Policy prior to publication.
- (ii) That the Executive approve a 2.3% rent increase for the Council's social housing in 2023-24.
- (iii) That the Compensation Policy at Annex 2 be approved and the Executive authorise the Head of Housing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Support to make any necessary minor amendments of the Compensation Policy prior to publication
- (iv) That the Decant Policy at Annex 3 be approved and the Executive authorise the Head of Housing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Support to make any necessary minor amendments of the Decant Policy prior to publication.

Reasons for Recommendations

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To publish policies on the Council's approach to rent setting, to increase rents as permitted by the Regulator of Social Housing, to publish policies to underpin to the Council's response to compensation claims and managing the decant of tenants to support the Council's new landlord functions.

Executive Summary

This report sets out policies to support the Council's social landlord functions. The Council is now a registered social housing provider and must adhere to a number of standards prescribed by the Regulator of Social Housing. The three policies set out in this report support aspects of these new responsibilities.

The Rent Policy applies to Council owned properties and explains the Council's approach to rent setting. It explains the Council will review rents annually and proposes a 2.3% rent increase for 2023-24.

The Compensation Policy explains the Council's approach to managing discretionary and compulsory compensation claims made by tenants.

The Decant Policy is applicable in circumstances where the Council may need secure or introductory tenants to vacate their permanent home temporarily or permanently.

Collectively the policies aim to provide transparency and certainty to our customers on our approach to these matters.

Executive has authority to approve the above recommendations

Statutory Powers

1. The Housing Act 1985 gives landlords the power to set and increase rents on an annual basis. The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 defines 'low cost rental' accommodation to which the government's policy statement on rents for social (2019) housing applies.
2. The Housing Act 1985 sets out tenant's right to have repairs carried out and the circumstances in which secure tenants can be paid compensation for improvements. The Planning and Compensation Act 1991, the Land Compensation Act 1973 and the Home Loss Regulations 2008 as amended, underpin statutory compensation for home loss and disturbance payments.

Background

3. In March 2021 as a prerequisite of a funding application from government funding programme known as the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP), the Council became a registered social housing provider. Consequently, the Council must comply with the Regulator of Social Housing (RoSH) Rent Standard Regulatory Guidance, and the four Consumer Standards which comprise the Home Standard, Tenancy Standard, Neighbourhood and Community Standard and Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.

4. The Council currently owns and directly manages 11 self-contained properties and a ten room shared facility property all used exclusively as accommodation for homeless households. In addition, the Council owns 32 homes in Redhill let on introductory or secure tenancies at affordable rents that are managed by a registered provider on the Council's behalf. All homes are subject to the Rent Standard and Consumer Standards. All future affordable homes acquired or developed by the Council will also be subject to these standards.
5. A number of policies are being produced to support the Council's responsibilities as a registered housing provider. Some policies such as the Rent Policy apply to all occupiers of the Council's social housing stock, other policies are only relevant to the Council's secure tenants.

Key Information

Rent Policy

6. The Housing Team has worked with an external consultant to review rent setting in Council owned accommodation for homeless households and to develop a rent policy to meet the requirements of the government's *Policy Statement on rents for social housing (2019)*. Where appropriate, social rents are being reviewed as properties are relet. The Council's Rent Policy sets out the legislative and regulatory framework which governs rent setting for social housing and the Council's approach to rents. The policy also explains how social rents are calculated and charged, how affordable rents are set and the Council's approach to service charges.
7. As the Rent Policy explains, the Council can consider the use of rent flexibilities for specific reasons for specific homes. Rent flexibilities enable the Council to set social rents at up to 5 percent above the formula rent for general needs homes and up to 10% for supported accommodation. Use of this flexibility must be based on a clear rationale and the possible circumstances in which they can be applied are outlined in the Rent Statement. At this current time, the 10 percent supported rent flexibility has been applied to the four single person homes delivered through Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme to reflect the more intensive management provided for these tenancies. No other rent flexibilities have been applied to properties.

Annual rent increase

8. The government's Policy Statement on Rents and the RoSH Rent Standard are clear that social housing providers can apply an annual rent increase once in any year. The government Policy Statement prescribes that social housing providers should not increase rents from 2020-21 until at least 2024-25 by more than September CPI rate +1% annually. On current inflation rises, this equates to an 11.1% rise in rents in 2023-24. Given the current economic uncertainty, the government consulted on alternatives for the annual rent increase in 2022. In the Autumn Statement 2022, the government limited the rent increase for people in social housing to a maximum of 7% for 2023-24 only.
9. Some Social rent homes are subject to service charges these are connected to the provision of communal services. Service charges are not subject to the government *Policy on rents for social housing*, but the Policy does recommend that they reflect the service being provided and are limited to CPI plus 1 percent. Service charges are reviewed annually to reflect costs with increases minimised.

Agenda Item 7

10. Service charges for the Council's Affordable rent properties are included within the assessment of the affordable rent. Affordable rents are based on gross market rent, which is inclusive of service charges, and the total affordable rent must not exceed 80% of gross market rent. The affordable rent for the Redhill housing scheme is set in accordance with local housing allowance rates in line with the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document and to ensure the scheme secured Homes England capital grant funding.
11. Households moved into the Council's Redhill housing scheme over a three week period at the end of November through to the beginning of December 2022 and will have resided in their homes for four months before the application of a rent increase. It is proposed that a 2.3% rent increase is made for 2023-24 across all the Council's accommodation.

Compensation Policy

12. Secure and introductory tenants can claim compensation in certain circumstances. The Compensation Policy sets out a fair and transparent approach to the way compensation claims are managed. It explains there are two types of compensation. Depending on the circumstances compensation may be compulsory or discretionary. In terms of compulsory claims, examples include cases where tenants have to be decanted temporarily or permanently to enable repairs or refurbishment or redevelopment to take place, claims for home loss payments if they have to permanently move out of their home, and or a disturbance payment to cover reasonable expenses of moving to a new permanent home and where tenants claim for home improvements when they end their tenancy. All compulsory compensation claims are subject to government regulations.
13. The Council is not subject to the compulsory compensation scheme regarding the 'right to repair' and 'qualifying repairs' set out in legislation. This scheme is triggered when a landlord has 100 secure tenants, the Council has fewer than 32 secure tenancies.
14. In recognition of the other circumstances that may arise outside of the compulsory claims schemes, the Council's Compensation Policy does permit the Council to offer a discretionary payment to customers to resolve a complaint in certain circumstances on a case by case basis.

Decant Policy

15. It is advisable for the Council to have a clear policy on the process for agreeing when the decant of a secure or introductory tenant is necessary and how the process will be managed. The Decant Policy covers circumstances when it is necessary for a tenant to vacate their permanent home temporarily to enable refurbishment or repairs to be carried out or permanently. The Policy gives examples when this may be necessary and the financial compensation that may be made available. It does not apply to households placed in emergency or temporary accommodation under the Council's homelessness powers or duties.

Agenda Item 7

16. In summary the Decant Policy explains tenants will be consulted in the event of a decant, kept informed through the process, resident's needs will be considered as far as possible, and the Council will comply with legislation when making home loss and disturbance payments. It explains the options for alternative temporary accommodation depending on the length of time it is required and its suitability, the situation with rents and service charges whilst staying in alternative temporary accommodation, when and what is covered by disturbance payments, and finally returning home.
17. It provides clear guidance for the Council's tenants facing this situation and for all staff involved in the process of decanting. It helps all parties to understand the responsibilities and statutory requirements and processes.

Options

18. Recommendation (i): That the Executive approve the Rent Policy.
 - a) Option 1: Approve the policy and authorisation for any amendments prior to publication. This option is recommended to provide clarity to tenants on the Council's approach to rent setting, service charges and rent increases.
 - b) Option 2: Not approve the Rent Policy. This would result in a lack of clarity and uncertainty for tenants on the Council's position on rent setting and charges.
19. Recommendation (ii): That the Executive approve a 2.3% rent increase in 2023-24.
 - a) Option 1: Approve the 2.3% rent increase proposed for 2023-24. This is the recommended option because it is supported by existing budgets to operate the Council's accommodation.
 - b) Option 2: Not approve the 2.3% rent increase in 2023-24 and propose an alternative.
20. Recommendation (iii): That the Executive approve the Compensation Policy.
 - a) Option 1: Approve the policy and authorisation for any amendments prior to publication. This option is recommended to provide clarity to tenants and staff on the Council's approach to managing and responding to compensation claims.
 - b) Option 2: Not approve the Compensation Policy. This would result in a lack of clarity and uncertainty for tenants on the Council's approach to all types of housing compensation claims and increase the risk of complaints.
21. Recommendation (iv): That the Executive approve the Decant Policy.
 - a) Option 1: Approve the policy and authorisation for any amendments prior to publication. This option is recommended to provide clarity to introductory and secure tenants on the Council's approach to managing a decant and the support available to them.
 - b) Option 2: Not approve the Decant Policy. There would be no certainty or advice for tenants or staff in the event a decant was necessary on how to proceed and manage the process. This would increase the risk of complaints.

Agenda Item 7

Legal Implications

22. Social housing landlords have a legislative right to charge rent. The method for setting social and affordable rents is set down in government policy and regulated by the RoSH. There is no requirement to apply either a rent increase or the maximum rent increase permitted.
23. It is not a legal requirement to have in place a Compensation or Decant Policy, however it is good practice to set out the Council's approach for customers and staff to understand.
24. There are legal implications arising from some compulsory compensation claims and it is essential regulations are followed when assessing these claims to avoid further legal challenge. The Compensation and Decant Policies support the implementation of good practice and the following of process where claims occur.
25. However, some types of compensation are compulsory, and the Council must follow legislation and regulations as appropriate to ensure claims are managed properly.

Financial Implications

26. The Council owns a very small number of social housing units, over two thirds are set at affordable rents, having been occupied for four months at the point a rent increase is applied. A 2.3% rent increase will increase the Council's income to meet the management, maintenance and other cost of the accommodation.
27. There are no immediate budget implications associated with the Compensation Policy or Decant Policy which are applicable to the Council's secure tenants and in the future leaseholders. Any future compensation claims will be managed on a case by case basis with adherence to regulations where statutory compensation claims are due. Given the 32 properties subject to these policies are new builds, the likelihood of a claim in the next 5 – 10 years is extremely low.

Equalities Implications

28. We have a statutory duty to consider equalities in all our decisions.
29. Opportunities exist to ensure households on low incomes access benefits, money and budgeting advice and support services to support rent paying responsibilities, these services are in place and monitored regularly.
30. This duty has been considered in the development of these policies and it has been concluded that there are low impacts on the equalities duties. This report does not recommend any specific decisions or actions in relation to our activities around rent setting or managing compensation claims or decants of tenants. When published, all policies will meet Accessibility standards.

Communication Implications

31. There are no specific communications implications arising from the publication of these policies or the rent increase. They will be made available on the Council's website and communicated to staff and our registered provider managing agent for Wheatley Court.

Environmental Sustainability Implications

32. Whilst there are no specific environmental sustainability implications arising out of this report, the Council continues to assess and make improvements to its buildings and services to avoid, improve and mitigate environmental impacts.

Risk Management Considerations

33. No risk to the provision of services to the Council's temporary accommodation or permanent homes has been identified by the recommendation not to increase rents in 2023-24.
34. In terms of compensation claims, given the 32 properties subject to these policies are new builds, the likelihood of a claim in the foreseeable future is extremely low. In terms of discretionary claims to date, no complaints regarding repairs or housing conditions have been received from households occupying the Council's temporary accommodation. The accommodation is subject to regular inspections to assess for issues at the earliest opportunity.

Consultation

35. No consultation has been carried out as these policies are based on regulatory frameworks and follow legislative requirements. The policies aim to clarify the Council's approach to rent setting, housing compensation claims and managing decants of tenants as part of the Council's new role as a registered provider.

Policy Framework

36. The recommendations in this report support the Council's Five Year Plan themes People and Organisation which includes a focus on local housing challenges, supporting housing with a housing need, housing costs and financial sustainability. The Council has become a registered landlord and is committed to continuing to deliver high quality housing and other services to households living in temporary accommodation and permanent accommodation to meet our Corporate Plan objectives.

Background Powers

None

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Rent Policy: Council owned accommodation

Housing Services

January 2023

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1. Summary

- 1.1. Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (the Council) is committed to setting rents that comply with relevant guidance and standards and help achieve organisation commitment to the relief of need, hardship and distress experienced by homeless people and disadvantaged groups. The Council will comply with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements to ensure it maintains financial viability and achieves value for money.
- 1.2. The Council operates in line with Homes England (HE), Regulator of Social Housing (the Regulator) Rent Standard Regulatory Guidance, under its delegated powers from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

Specifically, the Council will:

- Ensure that tenants are properly informed on changes to rents.
- Ensure that tenants are properly informed on changes to service charges.
- Ensure that it approaches rent and service charge setting in a transparent and open manner.
- Ensure that rent setting processes are efficient and effective.
- Ensure rents are set at no more than social formula rent levels
- Ensure affordable rents are set at the lower of 80% of market rent levels or the Reigate and Banstead local housing allowance
- Relet properties at formula rent levels
- Review affordable rent levels at reletting of properties
- Apply rent flexibilities of up to 10% above social formula rent levels, where there is a clear rationale for doing so

- Ensure no rents exceed the rent cap set annually by government
 - Ensure rents are only increased once a year and within government guidelines currently CPI plus one percent
 - Ensure increases take effect at least 52 weeks after the previous increase.
- 1.2 This document sets out how the Council sets rents on residential properties owned and managed by itself and its managing agents. The Council has been a registered social housing provider since 2021 as a pre-requisite of an application for funding from the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP). Consequently, the Council must comply with the Rent Standard as set out in the policy statement issued by DLUHC [policy statement on rents for social housing](#) (policy statement).
- 1.3 This rent policy complies with the requirements of the law as set out in legislative and regulatory framework and will remain in force until at least 31 March 2025. Unless any changes are required due to legislative or regulatory requirements implemented by government, or the Council's approach.

2. Principles

2.1. As well as legal and regulatory compliance, this policy seeks to embody the following principles:

- Affordability
- Tenancy sustainment
- Fairness
- Transparency
- Reflection of the cost of delivering a high-quality management and maintenance service to the stock
- Consideration of the cost of future investment in the stock so that it meets all legislative and regulatory requirements, as set out in the Councils Business Plan
- Consideration of property attributes and future upgrades

3. Legislative and Regulatory Context

3.1 The key piece of legislation governing the setting of social rent is the Housing Act 1985 which gives landlords the power to set and increase rents on an annual basis and sets out the steps they should follow in order to do so.

- 3.2 Government guidance issued in 1999 introduced the concept of a ‘formula’ rent based on the relative value of the property, the size of the property, and relative local income levels. The aim of this formula-based approach to setting rent levels is to ensure that similar rents are charged for similar social rented properties within a region.
- 3.3 From 2015 a ten year settlement of CPI +1% as a maximum annual increase was put in place. The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 however subsequently prescribed a compulsory annual reduction in rents of 1% for four years commencing from 2016-17.
- 3.4 From April 2020 all registered housing providers are required to comply with the Rent Standard. The Regulator of Social Housing (RoSH) produced guidelines [policy statement on rents for social housing](#) (policy statement) which was issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
- 3.5 The policy statement prescribes that social housing providers should not increase rents from 2020-21 until at least 2024-25 by more than the previous September CPI rate +1% annually. However, given rising inflation levels the government revised its position and announced in the Autumn Statement 2022 this formula would be replaced with a maximum increase of 7 percent increase for 2023-24.
- 3.6 In 2011, as part of the then government’s Affordable Homes Programme, social landlords were given the power to charge ‘affordable rents’ for new social homes, both new build and acquisitions. This needs specific approval from Homes England as part of any grant funding application. An affordable rent is a sum equal to, up to a maximum 80% of the market rent (including service charges). For some central government grant programmes, it has been a requirement that affordable rents are set on those new schemes.
- 3.7 Homes held by the Council are charged at either a ‘social (‘formula’ rent) or an ‘affordable’ rent. Each of these is explained below, along with the methodology for setting them.

4. Social rent

- 4.1 Since 2001, rents for properties let at ‘social rent’ in England have been based on a formula set by government. This is known as a ‘formula rent’ often referred to as ‘target rent’.

- 4.2 The formula contained within the policy statement is based upon a 1999 England average weekly rent of £54.62, relative local authority property values at January 1999 valuations, and relative county income levels in 1999, and the size of the property.
- 4.3 In Surrey manual weekly county earnings in 1999 were £333.20 compared to a national England average of £316.40. Individual property valuations at 1999 prices are available for all council owned properties in Reigate and Banstead based upon either a specific RICS valuation or referral to [land registry database](#) and can be compared to a national average property valuation of £49,750.

The calculation for setting social rents is based upon;

- 70% of the national average rent
- Multiplied by relative county earnings
- Multiplied by a bedroom weighting

Plus

- 30% of the national average rent
- Multiplied by relative property value
- Uplifted by a cumulative inflationary increase of 73.64% for general needs properties or 76.97% for supported accommodation to reflect 2022/23 prices. The difference reflects a 0.9% permitted increase as part of the Welfare Reform Act 2016 for supported accommodation.

4.4 All Council properties are currently let at, or below social formula rent levels.

4.5 The Council will set rents at formula rent on all relets

4.6 All rents levied by the Council will be below rent caps set annually by Government. For 2022/23 these are:

Number of bedrooms	Rent cap (52 weeks)
1 and bedsits	£148.88
2	£157.62
3	£166.38
4	£175.12
5	£183.89
6 or more	£192.64

- 4.7 Rent caps will increase annually at CPI plus 1.5%, unless otherwise directed by government, and are unlikely to affect properties owned by the Council for the foreseeable future.
- 4.8 Rents are collected on a 52 week basis.
- 4.9 The Council will review rents annually. Social rents will be set, and any annual increase applied, as part of the Council's annual budget-setting process. Any change to rents will be approved at Executive Committee in January each year. Changes will apply from the following financial year commencing in April.
- 4.10 Where there have been major alterations or investment in a property such as an extension or an increase in the number of bedrooms the Council may apply to have the property revalued to reflect improvements made in accordance with the policy statement and if appropriate recalculate rent accordingly.
- 4.11 Tenants will be notified in writing of rent increases and weekly amount payable at least 28 days in advance of the new payment being due.
- 4.12 Any properties which are not currently levied at formula rent will be reset to the formula rent value when they become vacant and are relet.

Social rent flexibilities

- 4.13 Current guidelines maintain discretion for local authorities to set rents above formula rent by up to 5% for general needs properties and 10% for supported accommodation. However, any use of rent flexibilities must be in accordance with a clearly defined rationale that has been developed with tenants and takes account of local circumstances and affordability. Rent flexibilities are not to be used as a general policy and must relate to individual properties.
- 4.14 Defining a clear rationale can be complex but can be used to reflect any significant improvements that need to be carried out in a property, for example, major energy improvements. When applying flexibility, the Council will ensure that it details the exact criteria for which flexibility is being applied and consult with tenants accordingly. These criteria will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- 4.15 The Council will use rent flexibility where appropriate when reletting properties. Rent flexibilities are not permitted on existing tenancies and cannot be applied retrospectively.
- 4.16 Whilst it is not possible to list every scenario in which the flexibility will be applied, some of the likely circumstances which may be appropriate include:
- Major energy efficiency schemes such as external wall insulation
 - Photo voltaic panels
 - Making homes carbon zero
 - Meeting decent homes standards
 - Fire safety measures
 - Intensive levels of housing management and tenancy support
- 4.17 In considering whether to apply rent flexibilities, the Council will ensure rents remain affordable and do not exceed local housing allowance rates and rent caps set by government.
- 4.18 Where a property is currently being charged a social rent that exceeds the formula rent and the local flexibility criteria is no longer applicable, the Council will either reduce the rent immediately or limit annual rent increases to the relevant CPI value only until formula rent is restored.

5. Affordable rent

- 5.1. Affordable rent is generally applied to new build properties and acquisitions and requires approval by Homes England as part of development proposals. Initial

affordable rents will be set at a maximum of 80% of market rent inclusive of service charges, in accordance with prescribed RICS Red Book valuation methodology.

- 5.2. Affordable rents will increase annually by a maximum of CPI plus 1% in line with the policy statement on rents for social housing so long as affordable rents will not exceed 80% of market rent.
- 5.3. When an affordable rent property becomes vacant, the property may be revalued, and the affordable rent levied on relet will be based on a maximum of 80% of the current market rent value at the time of reletting.
- 5.4. In determining a market rent value, the Council will utilise a range of market data to establish current market rent levels.
- 5.5. When setting an affordable rent, prevailing rental market conditions will be considered. When local private rents are increasing rapidly and significantly, it may not be appropriate to set a rent at 80% of market rent as this may well push such rents beyond affordability. In such cases, the rent should be set at the local housing allowance level.

6. Service Charge

- 6.1. In addition to the rent due on their homes, tenants may also be liable for additional charges in relation to services which they receive above and beyond the general occupation of a property.
- 6.2. Service charges usually reflect additional services which may not be provided to every tenant, or which may relate to communal facilities rather than being particular to the occupation of a dwelling.
- 6.3. Any charge will only reflect the cost of providing those services and will be reviewed and where appropriate adjusted annually. Tenants will be notified on annual rent statements.
- 6.4. Service charges are not specifically covered by the policy statement, however there is an expectation that they must not exceed the cost of services provided and that any annual increase should be no more than CPI plus 1%.
- 6.5. Council Approach to Service Charge Setting is as follows:

- Where appropriate, the Council will charge licensees/tenants for additional services such as cleaning of communal areas etc based on actual costs of the services provided
- Utility costs for communal spaces will be based on actual costs
- The costs of the utilities for communal spaces will be based on the percentage of floor space that is used for communal use including hallways, bathrooms, kitchen and other shared living areas
- The Council may consider introducing new service charges. We will inform tenants of the new service charge in writing, giving at least one month's notice in line with Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.

Glossary of terms

Affordability – Ability of tenants to afford rent and associated service charges

Consumer Price Index – measurement of annual price increases

Affordable rent – charges levied for properties acquired or built as part of Affordable Homes programme or funded by Right to Buy receipts.

Consumer Price Index – Office for national statistics (ONS) measurement of annual price comparisons

Formula rent – Government policy to determine level of social rents

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – A ring fenced account used for all income and expenditure relating to housing properties and land.

Regulator of Social Housing – regulatory body for registered social housing providers

Rent convergence – process of ameliorating difference between council and housing association rents

Rent flexibility – discretion allowed by government for housing providers to charge up to 5 or 10 per cent above formula rents

Rent Standard – a regulatory standard for social housing rent levels

Service charges – charge for additional services above the occupation of a dwelling.

Tenancy sustainment – being able to conduct and maintain a satisfactory tenancy



Compensation Policy

Housing Services

January 2023

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Compensation Policy has been developed to ensure we have a fair and transparent approach to the way we manage compensation claims made by our customers.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy focuses on the awarding of compensation and the different types of compensation available. These types are discretionary and compulsory.

3. Our approach

3.1. We will acknowledge all claims for compensation within 5 days and aim to reach a decision within 10 working days. However, as some claims may be complex, we may need more time to investigate. In these cases, we will contact the customer and agree a suitable extension.

3.2. Some compensation claims may be linked to a complaint, in which case any claim will not be finalised until the complaint has been fully investigated in line with our complaints procedure. On rare occasions we may need to offer interim payments.

Home Contents Insurance

3.3. Customers are expected to arrange their own home contents insurance, which will cover them for loss of, or damage to, their personal possessions.

3.4. There may be no right to compensation from us where any loss or damage would normally be covered by a household contents insurance policy and where we have not been at fault.

3.5. There are two types of compensation:

Discretionary compensation

3.6. We may offer a discretionary payment in certain circumstances to customers to resolve a complaint. Circumstances may include:

- where a customer is required to temporarily move out of their home;
- where a customer is unable to use part of their home due to disrepair or service failure;
- where a customer has suffered inconvenience or disruption during works to their home carried out by the Council's contractors;
- where we have failed to meet our landlord obligations under the tenancy or lease;
- where we have failed to provide services, or the quality of the service provided has fallen below our agreed standards, including adequate response times; or
- refunding reasonable costs that a customer would not have incurred if not for our service failure.

Compulsory compensation

3.7. We will offer this type of compensation in cases that fall under our statutory and/or contractual obligations. This may include:

- where a customer has made improvements to their home; or
- where a customer's home is being demolished and they must move to new accommodation.

3.8. A compulsory compensation scheme does exist which relates to the time taken to complete 'qualifying repairs'. The scheme applies to public landlords with 100 or more secure tenancies. The Council has not reached this number to date, so this compensation scheme does not apply to the Council's secure or introductory tenants.

4. Awarding Compensation

Discretionary Compensation

- 4.1. Colleagues may offer good will payments to our customers who have experienced a service failure. These payments are not an acceptance of any legal responsibility.
- 4.2. These offers are intended as a full and final settlement of any claim. However, this does not prevent a customer from making a formal complaint or escalating an ongoing complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service (or another Ombudsman service).
- 4.3. Each customer's situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Compulsory (Statutory) Compensation

- 4.4. There is clear guidance in place for statutory compensation and for compensation following a decanting process.
- 4.5. Below are examples of circumstances in which our customers may be eligible for compulsory compensation:

Home Improvements

- 4.6. A customer may be eligible for compensation for improvements they have made to their home when they end their tenancy.
- 4.7. In order to qualify for compensation, the improvement must be a qualifying improvement, the customer must have followed the required procedure and received the appropriate authorisation for the improvement to be carried out.
- 4.8. When considering compensation we will take into consideration the cost of the improvement, the number of years the improvement has been in place and the estimated life of the improvement.
- 4.9. We will give clear information to our customers as part of the Home Improvements application process.

Decanting

- 4.10. This is the process we follow when moving a customer out of their home, either on a temporary basis so that major work can be carried out, or on a permanent basis where the customer's home is going to be demolished.
- 4.11. A customer may also need to be decanted following an emergency such as fire or flood.

4.12. We will make statutory payments such as home loss or disturbance payments, where applicable.

4.13. Our Decant Policy gives further guidance, and this will be fully explained to any customer who is required to move out of their home.

Home Loss Payments

4.14. A Home Loss Payment is a statutory compensation payment to a customer who must permanently move out of their home as a result of redevelopment or demolition.

4.15. Payments may be made to customers who have lived in their home for a minimum of 12 months.

4.16. Home Loss Payments will be awarded in line with the following legislation:

- The Planning and Compensation Act 1991
- The Land Compensation Act 1973
- The Home Loss Regulations (Prescribed Amounts) 2008 amended annually

4.17. These regulations are reviewed frequently and should be checked before any payment is agreed.

4.18. Colleagues should always refer to Legal Services for assistance where a Home Loss Payments is required.

Disturbance Payments

4.19. A Disturbance Payment is a statutory entitlement to cover the reasonable expenses of moving and setting up a new home when a customer must permanently move out of their Reigate & Banstead Borough Council home.

4.20. An assessment will be made based on the customer's circumstances to agree the amount of compensation to be awarded.

Expenses for Temporary Moves

4.21. Where a customer must move out of their home on a temporary basis, they will not be entitled to a disturbance payment. They will, however, be entitled to reasonable expenses and the customer's circumstances will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The Council's Decant Policy explains this in more detail.

5. Declining a Compensation Claim

5.1. Every request for compensation should be considered on its own merits. If we decline any part of a formal compensation claim, we will explain why. Compensation may not be payable in the following circumstances:

- the loss or damage has been caused by the customer or a member of their family or a visitor to their home.
- a customer of an adjoining property causes the damage, for example a leaking washing machine.
- the customer has not reported the loss or damage within a reasonable timescale, has not retained damaged goods for inspection, and/or is unable to provide appropriate receipts for the losses incurred. We will consider what constitutes a 'reasonable timescale' on a case-by-case basis but would normally consider 28 days to be the maximum. In such circumstances, we may wish to make some form of compensation offer.
- where a contractor is unable to gain access to the customer's home to assess the damage and the cause of it.
- where we have kept the customer fully informed of unforeseen works or delays in works that are required.
- where there has been no negligence or failure on the part of the Council, although it may be appropriate to acknowledge any inconvenience caused to the customer.

5.2. There is no right to compensation where the contractor:

- has attended in the agreed timescale and is waiting for parts
- has attended and made safe or limited further damage
- is delayed for another reason outside of their control
- has been unable to complete the work for reasons of health and safety
- has been unable to gain access to the property through no fault of his/her own.

5.3. If the customer is unhappy with the decision, it will be treated as a complaint (or an escalation of an existing complaint).

Complaints

5.4. Where the customer is not satisfied with the outcome of a claim for compensation, this may lead to them making a formal complaint. All complaints will be investigated and managed in line with our Complaints Policy.

5.5. Where the compensation claim is part of an existing complaint, the customer may request that the complaint is escalated to the next stage of the complaints process, where they are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint investigation.

6. References

Relevant legislation:

- Land Compensation Act 1973
- Housing Act 1985, s.96 (Right to Repair), s. 99A and 99B (compensation for improvements)
- Planning and Compensation Act 1991
- Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations SI 1994 / 133
- Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Compensation for Improvements) Regulations SI 1994 / 613
- Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Right to Repair) (Amendment) Regulations SI 1997 / 73
- Home Loss Regulations 2008 as amended

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council:

- Decant Policy
- Compensation Procedure
- Complaints Procedure

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Decant Policy

Housing Services

January 2023

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy covers circumstances when it is necessary for Council's secure and introductory tenants to vacate their permanent home temporarily to enable refurbishment or repair works to be carried out. The policy gives examples of the circumstances in which this may be necessary and the financial compensation that will be made available. It does not apply to households living in temporary or emergency accommodation under the Council's homelessness powers or duties.

2. Policy Implementation

- 2.1. Residents will be consulted about decants as soon as a decision to decant is made and made aware of this policy. We provide residents with clear information and keep

them informed throughout the decant process, either face to face, by phone or in writing.

- 2.2. As far as is reasonably possible, residents' needs are considered regarding alternative accommodation.
- 2.3. We comply with the Land Compensation Act 1973 when making home loss and disturbance payments.
- 2.4. Decant policy and procedures may be governed by our insurers, depending on the cause, cost and extent of the work required.
- 2.5. Changes to this policy and its associated procedure will be communicated to the Housing Services team, the Property Services team and our property managers. All Housing Services, and Property Services team members will be required to read this policy, and to confirm that they have read and understood it.
- 2.6. The Council's managing agent may undertake a number of actions and responsibilities relating to Decants on the Council's behalf.

3. Responsibility and Decisions

- 3.1. A decant can be recommended by any officer or surveyor, but approval will need to be provided by the Head of Housing Services. Decant decisions must be recorded on the relevant repairs management system. Decant spend must be approved by the relevant budget holder and all spend must be recorded and monitored against budget by the relevant budget holder.
- 3.2. All employees who are assisting a resident with a decant must refer to the policy for guidance and liaise with the Council's Loss Adjuster to check the details of the claim.
- 3.3. All employees are responsible for feeding back any improvements that could be made to this policy (and its associated procedure) or problems they have found while trying to implement it.

4. What is a Decant?

- 4.1. A 'decant' is when it is necessary for residents to vacate their permanent home temporarily or permanently to enable refurbishment or repair works to be carried out.
- 4.2. The carrying out of works or repair may cause some unavoidable interference with a resident's enjoyment of their home. Some repairs can be very disruptive which means it isn't possible to do the work around you. The Council will take measures through the decant process to minimise the disruption.

4.3. Sometimes, if your home has been damaged by an incident such as a fire or flood, you may first need to move to short-term accommodation while we assess the damage or find longer-term accommodation. Therefore, you could be decanted to several alternative accommodations throughout the period of the repair. We will try to minimise the disruption as much as possible.

5. Circumstances when a Decant may happen

5.1. The circumstances in which it might be necessary to require you to vacate your permanent home include:

- Major structural repairs, refurbishments or improvements are required to the property, which would be impossible to carry out if you remained in occupation. Your home may need to be handed over to a contractor and become a designated construction site for health and safety reasons.
- Work that involves turning off your water or electricity.
- The property has been damaged or made structurally unsound owing to fire or flood and is not safe or fit for you to occupy until repairs have been carried out.
- Major works are required as a result of an Environmental Health Order having been served which would be impossible to carry out if you remained in occupation.
- The Property is subject to redevelopment including demolition.

5.2. You will be advised as early as possible of the need to vacate your permanent home. Sometimes you will need to vacate your home immediately.

6. Alternative Temporary Accommodation

6.1. In an emergency, you should stay with friends or relatives in the short term. If this is not possible, suitable alternative accommodation will be sought.

6.2. In some cases, Bed and Breakfast or hotel accommodation will be used.

6.3. We will use Travelodge or Premier Inn where they are located within a reasonable distance of your home. We will usually include breakfast, unless previously agreed that this will not be included. We will include the cost of wifi.

6.4. For longer term absences, the Council may choose to decant you to another Council property on a temporary basis.

6.5. In exceptional circumstances, private rented accommodation may be used.

- 6.6. If it is necessary for the property to be cleared, the Council will arrange for storage of belongings and pay for the removal costs. The Council will make all the arrangements for removals and connection of appliances (e.g. gas cooker connections, plumbing washing machines) unless you prefer to do so yourself.
- 6.7. While works are underway at the property, for health and safety reasons, you will not be able to return without prior arrangement. We will install a keysafe at your property to allow contractors to gain access to carry out works. We may need to secure the property by changing the locks.

7. Suitable Temporary Accommodation

- 7.1. The Council will use best efforts to use temporary accommodation within a reasonable travelling distance to work and school, using your own car or public transport. If this is not possible, or puts you at a financial loss, the Council; will consider ways to assist with transport.
- 7.2. The Council will include alternative accommodation for pets where they cannot be housed in the temporary accommodation. Families may be required to share a room, or children to share a room where they may not do so at home.
- 7.3. There may not be cooking or laundry facilities. In this instance a subsistence payment will be given to cover additional costs. A garden or parking is not a requirement of temporary accommodation.

8. Rent and service charges whilst staying in alternative temporary accommodation

8.1. Staying with friends or family:

- 8.2. If you claim the Housing Element of Universal Credit (UC), or Housing Benefit (HB), you must continue to claim and use this money to cover your rent on your tenanted home. We will pay a disturbance payment to the host family in recognition of the costs incurred. The value will be agreed with our loss adjuster (if applicable) or will be paid at £10 per day. The loss adjuster value may differ.
- 8.3. If you are not in receipt of UC or HB then you must continue to pay rent on your tenanted home and a payment equivalent to your current rent will be paid to you. This excludes service charges, or heating charges.

8.4. Staying in a services apartment or private rental:

- 8.5. The Council will pay the rent, service charges, and council tax on your serviced apartment or private rented accommodation.

- 8.6. You must pay for your utilities at your private rented accommodation.
- 8.7. You must continue to pay your rent, service charges and council tax on your tenanted home.
- 8.8. Where the Council is using your utilities to carry out repairs at your tenanted home, we will cover the cost of these.
- 8.9. Where required, the Council will pay the damage deposit on a private rented apartment and any furniture pack being provided with it.
- 8.10. Any claim against the deposit at the end of the let will be charged to you as it will be your responsibility to keep the private rented property and its contents damage free and in a good and clean condition.
- 8.11. Depending on the extent of the decant and the works required to your home, the Local Authority Council Tax team may 'delete' your property's council tax band. This means that your property will not have a Council Tax band and you will not pay any Council Tax on your tenanted property until the works are completed. In this case you will be required to pay any Council Tax owing on your temporary accommodation. You will never be required to pay Council Tax on both your tenanted home and your temporary accommodation at the same time.
- 8.12. As there will be cooking and laundry facilities you will not receive a subsistence payment.
- 8.13. Depending on the location of the alternative accommodation, travel or fuel costs for essential journeys, that are an additional expense to you, may be covered. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 8.14. **Staying in another social housing property:**
- 8.15. Another social housing provider may have an empty property that you can temporarily move to. You will not be charged rent for this property but will continue to pay rent on your tenanted home. If there are additional charges such as heating or other charges at the temporary housing association property, you will be required to pay these, along with the utilities for this property.

9. Disturbance Payments

- 9.1. Disturbance payments are made to compensate a resident for reasonable expenses in moving from their home. These are expenses that relate strictly to the move, and expenses reasonably incurred as a direct and natural consequence of the displacement.
- 9.2. The Council will meet the costs associated with moving, including:

- Costs of removal and/or storage of belongings where necessary.
- Disconnection and reconnection of appliances, gas and electricity supply, and telephone.
- Any additional rent or service charge costs (residents will continue to be liable for rent and service charge for their permanent home).
- Short-term bed and breakfast or hotel charges in emergency circumstances.
- Cost of housing pets in kennels or cattery during the decant period.
- Cost of redirection of mail.
- In exceptional circumstances floor coverings, curtains/blinds and white goods in the alternative accommodation, but particularly where the provision of these items is a landlord obligation in your tenancy.

9.3. Where residents require reimbursement of expenses, appropriate receipts will need to be produced.

9.4. If there are no cooking facilities in your temporary accommodation you will be eligible for subsistence payments:

- Up to £15 per adult per day
- Up to £10 per child per day (over 6 months and under 12 years)

9.5. If any other financial costs are incurred because of the temporary relocation, such costs as are reasonable will also be reimbursed, subject to approval and the submission of receipts.

9.6. The Council cannot cover the following during a decant:

- Any contents or belongings damaged following an incident, that should be covered by home content insurance for example spoilt food in fridge, replacement personal items or clothing, cleaning of personal items such as furniture, garden sheds, damaged flooring/carpets, white goods.
- Services that cannot be used whilst decanted, such as subscriptions to Sky, internet, TV licence.

10. Returning Home

10.1. You will be given as much notice as possible when your permanent home is again available for occupation. If you are staying in bed and breakfast accommodation you will normally be expected to move back immediately. The Council will be responsible for arrangements for the removal and associated costs as detailed above.

10.2. You will not normally be able to remain in the temporary accommodation when your permanent home becomes available for occupation.

- 10.3. The exception to this is where a resident who has moved to another Council property, can demonstrate a need for housing, is registered on the Local Authority waiting list and meets the criteria for an offer of that property as permanent housing.
- 10.4. On occasions when it is necessary to ask you to vacate your home on a permanent basis, because your home is to be demolished or substantially altered, additional Home Loss payments are payable.
- 10.5. Payments are based upon the statutory Home Loss Payment as defined in the Land Compensation Act 1973. This payment is per household and will be equally split between the legal tenants. This is in addition to the relocation costs summarised above. Any Home Loss payments will be offset against monies owed to the Council, such as rent arrears.

11. Legal Matters

- 11.1. Home Loss Payments are set out in the Land Compensation Act 1973 and the prescribed amount is regulated.
- 11.2. The Housing Act 1988 sets out matters that are to be taken into account when determining whether alternative accommodation is suitable or not in relation to a permanent move.
- 11.3. For temporary decants, a direct offer of alternative accommodation will be made, allowing, where possible, for consideration of your needs.
- 11.4. Our tenancy agreements lay out the landlord and occupants' responsibilities towards repairs. If you do not allow access for the Council or its managing agents to carry out repairs or refuse to leave the property temporarily to allow major repairs to take place, then the Council will take legal action in the form of an injunction to require you to move.
- 11.5. We will always ensure we make at least 1 reasonable offer of accommodation before going to court. We will try to make an offer as near to your housing needs as possible, however the options available depend on the properties or hotels available at the time.

12. Leaseholders

- 12.1. The Council does not have an obligation to decant or provide disturbance payments to Leaseholders.
- 12.2. If major or urgent works are required, then consultation under s20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 will be required. Leaseholders will be notified of their options and advice provided.

13. Monitoring

- 13.1. We will monitor the latest Home Loss Payments regulation. The amount of Home Loss payments change periodically and the website <http://www.legislation.gov.uk> should be used to verify statutory amounts payable.
- 13.2. When a decant is covered by our insurers, we will work with our Loss Adjuster to ensure that offers of alternative accommodation and decant costs are in line with our insurance policy.
- 13.3. Offers of accommodation, disturbance payments, subsistence payments or Home Loss payments outside of the scope of this policy will constitute a breach of policy, unless they have been previously agreed with our loss adjuster or the Council's Executive.

14. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 14.1. For the Council, diversity is about respecting people's individual differences and ensuring that all people that come into contact with us have access to the same high standards of behaviour and service.
- 14.2. We are committed to ensuring that no resident will be treated less favourably because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.

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Agenda Item 8



Signed off by	Head of Legal and Governance
Author	Annette Wiles, Deputy Democratic Services Manager
Telephone	01737 276607
Email	annette.wiles@reigate-banstead.gov.uk
To	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Executive Council
Date	Thursday, 19 January 2023 Thursday, 26 January 2023 Thursday, 9 February 2023
Executive Member	Leader of the Council

Key Decision Required	N
Wards Affected	

Subject	Calendar of Meetings 2023 - 2024
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Recommendations
<p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the draft Calendar of Meetings for the 2023/24 Municipal Year (Annex 1) and make any observations to the Executive.</p> <p>The Executive is asked to consider, and recommend to Council, the draft Calendar of Meetings for the 2023/24 Municipal Year (Annex 1).</p> <p>Council is asked to approve the Calendar of Meetings for the 2023/24 Municipal Year (Annex 1).</p>
Reasons for Recommendations
To establish a timetable to ensure the efficient and effective conduct of Council business for the forthcoming Municipal Year.
Executive Summary

Agenda Item 8

The Calendar of Meetings for 2023/24 draws on the pattern of meetings from previous municipal years. It is designed to ensure all business is achieved as efficiently as possible. The draft Calendar of Meetings for 2023/24 has been subject to a full consultation process having been considered by:

- Group Leaders on 21 November 2022; and
- The Leader's Meeting on 19 December 2022.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the Calendar of Meetings at its meeting on 19 January 2023.

It will be reported to the meeting of the Executive on 26 January 2023. The proposed Calendar of Meetings will be subject to approval by Council at its meeting on 9 February 2023.

The Calendar of Meetings requires approval by Council.

Background

1. The Constitution stipulates that Council approves the Schedule of Meetings (Procedure Rule 2/Para 2.4.2).
2. A draft Calendar of Meeting is published as an Appendix to this report (Annex 1).

Key Information

3. The public meetings as detailed in the Calendar of Meetings (Audit Committee, Council, Employment Committee, Executive, Licensing and Regulatory Committee, Partner, Shareholder and Trustee Executive Sub-Committee, Planning Committee and Standards Committee) all start at 7.30pm as set out in the Constitution (Procedure Rule 4, Paragraph 4.8.4).
4. The Budget Council meeting for 2024 (February) and preceding Executive meeting have been moved to take place just over a week later than is usual. This is to allow more time after the end of the mandatory eight-week budget consultation period to enable sufficient consideration of the results before inclusion in the report that will initially go to the Executive and progress onto Council. It has been verified that this delay will not negatively affect the production and distribution of Council Tax letters.
5. The Council meeting in Spring 2024 has again been moved to avoid being consecutive with the Good Friday Bank Holiday. This is usual practice with the Council meeting being moved depending on how the Easter Holiday falls.
6. The Partner, Shareholder and Trustee Executive Sub-Committee meets formally six times a year at 6.30pm before Executive meetings. Informal meetings of the Sub-Committee will meet every other month (between the formal meetings) and additional meetings will be held, should a need arise.
7. Planning Committees are held on Wednesday evenings and in different weeks to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee meetings (given the large overlap in Members involved in these meetings).

Agenda Item 8

8. Following a previous discussion at Group Leaders', the draft Calendar of Meetings reflects that no Planning meetings take place between the local elections and the Annual Council meeting. This avoids needing to appoint Substitute Members for any Planning meeting in May, if some Members of the Committee have not been re-elected, and new Committee Members are yet to be confirmed at the Annual Council for the new Municipal Year. Therefore, two Planning Committees will take place in April in 2023 and 2024.
9. There are eight Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings throughout the year (including the Police and Crime Annual Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny) plus the Budget Scrutiny Panel on 29 November 2023.
10. There are four Audit Committee meetings during the 2023/24 municipal year. The meetings will take place on Wednesday evenings. This reflects a slight change to the schedule (previously Audit meetings were held on Tuesday evenings). This is to allow for a phasing that better accommodates the Chair's briefing meeting. These meetings are scheduled to be in the same week as Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings to fit in with reporting to Executive meetings and to avoid meeting in the same week as the Planning Committee.
11. An additional Audit meeting will need to be scheduled for the consideration of the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts and the opinion of the external auditor. This will be addressed during the municipal year.
12. As in previous years, meetings of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee and its Sub-Committees have not been scheduled except for the initial meeting to appoint the Chair, Vice Chair and Chairs of the Sub-Committee. The first meeting of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee on 30 May 2023 will be combined with a training session.
13. The Standards Committee meets three times a year. The first Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2023/24 is expected to be brief taking place on 6 June 2023.
14. The Employment Committee meets quarterly. In consultation with officers, its Autumn 2023 meeting has returned to the usual schedule and will therefore be held in September rather than November.
15. The Corporate Governance Group previously requested that the October and February half term dates be avoided. This has again been reflected in the draft Calendar of Meetings. Additionally, effort has been made to avoid school holidays where possible. However, this is difficult to achieve in totality especially if numerous meetings being held in the same week is to be avoided. It is hoped that the correct balance has been achieved. A specific request was received from Group Leaders that no meetings of Full Council be held during Surrey school holidays. This has been accommodated by moving the Council meetings that take place in July 2023 and February 2024.
16. A provisional Executive meeting has been added (26 October 2023). This fulfils a previous request from Group Leaders. However, this meeting will only proceed if there is sufficient business to warrant it being held.

Agenda Item 8

17. The proposed Calendar includes indicative dates for meetings at the start of the 2024/25 Municipal Year to assist with planning for future business. These dates will be confirmed as part of the Calendar of Meetings for 2024/25, subject to any revisions.
18. Amendments to the Calendar may be made at any time in the course of the year, in consultation with the relevant Chair, and any such changes will be publicly notified as and when these occur. However, given the difficulties of rescheduling meetings, and the notice of meetings provided by this calendar, it is hoped that any such changes would be a rarity and that all Members will take note of these dates at the point the calendar is approved by Council.

Legal Implications

19. There are no legal implications

Financial Implications

20. There are no financial implications.

Equalities Implications

21. Consideration has been given to avoiding meeting dates in half term or school holidays, where possible.

Communication Implications

22. Members' calendars on their tablets will be automatically updated with the meetings they attend as Committee Members. All scheduled meetings will also be sent via Outlook Calendars to officers and Members and be listed in the Centralised diary.
23. Scheduled meetings will be available to view on the Council's website. Any changes will be publicly notified as and when they occur.

Consultation

24. The draft schedule has been reviewed by all members of the Management Team. As a result, the sequence of meetings was specifically scrutinised to see if this could be further optimised. It was established that the current phasing of meetings is required to allow officers sufficient time to produce reports and to allow these to progress correctly through the meeting cycle.
25. The Corporate Governance Group (officer group) was consulted at its meetings on 16 November 2022 and 14 December 2022.
26. The Leader's meeting considered the draft schedule on 19 December 2023. Group Leaders was consulted on 21 November 2022.
27. Any comments by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 19 January 2022 will be reported to the Executive on 26 January 2023.

Agenda Item 8

28. The final Calendar of Meetings 2023/24 is subject to the approval of Council at its meeting on 9 February 2023.

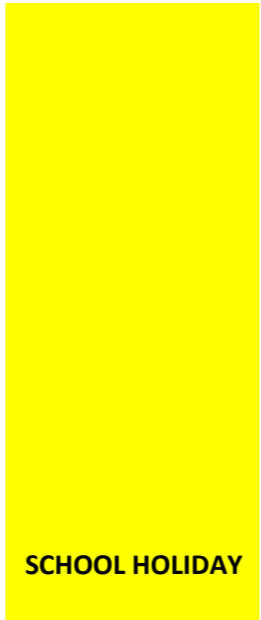
Annex 1

1. Annex 1 – Draft Calendar of Meetings 2023/24 dates.

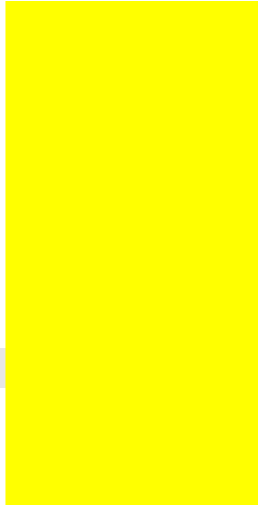
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MONTH	DATE	DAY	COMMITTEE	START TIME	SCHOOL HOLIDAYS	NOTES
2023	3	Monday				
	4	Tuesday				
April	5	Wednesday	PLANNING COMMITTEE	7:30pm		
	6	Thursday				
	7	Friday				BANK HOLIDAY (Good Friday)
	10	Monday			SCHOOL HOLIDAY	BANK HOLIDAY (Easter Monday)
	11	Tuesday				
	12	Wednesday				
	13	Thursday				
	14	Friday				
	17	Monday				
	18	Tuesday				
	19	Wednesday				
	20	Thursday				
	21	Friday				
	24	Monday				
25	Tuesday					
May	26	Wednesday	PLANNING COMMITTEE	7:30pm		
	27	Thursday				
	28	Friday				
	1	Monday				BANK HOLIDAY (May Day)
	2	Tuesday				
	3	Wednesday				
	4	Thursday				LOCAL ELECTIONS
	5	Friday				
	8	Monday				
	9	Tuesday				
	10	Wednesday				
	11	Thursday				
	12	Friday				
	15	Monday				
16	Tuesday					
17	Wednesday					
18	Thursday					
19	Friday					
22	Monday					
23	Tuesday					
24	Wednesday					
25	Thursday	COUNCIL (ANNUAL) (1)		7:30pm		
26	Friday					
29	Monday				BANK HOLIDAY (Spring)	
30	Tuesday	LICENSING & REGULATORY COMMITTEE (1)		7:30pm		
31	Wednesday				SCHOOL HOLIDAY	
1	Thursday					
2	Friday					
5	Monday					
6	Tuesday	STANDARDS COMMITTEE (1)		7:30pm		
7	Wednesday	PLANNING COMMITTEE (1)		7:30pm		

	8 Thursday		
	9 Friday		
	12 Monday		
	13 Tuesday		
June	14 Wednesday	AUDIT COMMITTEE (1)	7:30pm
	15 Thursday	OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (1)	7:30pm
	16 Friday		
	19 Monday		
	20 Tuesday	EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE (1)	7:30pm
	21 Wednesday		
	22 Thursday	PSTESC (1)	6:30pm
		EXECUTIVE (1)	7:30PM
	23 Friday		
	26 Monday		
27 Tuesday			
28 Wednesday	PLANNING COMMITTEE (2)		
29 Thursday			
30 Friday			
3 Monday			
4 Tuesday			
5 Wednesday		7:30pm	
6 Thursday	OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (2)		
7 Friday			
10 Monday			
11 Tuesday			
12 Wednesday			
13 Thursday	PSTESC (2)	7:30pm	
	EXECUTIVE (2)		
14 Friday			
July	17 Monday		
	18 Tuesday		
	19 Wednesday	PLANNING COMMITTEE (3)	
	20 Thursday	COUNCIL (2)	7:30pm
	21 Friday		
	24 Monday		
	25 Tuesday		
	26 Wednesday		
	27 Thursday		
	28 Friday		
31 Monday			
1 Tuesday			
2 Wednesday			
3 Thursday			
4 Friday			
7 Monday			
8 Tuesday			
9 Wednesday			
10 Thursday			
11 Friday			
14 Monday			



Month	Date	Day	Meeting Name	Time
August	15	Tuesday		
	16	Wednesday		
	17	Thursday		
	18	Friday		
	21	Monday		
	22	Tuesday		
	23	Wednesday		
	24	Thursday		
	25	Friday		
	28	Monday		
	29	Tuesday		
	30	Wednesday	PLANNING COMMITTEE (4)	7:30pm
	31	Thursday		
	1	Friday		
September	4	Monday		
	5	Tuesday		
	6	Wednesday	AUDIT COMMITTEE (2)	7:30pm
	7	Thursday	OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (3)	7:30pm
	8	Friday		
	11	Monday		
	12	Tuesday		
	13	Wednesday		
	14	Thursday	PSTESC (3) EXECUTIVE (3)	6:30pm 7:30pm
	15	Friday		
	18	Monday		
	19	Tuesday		
	20	Wednesday		
	21	Thursday	COUNCIL (3)	7:30pm
	22	Friday		
	25	Monday		
	26	Tuesday		
	27	Wednesday	PLANNING COMMITTEE (5)	7:30pm
	28	Thursday	EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE (2)	7:30pm
29	Friday			
October	2	Monday		
	3	Tuesday		
	4	Wednesday		
	5	Thursday		
	6	Friday		
	9	Monday		
	10	Tuesday		
	11	Wednesday		
	12	Thursday	OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (4)	7:30pm
	13	Friday		
	16	Monday		
	17	Tuesday		
18	Wednesday			
19	Thursday			
20	Friday			



BANK HOLIDAY (August)

23	Monday		
24	Tuesday		
25	Wednesday		
26	Thursday	<i>EXECUTIVE (PROVISIONAL)</i>	7:30pm
27	Friday		
30	Monday		
31	Tuesday		
1	Wednesday	PLANNING COMMITTEE (6)	7:30pm
2	Thursday		
3	Friday		
6	Monday		
7	Tuesday	STANDARDS COMMITTEE (2)	7:30pm
8	Wednesday		
9	Thursday		
10	Friday		
13	Monday		
14	Tuesday		
15	Wednesday		
November			
16	Thursday	PSTESC (4)	6:30pm
		EXECUTIVE (4)	7:30pm
17	Friday		
20	Monday		
21	Tuesday		
22	Wednesday	PLANNING COMMITTEE (7)	7:30pm
23	Thursday		
24	Friday		
27	Monday		
28	Tuesday		
29	Wednesday	BUDGET SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL (1)	7:30pm
30	Thursday	COUNCIL (4)	7:30pm
1	Friday		
4	Monday		
5	Tuesday		
6	Wednesday	AUDIT COMMITTEE (3)	7:30pm
7	Thursday	OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (5)	7:30pm
8	Friday		
11	Monday		
12	Tuesday		
13	Wednesday		
		PLANNING COMMITTEE (8)	7:30pm
December			
14	Thursday	EXECUTIVE (5)	
15	Friday		
18	Monday		
19	Tuesday		
20	Wednesday		
21	Thursday		
22	Friday		
25	Monday		
26	Tuesday		



SCHOOL HOLIDAY



SCHOOL HOLIDAY

DISCRETIONARY DAY
 BANK HOLIDAY (Christmas Day)
 BANK HOLIDAY (Boxing Day)

27 Wednesday
 28 Thursday
 29 Friday

2024

1 Monday
 2 Tuesday
 3 Wednesday
 4 Thursday
 5 Friday
 8 Monday
 9 Tuesday

10 Wednesday **PLANNING COMMITTEE (9)** 7:30pm
 11 Thursday **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE (3)** 7:30pm

12 Friday
 15 Monday

January

16 Tuesday
 17 Wednesday
 18 Thursday
 19 Friday
 22 Monday
 23 Tuesday
 24 Wednesday

25 Thursday **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (6)** 7:30pm

26 Friday
 29 Monday
 30 Tuesday
 31 Wednesday

1 Thursday **PSTESC (5)**
EXECUTIVE (6)

2 Friday
 5 Monday
 6 Tuesday

7 Wednesday **PLANNING COMMITTEE (10)** 7:30pm

8 Thursday
 9 Friday

February

12 Monday
 13 Tuesday
 14 Wednesday
 15 Thursday
 16 Friday

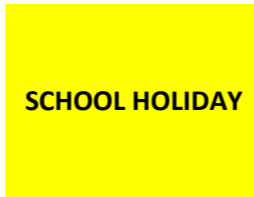
19 Monday
 20 Tuesday **COUNCIL (BUDGET) (5)** 7:30pm

21 Wednesday
 22 Thursday **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (7)** 7:30pm

23 Friday
 26 Monday
 27 Tuesday
 28 Wednesday
 29 Thursday
 1 Friday



BANK HOLIDAY (New Years Day)



SCHOOL HOLIDAY

4	Monday		
5	Tuesday	STANDARDS COMMITTEE (3)	7:30pm
6	Wednesday	PLANNING COMMITTEE (11)	7:30pm
7	Thursday		
8	Friday		
11	Monday		
12	Tuesday		
13	Wednesday	AUDIT COMMITTEE (4)	7:30pm
14	Thursday	OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (8)	7:30pm
15	Friday		
18	Monday		
19	Tuesday		
20	Wednesday		
21	Thursday	PSTESC (6)	6:30pm
		EXECUTIVE (7)	7:30pm
22	Friday		
25	Monday		
26	Tuesday	EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE (4)	7:30pm
27	Wednesday		
28	Thursday		
29	Friday		
1	Monday		
2	Tuesday		
3	Wednesday	PLANNING COMMITTEE (12)	7:30pm
4	Thursday	COUNCIL (6)	7:30pm
5	Friday		
8	Monday		
9	Tuesday		
10	Wednesday		
11	Thursday		
12	Friday		
15	Monday		
16	Tuesday		
17	Wednesday		
18	Thursday		
19	Friday		
22	Monday		
23	Tuesday		
24	Wednesday	PLANNING COMMITTEE (13)	7:30pm
25	Thursday		
26	Friday		
29	Monday		
30	Tuesday		
1	Wednesday		
2	Thursday		
3	Friday		
6	Monday		
7	Tuesday		
8	Wednesday		
9	Thursday		

March

April

BANK HOLIDAY (Good Friday)
BANK HOLIDAY (Easter Monday)

SCHOOL HOLIDAY

POLLING DAY - MAY 2024 ELECTIONS (UK PARL / PCC/ BOROUGH)

BANK HOLIDAY (May Day)

May	10	Friday			
	13	Monday			
	14	Tuesday			
	15	Wednesday			
	16	Thursday			
	17	Friday			
	20	Monday			
	21	Tuesday			
	22	Wednesday			
	23	Thursday	<i>COUNCIL (ANNUAL) (1) PROVISIONAL</i>	7:30pm	
	24	Friday			
	27	Monday			BANK HOLIDAY (Spring)
	28	Tuesday	<i>LICENSING REGULATORY COMMITTEE (1) PROVISIONAL</i>	7:30pm	SCHOOL HOLIDAY
	29	Wednesday			
30	Thursday				
31	Friday				
3	Monday				
4	Tuesday	<i>STANDARDS COMMITTEE (1) PROVISIONAL</i>	7:30pm		
5	Wednesday	<i>PLANNING COMMITTEE (1) PROVISIONAL</i>	7:30pm		
6	Thursday				
7	Friday				
10	Monday				
11	Tuesday				
12	Wednesday	<i>AUDIT COMMITTEE (1) PROVISIONAL</i>	7:30pm		
13	Thursday	<i>OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (1) PROVISIONAL</i>	7:30pm		
14	Friday				
June	17	Monday			
	18	Tuesday	<i>EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE (1) PROVISIONAL</i>	7:30pm	
	19	Wednesday			
	20	Thursday	<i>PSTESC (1) PROVISIONAL</i>	6:30pm	
			<i>EXECUTIVE (1) PROVISIONAL</i>	7:30pm	
	21	Friday			
	24	Monday			
	25	Tuesday			
	26	Wednesday			
	27	Thursday			
	28	Friday			

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