

# Agenda

## Executive

Thursday, 1 February 2024 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.



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

### Members:

#### R. Biggs (Leader)

V. H. Lewanski

R. H. Ashford

H. Avery

A. King

J. P. King

R. Michalowski

N. C. Moses

C. M. Neame

**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 - 20)  
To approve the Minutes of the last meeting on 14 December 2023.
- 3. Declarations of interest**  
To receive any declarations of interest.
- 4. Response to Motion: Climate Change** (Pages 21 - 30)  
The Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability.
- 5. Housing rent review** (Pages 31 - 38)  
The Executive Member for Housing and Support.
- 6. Budget & Capital Programme 2024/25** (Pages 39 - 178)  
The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance, Governance and Organisation.
- 7. Council Tax 2024/25** (Pages 179 - 188)  
The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance, Governance and Organisation.
- 8. Calendar of Meetings 2024 - 2025** (Pages 189 - 202)  
The Leader of the Council.
- 9. Statements**  
To receive any statements from the Leader of the Council, Members of the Executive or the Managing Director.
- 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.

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## **BOROUGH OF REIGATE AND BANSTEAD**

### **EXECUTIVE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at the New Council Chamber - Town Hall, Reigate on 14 December 2023 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors R. Biggs (Leader), V. H. Lewanski (Deputy Leader), H. Avery, A. King, J. P. King, R. Michalowski, N. C. Moses and C. M. Neame.

Also present: Councillors M. S. Blacker, N. D. Harrison, S. A. Kulka, M. Smith and S. T. Walsh.

#### **41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ashford.

#### **42. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the previous meeting on 16 November 2023 were agreed.

#### **43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest given.

#### **44. RESPONSE TO PETITION: RE-OPEN PUBLIC CONVENIENCES IN REIGATE AND BANSTEAD BOROUGH PARKS**

Executive Member for Commercial and Community Assets, Councillor Andrew King, gave the Executive's response to the petition. At full Council in September, a petition was debated regarding the provision of public toilets in three of the Council's parks. It had been resolved to refer the petition to the Executive for consideration.

The report set out details of that petition and contextual information regarding existing and proposed toilet provision in the three parks as well as details of other public toilets in the vicinity.

Taking into consideration the provision of the existing level of public toilet provision, it was not proposed to install any new public toilets and amend the existing provision.

The Leader noted that temporary toilets had been put in place until the renovated cafes reopened with new toilets, therefore toilet provision in the parks had continued. It was important to note that the Council was providing these services where other Councils had ceased to provide them. New facilities have also been provided in developments like The Rise in Redhill. There needed to be provision but at an affordable cost to the Council.

It was noted that the petitioner was unable to attend the meeting.

Visiting Members made the following observations:

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- They noted provision in Redhill, Reigate and in Merstham as part of the updated cafés. There was concern about Lady Neville Park as the nearest public toilets were a long walk away, therefore this needed further consideration.
- Alternative provision of toilets in Redhill was questioned, as the toilets set out in the report were some distance when walking from Memorial Park. There was also a question on equity comparing provision in Redhill to Reigate. Members asked for assurance that in future there would continue to be provision of public conveniences if there was any break in the letting of the cafes.

The Leader clarified that in Redhill Park, the separation of the café and toilets was not possible because of how the building was constructed and there was no separate access to the toilets without going through the cafe. There were toilets in Redhill Park at the moment with the Big Top pantomime taking place in Redhill and also temporary toilets in Reigate Park. Noted the request to confirm whether it would be possible to access the toilets from the outside in the new Merstham facility but also noted the need to balance this with the security as well as the additional considerable costs. The average cost of maintaining a public toilet is between £40,000 to £80,000 a year, representing about 3 to 4 per cent of the Council tax bill alone to provide in all parks.

The Property Manager confirmed that the distances were set out in the report to highlight the distance of Council-operated public toilets from the parks.

The Leader confirmed that it had been possible to open the café in Redhill because staff from the Harlequin were available to be redeployed to the café while staffing the Big Top Panto.

## **RESOLVED that the Executive:**

**i) Considers the information presented in this report and confirms that no changes will be made to public convenience provision in the borough**

## **45. OBSERVATIONS ON BUDGET PROPOSALS 2024/25 - BUDGET SCRUTINY PANEL REPORT**

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Organisation, Councillor Lewinski, introduced the item on observations of the Budget proposals 2024/25 from Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 December 2023. He summarised that the O&S Budget Scrutiny Panel found the Budget proposals to be sound and robust. Credit was given to the Chief Finance Officer and the Finance Team for their work on the proposals this year. There was some more information to come which would come with the Government local government finance settlement announcement that was due before Christmas.

Councillor Harrison spoke in his capacity as the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The following points were highlighted:

- Changes to the local Council Tax scheme are to be paid for by premiums on vacant properties which was supported by the Committee.

- The local government finance settlement was due before Christmas which will be considered with the final budget changes at the January meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- The proposed savings will not have a significant impact on service delivery.
- There was discussion on inflation assumptions and the Council's Commercial Strategy.
- Members were advised that the staff pay offer for 2024/25 had been accepted.
- The housing benefit funding shortfall was being met by a one-off withdrawal from reserves.

In conclusion, the report was judged as acceptable and the final position would be reviewed in January.

Visiting Members to Executive made the following comments:

- The Government's **Resources and Waste Strategy** meant that rollout of recycling needs to be completed to all properties by the end of next year. There was disappointment that there were no plans indicated in the draft budget proposals as how this will be achieved next year.

The Leader noted that the first item would be picked up in the Review of the Council's Environmental Strategy. The Managing Director noted that the Government's new Strategy on waste had only recently been published. Officers were consulting with the Portfolio Holder in order to plan to address the new requirements. Due to timing announcement, it was anticipated that a separate report would be brought forward to deliver the new legislation and confirm the budget implications.

- A number of items in the **Capital Programme** were brought forward from previous years. There was a request to set out those items that have been delayed and how these will be taken forward. For example, the environmental sustainability retrofit of the Council's buildings. Councillor Lewanski explained that the future spending forecast would be reviewed with budget holders, when preparing the final budget proposals.

A Visiting Member reinforced the point on the Capital Programme and the items that were previously budgeted but had not yet been delivered. Concern was expressed that further detail was required.

- **Update on the Harlequin theatre in Redhill** and the situation with regard to insurance following discovery of RAAC concrete.

The Leader clarified that there is no date yet to carry out the intrusive survey. The Managing Director advised that discussions were taking place with more information to be provided as this became available. It was confirmed that the Council owns the freehold of the Harlequin.

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**RESOLVED that the Executive:**

**Note the following observations and Recommendations from the Budget Scrutiny Panel that in response to the Service and Financial Planning 2024/25 report and supporting documents to Executive on 16 November 2023, that:**

- (i) The national and local policy context (Annex 1) and significant financial uncertainties at this stage in the budget-setting process were noted, along with the associated uncertainties and risks.**
- (ii) The service proposals set out in this report which seek to respond to this context and deliver our corporate priorities, be noted.**
- (iii) The draft service business plans for 2024/25 to 2026/27 be noted.**
- (iv) The Panel tested the explanations in the Budget report for year on year changes in the revenue budget (savings, income and growth) in the context of the actual expenditure for the previous year and current year in respect to the services to be provided.**
- (v) The Panel found the Budget proposals to be reasonable and in relation to the budget consultation and subject to the outstanding issues and risks commented on below, the Panel considered the following to be achievable, realistic, and based on sound financial practices:**
  - a. Medium Term Financial Plan Forecasts and proposed actions to address the forecast Revenue Budget gap (Annex 2);**
  - b. Service Revenue Budget growth proposals totalling £0.943 million, savings of (£1.719) million and additional income of (£0.540) million (Annex 3);**
  - c. Continued funding support for Banstead Commons Conservators for a further three years (2024/25 to 2026/27);**
  - d. Central Revenue Budget savings and growth proposals totalling (£0.376) million, and £1.75m provision for the 2024/25 pay award (Annex 3);**
  - e. Agreement of a new 10 year Section 136 agreement with Horley Town Council;**
  - f. Revenue Issues, Risks and Opportunities totalling £0.964 million, to be funded from earmarked Reserves as necessary;**
  - g. Revenue Reserve Balances at 1 April 2023 of £35.474 million (Annex 6.1); and**
  - h. A forecast balanced Revenue budget for 2024/25, subject to final confirmation of the outstanding items.**
- (vi) The Capital Programme Growth proposals totalling £3.175 million (Annex 4) was reviewed. (This is revised down from the original £3.986 million)**
- (vii) The Fees & Charges Policy (Annex 5) was noted.**
- (viii) The Reserves Policy (Annex 6.2) was noted.**
- (ix) The Panel supported the following changes to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme to be adopted from 2024/25:**



- a. **Removal of the maximum award of 90% Council Tax liability for 1,800 households and increasing the award to 100%;**
  - b. **Removal of the minimum requirement for a household to qualify for £5 per week before support is provided;**
  - c. **Expansion of support awards to cover full Council Tax liability for residents in Bands F to H;**
- (x) The Panel supported the following changes Council Tax premiums on empty properties to be adopted from 2024/25:**
  - a. **Removal of the empty homes discount of 28-days where a property becomes empty and unfurnished;**
  - b. **For empty and furnished second homes – charge 200% council tax after the first 12 months; and**
  - c. **For long-term empty properties – commence charging the 100% premium after 12 months.**
- (xi) The Panel noted that the proposals at recommendation (x) would fund the proposals at recommendations at (ix)**
- (xii) The Panel noted that 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 2024/25. The Panel looks to receive an update on these items in January. Besides Government funding, the principal areas of uncertainty and risk are: homeless support/ temporary accommodation, housing benefit subsidy, recycle income/costs and the Government's proposals for resources and waste; the Harlequin/RAAC, and final confirmation of other grants received.**
- (xiii) The changes made in the final Budget 2024/25 proposals to Executive on 1 February will also be an agenda item for discussion at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25 January 2024.**
- (xiv) The Panel noted that the proposed savings were not expected to have a significant impact on service scope or quality.**
- (xv) The Panel expressed concerns about general inflationary pressures in the UK economy – 10% in the previous year and currently 6%, well above the Bank of England 2% target, and suggested this may put further upward pressures on the cost of goods and services and the annual pay award.**
- (xvi) The Panel noted that for several years, the Council has been pursuing its Commercial Strategy to help address budget gaps in future years, as Government funding is further reduced. It noted that additional income from The Rise is included in the revenue budget, with potential for further increases when all units are fully let. Furthermore, Government guidance and experience elsewhere means that the Council is cautious about further expansion of commercial activity. The**

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**Panel noted that the Commercial Strategy was now more focussed on generating income through the Council's areas of strength, such as service provision, rather than investment in commercial assets. It was noted that outside of The Rise, there are not yet specific proposals for additional revenue in development for 2025/26 and beyond.**

**(xvii) The Panel noted that the use of earmarked reserves, to fund housing benefit shortfalls, could only be a one-off action and not a permanent solution.**

**(xviii) The Panel noted that in the Financial Accounts, a £1.1million provision has been made for credit loss with regard to the investment in Pathway for Care. This would be funded from the Commercial Risks and Volatility Reserve.**

**The Panel thanked the Portfolio Holder and officers for the substantial work in preparing the Budget 2023/24 report and for the written responses to the 82 advance questions from Members.**

## **46. COMMERCIAL STRATEGY PROGRESS UPDATE 2023**

Executive Member for Commercial and Community Assets, Councillor Andrew King, gave an overview of the report which was the second annual update on the Council's Commercial Strategy. Part 1 was agreed in November 2020 and Part 2 in December 2021.

This gave an overview of the changing context in which the Council operates and its influence on commercial activities. National guidance and controls on commercial activity by local authorities now more closely steer the available investment approaches. There is an increased emphasis on ensuring that investment and commercial activities should directly serve Councils' role in benefiting their local areas.

For this Council, this renewed emphasis aligns with its wider objectives and principles. As set out in the report, consideration of commercial matters is now primarily taking place within the context of the Council's Financial Sustainability Programme, updates on which are provided as part of quarterly reporting to this committee and the Executive.

In terms of this year's activity, the Council's commercial activity can be broken down into two main areas – commercial assets and commercial services. Progress this year has continued to be positive, with achievements including:

- The completion of The Rise development at Marketfield Way, with more information provided in the parallel report to this committee;
- A contribution of an additional £700k towards the revenue budget from Council property assets; and
- Additional income of nearly £540k from planned updates to fees and charges.

Work is also continuing on other elements, with improvements now made to property reporting, a review of potentially underutilised assets underway and

consideration being given to a framework for future development activities. There is also note of the approval of acquisition of additional temporary and emergency accommodation, which will both improve the service the Council can offer and reduce costs associated with relying on external provision.

As set out in the previous annual report, there has been a move away from the use of company structures to support commercial activities, with potential company structures around housing activity and revenues and benefits work no longer viewed as required. More information on existing companies is available in the Winter 2023 Companies Performance Update considered by the Partner, Shareholder and Trustee Executive Sub-Committee. Work on improvements to contract management and procurement is also continuing, with more information provided in an annex to the Q2 Internal Audit progress report considered by the Audit Committee.

This report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, who did not make any specific observations.

**RESOLVED – that the Executive:**

- (i) **Notes the Commercial Strategy Annual Progress Report at Annex 1, along with any observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and agrees it for publication on the Council’s website.**

**47. PROCUREMENT OF GENERAL AND CAPITAL BUILDING WORKS CONTRACTS**

Executive Member for Commercial and Community Assets, Councillor Andrew King, introduced the report that recommends the award of two new contracts; one for planned and reactive property maintenance work and the other for capital building works.

The remit of the previous contract has been extended to cover recently acquired housing properties as well as some of the commercial portfolio for which the Council has repairing liability. The capital building works contract is a new contract required to ensure that the Council can be more responsive in arranging building works or alterations to buildings, primarily for the commercial property portfolio.

The commercial property market is highly competitive at present, and this means that alterations, sustainability improvements and other works are often necessary to prepare a property for market or to retain existing tenants. Procuring the capital building works contract will help to minimise void periods. Also, both contracts will ensure that the Council achieves value for money for repair, maintenance and other work required to Council-owned property.

The financial implications of the contracts were set out in the exempt report at Part 2 of the agenda. The expenditure will be accommodated within existing revenue and capital programme budgets.

There were no further questions from Executive Members.

A Visiting Member asked a question about environmental sustainability considerations and sought assurance that through the tendering process best

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practice would be followed, for example, when replacing plant to introduce insulation and other environmental improvements.

The Leader confirmed that this would be explored wherever possible.

There was no discussion on the Exempt Part 2 report.

## **RESOLVED – that the Executive approve:**

- i. **The award of a three year contract to Bennetts Builders Limited as the provider of general building works (planned preventative maintenance) from 1 March 2023 to 31 February 2026, as set out in the exempt report in Part 2 of this agenda.**
- ii. **The award of a three year contract to SW Nichols Limited as the provider of capital building works from 1 March 2023 to 31 February 2026, as set out in the exempt report in Part 2 of this agenda.**

## **48. QUARTER 2 2023/24 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources, Councillor James King, introduced the report that provided the Executive with an update on the Council's performance up to the end of Quarter 2 (July to September 2023).

Of the 10 key performance indicators reported on in Q2, eight were on target or within the agreed tolerance. Two indicators were off-target and outside of the agreed tolerance, which were:

- **KPI 6** – net housing completions, and;
- **KPI 7** – affordable housing completions.

Additional detail was provided in the report available at Annex 1.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on Thursday 7 December. The Committee made no formal observations to the Executive, though some advanced questions were asked, and comments made which were captured in the minutes of the meeting and published as an Addendum.

There were no further questions from Executive Members or Visiting Members.

Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance, Governance and Organisation, Councillor Lewanski, then introduced the financial elements of the performance report. This gave the Council's Revenue and Capital Budget position for Quarter 2 to 30 September. It also included an update on the quarter's treasury management activities.

### **Revenue Budget**

At Quarter 2 the projected full year outturn is £21.911m against a management budget of £23.194m resulting in an underspend for the year of £1.283m (5.5%). Details of the more significant budget variances were set out in the report. At this stage in the year there were no significant areas of concern, but further work was being carried out to look into the adverse variances.

## **Capital Programme**

The full year Capital Programme forecast at the end of Quarter 2 of £27.074m was 26% below the approved Programme for the year. The variance was predominantly as a result of £9.752m slippage. The reasons for the slippage at this stage was primarily because of updated forecasts of the time required to deliver the larger programmes. Capital spending plans were based on information available at the start of 2023 and, six months later, some timescales had been revised.

It was confirmed that the balance of the £30.0 million that was previously approved for investment in Housing schemes remains available but not yet committed.

## **Treasury Management**

The report included Annex 5.1 which provided an update on treasury management performance to the end of September. It confirms that treasury activities are in line with the Strategy that Council approved in July and that was reported to O&S and Executive in June following a Member briefing with our treasury advisors Arlingclose. The return on investments continued to outperform similar authorities and this was a key factor contributing to the favourable revenue budget outturn forecasts.

The report also set out the current position with regard to the Council's non-treasury (company) investments. These investments were explained in more depth in the Companies Performance Update report later in the agenda pack.

## **Strategic Financial Risks**

Executive noted that feedback was provided at the previous week's Audit Committee where Members asked questions about Strategic Risk 1 (Financial Sustainability) and whether the Council should now revise the RAG rating for that Risk to amber from red in light of the forecast balanced budget for next year.

Councillor Lewanski advised Executive this this would be considered when reviewing risks at the end of Quarter 3. The Council, however, does need to be mindful that SR2 focuses on the medium term, as well as the immediate future, and looking ahead the prospects for local government funding remain uncertain.

## **Overview & Scrutiny Committee comments**

The comments from Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 7 December 2023 which were published as an Addendum draft minute were noted. Councillor Harrison reported that O&S had looked at the individual items in the Budget review and the positive and negative variances in detail. The Committee was satisfied with what they had reviewed.

## **RESOLVED – that the Executive:**

- (i) Notes the Key Performance Indicators for Q2 2023/24 as detailed in the report and Annex 1;**
- (ii) Notes the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme forecasts for Q2 2023/24 as detailed in the report and Annexes 2 and 3;**

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## **(iii) Notes the Quarter 2 Treasury Management Performance Update for 2023/24 at Annex 5.**

### **49. RISK MANAGEMENT - Q2 2023/24**

The Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources, Councillor James King, gave an overview of the report which updates the Executive on risk management in Quarter 2 – July to September 2023.

In Quarter 2, no new strategic risks were identified, and no strategic risks recommended for closure. At the end of the quarter, there was one red rated operational risk, the detail of which is set out in the Part 2 exempt annex.

This report was considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on Wednesday 6 December. The Audit Committee made one observation to be considered by the Executive, concerning SR2 – ‘commercial investment’. In summary, a Substitute Committee Member commented they found it difficult to support an amber (as opposed to red) rating for this risk.

The risk scoring had been reviewed by officers and is felt to be appropriate at this time. However this risk – as with all strategic risks – will continue to be kept under review and any changes reported quarterly.

Councillor Harrison clarified that he was the Member at the Audit Committee meeting who had found it hard to accept SR2 (Commercial investment) as amber and not red. He had also considered that SR3 (Challenging economic conditions for residents and businesses) should be reported as amber and not red as it had fewer direct consequences on the Council.

There was no discussion of the Exempt item.

#### **RESOLVED – that the Executive:**

**(i) Notes the Q2 2023/24 update on risk management provided in the report.**

### **50. MARKETFIELD WAY UPDATE - DECEMBER 2023**

Executive Member for Place, Planning and Regulatory Services, Councillor Michalowski, gave an update on progress to deliver the Marketfield Way project in Redhill since it was last considered by Executive in December 2019.

An Exempt Addendum to the report included some minor amendments to the Part 2 Exempt report to incorporate recent feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Acting as developer, over the last four years the Council had overcome numerous challenges to bring this project forward to get to this stage. The most significant challenge was the huge uncertainty brought about by the pandemic. This resulted in the Council not being able to secure early pre lets on any of the commercial space, the loss of the initial cinema operator, and complex logistical challenges to ensure safe working on site.

While there was a fixed rate contract when changes were made, this resulted in cost increases due to high build cost inflation not only because of the pandemic but also due to the crisis in Ukraine. The development also faced complex engineering challenges including the relocation of an electricity sub-station and statutory services and the build over of a large public sewer.

These factors ultimately resulted in delay and consequential cost increases for the project. The pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis also resulted in much more uncertainty for prospective tenants and brought about less rental income than originally forecast.

Despite these challenges, the main build has now been completed. The residential part has been sold by the Council to a private sector partner. Over 70% of the commercial floorspace has been let, with deals being secured on the three remaining units.

The new development, The Rise, is now well and truly open for business, welcoming thousands of people every day. It is also already home to over 100 people, who benefit from living at the heart of Redhill town centre, with its excellent transport links.

This Council's commitment to the project and its investment has made a palpable difference to the regeneration of Redhill, in line with the Council's Corporate objectives. In summary:

- The Rise has become a leisure destination, alongside the Harlequin, with a forecast 400,000 visitors to The Light this year.
- Surveys show that people love the new leisure facilities, and they are telling their friends and family.
- Footfall in the town is substantially up, bucking national trends.
- More people are visiting the town from a wider catchment area.
- More people are staying longer; and
- Businesses report that trade is up, with more money ringing in their tills.

As a local ward councillor and the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Michalowski thanked both past and current Members and officers of this Council, as well as the local community for their continued support in bringing this project forward and making a real difference to the lives of residents and businesses.

The Leader emphasised the huge difference the development had made to the Redhill area. It had increased the night-time economy, with The Light bringing more than just a cinema to the town. Regeneration and added social value had been achieved. It was a fantastic asset that belonged to the Council and to residents of the borough for years to come. Congratulations were given to the Members and officers for this success and getting it over the finishing line.

Visiting Members particularly thanked the Head of Place Delivery, Peter Boarder, who had worked tirelessly on the project and seen it to completion. The project showed the Council was prepared to invest in its assets in the Borough as a way of generating revenue. Other comments included:

- The success in increasing the number of visitors and the footfall to the town.

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- Residents thanked officers for the timely work to replace some of the granite paving.

Councillor Harrison, in his capacity as the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee, said that the improvements in Redhill had been noted as well as the difficulties of carrying out the project during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Committee agreed to move into Exempt Part 2 session. Following discussion in Part 2, the meeting returned to the public session and it was:

## **RESOLVED - that Executive:**

- (i) **Note the progress that has been made to deliver Stage 4 of the project, in relation to scheme implementation, construction, residential sale and commercial lettings;**
- (ii) **Note the initial economic, social and environmental benefits that have been derived;**
- (iii) **Note the details set out in the Part 2 report;**
- (iv) **Authorise the Head of Place Delivery, in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance & Governance, Executive Member for Place, Planning & Regulatory Services and Chief Finance Officer to settle the final account with the Council's contractor VINCI Construction UK in line with the recommendations set out in Part 2 of this report;**
- (v) **Approve the inclusion of £4,297,682 million Capital Programme growth for completion of the development, funded from prudential borrowing, in the final budget report to Executive on 1 February 2024.**

## **51. REPLACEMENT OF LEASED COMPACT ROAD SWEEPERS**

The Executive Member, Councillor Avery, introduced the report on the replacement of leased compact road sweepers to consider and approve the award of a four-year lease contract to Karcher UK Limited to supply four compact road sweepers. The Council currently operates 4 leased compact road sweepers, and their lease is due to end in January 2024. The lease agreement was for a four-year period from January 2024 to January 2028.

The current road sweepers are four years old and becoming unreliable, often breaking down due to their age and the nature of work that they carry out. Replacement of the sweepers is necessary to ensure that reliable and legally compliant vehicles remain available to support ongoing service delivery. The benefits included:

1. Entering into a new lease to allow for the continuation of the service, maintaining the cleanliness of paths, pavements and pedestrianised areas throughout the Borough.
2. The new machines can be fuelled with Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), reducing the Council's carbon emissions.

These recommendations also support the Council's statutory obligation to clean and maintain the Borough's town centres and public areas.



There were no comments from Executive Members.

Visiting Members made the following observations:

- Members questioned whether the switch to HVO would reduce carbon emissions, what would it achieve and was it worth doing this currently with the additional costs.  
The Leader responded that these street sweepers could run on both diesel and HVO with diesel used until the switch was made. There was information to indicate potential for a significant reduction in carbon emissions when using HVO. This issue could be addressed at a separate time.
- Members asked if there was a break clause within the four-year contract and was there an intention to use them with HVO fuel in future and from what date?

Portfolio Holder, Councillor Avery, responded that the street sweepers were compatible with HVO and that it was intended to operate them with HVO, but not immediately.

The Executive agreed to move to Exempt Part 2 session to consider the Exempt report.

Following discussion, the Committee returned to the public session of the meeting, and it was:

**RESOLVED – that the Executive:**

- (i) **Approves the award of a four-year lease contract to Karcher UK Limited to supply four compact road sweepers. Contract to run from January 2024 to January 2028.**

## **52. OPTIONS FOR THE REDUCTION IN CARBON EMISSIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S FLEET OF DIESEL POWERED VEHICLES**

The Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Avery, gave an overview of the report which asked Members to consider and approve options for the reduction in carbon emissions from the council's fleet of diesel-powered vehicles. The Council currently operates 129 vehicles or plant, 115 which are operated using diesel fuel.

The key proposals were:

- To increase the capital fleet replacement budget to enable the purchase of one Electric-powered refuse collection vehicle, by £250,000;
- To delegate authority to the Head of Neighbourhood Operations, in consultation with Executive Members to enter into a procurement process for the electric refuse collection vehicles and three other diesel-powered dustcarts, which are at the end of their serviceable life.
- A switch from powering our Refuse Collection vehicles from diesel to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil commonly referred to as HVO.

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Operating the vehicle fleet makes a substantial contribution to the Council's carbon emissions. The purchase of one electric refuse collection vehicle (RCV) as part of its ongoing fleet replacement programme represents a measured approach to beginning the transition to low carbon RCVs, whilst recognising the relatively high cost of these vehicles.

The use of HVO in operating the refuse collection vehicle fleet provides a cost-effective means of reducing carbon emissions until such time as these existing RCV vehicles can be replaced with low carbon alternatives. The benefits include:

1. A reduction in the overall council's operational carbon emissions of 25%.
2. A reduction in the refuse collection vehicle fleet's carbon emissions of 76%.

These recommendations align with the Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy that commits the authority to work towards a target of net zero operational carbon emissions by 2030. The report contained more detail about the financial implications, sustainability and other benefits of the proposals and how the proposals will be implemented and associated risks mitigated.

The Head of Corporate Policy, Performance and Projects commented on the benefits of HVO being a recognised way of reducing carbon emissions from fleet vehicles. Paragraph 18 in the report details how the carbon reduction figures have been calculated. It is an interim measure until other options are available.

Visiting Members asked the following questions:

- Electric RCVs Vehicles are already on the market so are there other options available. Was it about the level of risk appetite to recommend one rather than three?
- Where is the Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) sourced and can the Council guarantee the provenance. Can details be published on the Council's website?
- Whether hybrid vehicles were available until fully electric versions are available that include an electric lift and compressor.

The Leader stated that cost was a key factor as electric RCVs are twice the cost of the diesel alternative while hydrogen-powered vehicles are three times the cost. The recommendation in the report was to procure one electric RCV for garden waste rather than three in order to test the charging infrastructure. The Council was taking a cautious approach to what was relatively new technology. The Council cannot further delay the replacement of the other two additional diesel powered RCVs as they are at the end of their serviceable life.

Officers confirmed that all suppliers that were approached, audited the provenance and carbon footprint of the supply of HVO, from the source of the oil through to delivery, and the carbon emissions of each process.

Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Avery, explained that this report was a first step in using an electric RCV in order to collect garden waste to give real world practical experience so that use of RCVs can then be expanded throughout the fleet. The recommendation was based on

a single bodied RCV which can be used for garden waste. There is not a suitable electric twin bodied RCV available. Officers confirmed that the bin lifters on all the vehicles purchased in 2020 and 2021 were electric therefore a form of hybrid service was in operation already.

- Members asked for clarification on the ongoing cost implications of an electric RCV compared to diesel. It was also requested that the supporting business case be shared.
- Members also asked whether the HVO is sourced from the UK or imported from overseas and its provenance.

Officers confirmed that there was not currently sufficient HVO being manufactured in the UK currently and it would therefore be imported from Europe with a guarantee that there will be no rape seed or virgin oil used. It will be recycled oil from the food industries and other industries. Officers confirmed that vehicles can be switched back to diesel from HVO if there are any issues, without any impact or alterations required.

The financial implications set out in the report were discussed. These included revenue and capital budget impacts. Current forecasts showed that it costs slightly more to charge electric vehicles compared to diesel fuel.

- Members asked about the planned programme for vehicle replacement and when more vehicles would be procured in future. It was confirmed that an outline of the programme was set out in Table 3 of the report on p247.
- The expense of electric vehicles and of the cost of vehicle recovery when the battery fails or when a vehicle breaks down was noted.

The Leader noted that all these were important steps forward to meet the Council's Environmental Strategy and goals.

## **RESOLVED – that the Executive:**

- (i) Approve the inclusion of £0.250million Capital Programme growth for the purchase of one electric refuse collection vehicle, funded from prudential borrowing, in the final budget report to Executive on 1 February 2024.**
- (ii) Agree to delegate authority to award the vehicle supply contract(s) for the four refuse collection vehicles identified for replacement in 2023/24 (one EV garden waste vehicle, two diesel garden waste vehicles and one split body waste & recycling vehicle) to the Head of Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and the Executive Member for Finance, Government & Organisation; following the undertaking of a procurement exercise in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.**
- (iii) Endorse the transition of the existing diesel refuse collection vehicle fleet to run on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil, noting the financial**

# Agenda Item 2

Executive  
14 December 2023

Minutes

**implications that were included within the draft budget proposals reported to Executive on 16 November 2023.**

## **53. STATEMENTS**

There were no Statements given at the meeting.

The Leader wished all Members and officers a happy Christmas and New Year. He thanked them for all their work on reports to Executive through the year.

## **54. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no other urgent business to discuss.

## **55. EXEMPT BUSINESS**

**RESOLVED – that the Executive agreed that:**

**Members of the Press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items 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.**

There was discussion in Exempt Part 2 sessions on Item 10 – Marketfield Way Update – December 2023 and Item 11 – Replacement of leased compact road sweepers which are set out in the Exempt Minutes.

The Meeting closed at 9.22 pm



<b>Signed off by</b>	Head of Corporate Policy, Projects and Performance
<b>Author</b>	Catherine Rose, Head of Corporate Policy
<b>Telephone</b>	Tel: 01737 276766
<b>Email</b>	Catherine.Rose@reigate-banstead.gov.uk
<b>To</b>	Executive
<b>Date</b>	Thursday, 1 February 2024
<b>Executive Member</b>	Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability

<b>Key Decision Required</b>	Y
<b>Wards Affected</b>	(All Wards);

<b>Subject</b>	Response to Motion: Climate Change
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<b>Recommendations</b>
<p><b>That the Executive:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) <b>Recognises the continuing need for urgent action on climate change and nature recovery, and is committed to maintaining an up-to-date Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan which will provide the basis for its work at a Council level and within Reigate &amp; Banstead Borough;</b></li> <li>(ii) <b>Is committed to continuing to work closely with Surrey County Council and Surrey district and borough authorities to achieve shared climate change and environmental sustainability objectives; and</b></li> <li>(iii) <b>Agrees that the Portfolio Holder for Environment &amp; Sustainability write to local MPs informing them of the Council’s approach to taking action on climate change and nature recovery, and requesting to meet to discuss how the Government’s future approach to policy and legislation can assist in this.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Reasons for Recommendations</b>
To confirm the Council’s position in respect of the two main topic areas covered by the Motion, that is, climate change and nature recovery.
<b>Executive Summary</b>

# Agenda Item 4

At the Full Council meeting on 30 November 2023, Cllr Essex proposed a Motion about climate change, seconded by Cllr Booton. The motion requested (in summary) that the Council declare a climate emergency, fully endorse the Surrey County Council Climate Change Strategy and Local Transport Plan 4, and support the Climate and Ecology Bill; writing to local MPs to confirm the above.

This report considers the Motion requests in turn. It recommends:

- On the basis of our previous approach, that the Executive should confirm its previously stated position; that is, to recognise the need for urgent action on climate change, and its commitment to maintaining and implementing an up-to-date Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan.
- In relation to the Surrey County Council Climate Change Strategy and Local Transport Plan 4, that, while full endorsement is not appropriate due to some inconsistency in detail, the opportunity should be taken to reassert our commitment to joint working with Surrey County Council and other local authorities to deliver shared climate change objectives. There are also other SCC documents that have - and will continue to - inform our local approach, not just those referenced in the Motion.
- That the Executive should also confirm its commitment to supporting nature recovery in its Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan, in recognition of the relationship between climate and nature (which the Climate and Ecology Bill draws attention to); and
- That the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Sustainability should communicate the Council's position on the above to local MPs with an offer to meet and discuss these important topics in more detail.

**Executive has authority to approve the above recommendations**

## Statutory Powers

1. Under the Local Government Act 2000, the Council has a duty to promote the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of its area. The Council also has related statutory duties around environmental health and planning.
2. The Council's Constitution allows for Motions relating to the function of the Council or the Borough to be submitted to Ordinary Council meetings, and for these to be referred to the Leader or relevant Committee for consideration and recommendation to Council (if appropriate).

## Background

3. At the Full Council meeting on 30 November 2023, Cllr Essex proposed a Motion about climate change, seconded by Cllr Booton.
4. The full text of the Motion is available to view [here](#). In summary, it requested that Council resolve to:
  1. Declare a Climate Emergency itself and reflect this in the update of its Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

2. Fully endorse the Surrey Climate Strategy and associated Local Transport Plan in its update of its own Environmental Sustainability Strategy
3. Join the 237 other councils who have resolved to support the Climate and Ecology Bill and write to the organisers of the cross-party campaign for this bill, expressing Reigate and Banstead Borough Council's support.
4. Write to the MPs with constituencies in our borough council area, informing them that this motion has been passed, and urging them to sign up to support the Climate and Ecology Bill
5. The Motion was referred by the Mayor for consideration by the Executive.
6. This report considers each request within the Motion in turn and makes associated recommendations.

### **The Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy**

7. The Council's Environmental Sustainability (ES) Strategy is referred to within the Motion. The current ES Strategy (available [here](#)) was approved by the Executive in 2020. The Strategy covers not only climate change (ie the reduction of carbon emissions) but also wider environmental sustainability challenges, including the use of natural resources ('low impact consumption') and protecting and enhancing the natural environment and biodiversity.
8. We report annually on our progress in delivering the ES Action Plan. The most recent annual report was provided to the Executive in September 2023 and is available on the [Committees section of the website](#). We continue to take positive action to become a more sustainable Council and Borough, and to reduce our carbon emissions. More recent progress (since the 2022/23 annual report was published) has included:
  - Agreement to fuel our refuse collection vehicles with hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO), which will reduce our total council carbon emissions by around 25%; and the purchase of our first electric bin lorry.
  - Inclusion in our latest draft capital programme of over £1m which (along with CIL funding) will enable us to reduce carbon emissions from gas and electricity use within our operational buildings.
  - Installation of solar panels on temporary and emergency housing owned by the Council, plus the highest number of 'Solar Together' registrations of any Surrey local authority, with installations already taking place meaning residents benefit from lower energy bills and our borough-level carbon emissions are reduced.
  - A dedicated Active Travel Officer, working with local schools and our community development workers, to increase the uptake of walking and cycling and reduce reliance on the private car.
9. Following agreement from the Executive in September 2023, a light touch review of the ES Strategy is in the process of being undertaken. An updated Strategy and Action Plan is on the Forward Programme to be reported to both the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Executive in March 2023.

### **Key Information**

# Agenda Item 4

## **Motion request 1: That the Council declare a climate emergency and reflect this in the update of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy**

10. Over 300 single tier, county and district Councils in England & Wales have declared a climate emergency, including Surrey County Council and all other Surrey districts and boroughs, as well as our other neighbouring councils.
11. A declaration of a climate emergency does not come with any necessary action or resourcing attached, rather it is a public statement or recognition of the current and immediate climate challenge facing us globally.
12. The Council's Executive considered a previous Full Council Motion to declare a climate emergency at the same time the current Environmental Sustainability Strategy was presented to it for agreement in July 2020<sup>1</sup>. At that time, the Executive did not declare a climate emergency, but noted that – in preparing the Strategy – the Council had already made a clear commitment to take action to tackle the global climate challenge. The Executive therefore agreed a recommendation to:  
  
“recognise the need for urgent action on climate change and environmental sustainability issues”
13. Subsequently, councillor questions to Full Council meetings have revisited the suggestion, including in December 2022 and most recently in July 2023. In July 2023, in a written answer to a councillor question raised by Councillor Booton, the Leader re-affirmed that he was:  
  
“committed to taking action – both to tackle climate change via a reduction in greenhouse gases, and to ensure that our Borough and communities are supported to adapt to the changing climate.”

### **Options**

14. As recognised in the Motion, the option remains for the Council to declare a climate emergency. If the Executive wishes to take this option, this could then be reflected in the updated Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan which is due to be considered for adoption in March.
15. The alternative option – suggested here on the basis of the Executive's previous approach – is for the Executive to reassert the position of the 2020 Council Executive by focusing on the continuing need for urgent action on climate change, including by maintaining - and implementing - an up-to-date Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan (see Recommendation (i)). Some examples of the positive progress that is being made are set out in the earlier section of this report.

## **Motion request 2: That the Council fully endorse the Surrey Climate Strategy and associated Local Transport Plan in its update of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy**

### **The Surrey Climate Change Strategy**

16. Surrey County Council (SCC) agreed its Climate Change Strategy in April 2020 ([Surrey's Climate Change Strategy 2020 - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://reigate-banstead.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=137&MIId=1413&Ver=4)).

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<sup>1</sup> Executive report available to view at <https://reigate-banstead.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=137&MIId=1413&Ver=4>



17. The Surrey Climate Change Strategy recognises that it “provides a joint framework for collaborative action on climate change across Surrey’s local authorities and other partners”. Soon after it was agreed by SCC, the Reigate & Banstead Borough Council Executive adopted the current ES Strategy, and also agreed a recommendation to:

“support the overall approach within the recently adopted Surrey Climate Change Strategy and commit to continue to work with the County Council and other Surrey boroughs and districts to develop a jointly owned action plan and achieve shared climate change objectives.”

18. At that time (July 2020), full endorsement of the SCC Strategy was not considered appropriate because further work was necessary to finalise a joint action plan and agree individual authorities’ contributions to Surrey-wide targets. Subsequently, in October 2021, the SCC Cabinet agreed a [Delivery Plan](#) to accompany the strategy, covering the period 2021-2025. This Delivery Plan included about 70 actions which reflected and built upon action already being undertaken by Surrey local authorities, including Reigate & Banstead.

19. In November 2021<sup>2</sup>, this Council’s Executive was updated on the publication of the SCC Delivery Plan, and took the opportunity to:

“reassert its commitment to working in partnership with Surrey County Council and other Surrey districts and boroughs to achieve county-wide climate objectives.”

### **The Surrey Local Transport Plan**

20. Preparation of a Local Transport Plan (LTP) is best practice for Highways Authorities such as SCC. The latest [LTP \(version 4\)](#) was agreed by SCC in July 2022. It covers a 10 year period and focuses on action needed across transport networks in the County to achieve net zero by 2050. It explains:

“We are keen to work with district and borough councils, stakeholders, partner organisations, local groups, businesses, communities and residents to deliver the Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) and jointly achieve our ambitious objectives.

We will lead on the delivery of the LTP4 going forward, as part of our statutory responsibility to maintain and develop transport and highways at a local level. However, many of the measures identified within LTP4 will require the involvement of other organisations, particularly our district and borough authorities, sub-national transport body and central government.”

21. As a document prepared and owned by the Highways Authority, lower tier authorities are not required to formally endorse the LTP, and we have not received a request from SCC to do so. RBBC submitted comments on the draft LTP4 at the consultation stage, although it is understood that the consultation responses received by SCC did not result in changes to the proposed measures or overall approach. Joint working between SCC and the districts and boroughs to deliver shared objectives within the LTP4 is nonetheless important.

### **Options**

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<sup>2</sup> Executive report available to view at <https://reigate-banstead.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=1810&Ver=4>

# Agenda Item 4

22. The Motion recommends 'full endorsement' of the SCC Climate Change Strategy and the LTP4 via the update of the Council's updated Environmental Sustainability Strategy.
23. The updated ES Strategy is due to be considered by the Executive at its meeting in March. It is suggested that this process should not be 'pre-empted' by making the commitment proposed in the Motion at this February meeting.
24. It should be noted that there are some elements within the SCC documents referred to in the motion that are not entirely consistent with our own position and/or are unlikely to be deliverable for us at the borough-level. By way of example, when it comes to the SCC commitment for 'all council-owned vehicles... to be zero carbon by 2030 or sooner, we do not currently have sufficient certainty locally that vehicle technology will have evolved sufficiently for us to do this.
25. However, members can be reassured that both the Surrey Climate Change Strategy and the LTP4 are documents that we will continue to work with SCC and other boroughs and districts to collectively deliver.
26. There are also other relevant SCC documents that are not referred to in the Motion that have, and will continue to, inform our work – for example the Climate Change Delivery Plan and the Surrey Adapt Strategy. Collectively, these documents will help inform not only our ES Strategy work but also other activity, for example the development of borough-level planning policy documents.
27. Recommendation (ii) is therefore proposed as reflects this wider commitment to ongoing cross-authority working across a wider range of areas of shared interest.

### **Motion request 3: That the Council support the Climate and Ecology Bill**

28. The Climate and Ecology Bill was first introduced to Parliament as a Private Members Bill by Caroline Lucas MP (Green) in 2020. The Bill was re-introduced (this time as the Climate and Ecology (No 2) Bill) in the 2022/23 Parliamentary Session by Olivia Blake MP (Labour) and received its first reading on 10 May 2023. It has not yet progressed to its second reading.
29. The Bill has a reasonable amount of cross party support. As of May 2023, 126 MPs from across 11 political parties were supporting it.
30. A group called Zero Hour ([Climate and Ecology Bill - Back the CE Bill Campaign \(zerohour.uk\)](https://zerohour.uk)) is campaigning for the Bill. Local Councils that have signed up to this campaign can be viewed [here](#). It should be noted that the term 'local councils' include unitary councils, county councils, district councils and town / parish councils. Of the 319 councils signed up at the time of writing, around 80 are local authorities (including Mole Valley, Epsom & Ewell, Elmbridge, Surrey Heath and Woking) – the others are town or parish councils.
31. As noted above, the Bill has not yet made any progress through Parliament. It seeks to bring together both climate and nature targets and implement a joined-up approach to achieve those targets. The proposed climate and nature targets are, respectively:
  - Cutting UK emissions at a rate consistent with limiting the global mean temperature increase to 1.5°C; and

- Halting and reversing the UK's overall contribution to the degradation and loss of nature in the UK and overseas.

32. The joined-up approach includes:

- Giving the relevant Secretary of State a duty to implement a strategy to achieve stated climate and nature targets in a joined up way
- Establishing a Climate and Nature Assembly to advise the Secretary of State in creating the strategy; and
- Giving duties to the Committee on Climate Change and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee regarding the strategy and its targets.

### Options

33. The Motion recommends that the Council support the Climate and Ecology Bill. The Executive may chose to follow this course of action, however while some of the principles behind the Bill are to be supported, there appears limited chance of it being enacted in this parliamentary period.

34. As such, it is suggested that the Executive should confirm its commitment to tackling not only climate change but also nature recovery, through its own ES Strategy, recognising that the updated Strategy will include updated actions in relation to the nature and biodiversity theme (see Recommendation (i)).

### **Motion request 4: Write to the local MPs, informing them that the motion has been passed, and urging them to sign up to support the Climate and Ecology Bill**

35. This element of the Motion follows on from the first three requests, considered above.

36. Subject to agreement of the other recommendations within this report, it is suggested that the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Sustainability write to local MPs informing them of the Council's approach to taking action in relation to climate change and nature and requesting to meet to discuss how the Government's future approach to policy and legislation in this area can assist in the achievement of our objectives.

### Summary

37. In summary, the suggested response to the Motion submitted to Full Council is not to fully accept the Motion requests; but to confirm - via the recommendations within this report - the Council's commitment to taking action on nature and climate change, working in partnership with other organisations, including Surrey County Council. This commitment will also then be able to underpin the updated Environmental Sustainability Strategy, which is due to be considered by the Executive next month.

### Options

38. The following options are available to the Executive:

**Option 1:** Support the Motion as presented to Council in November 2023 in full. This option is not recommended because elements of the motion are inconsistent with the Council's current stated position.

**Option 2:** Agree the recommendations in this report, which – although not fully consistent with the Motion – confirm the Council's position in relation to the two key topic areas covered by the Motion, that is, climate change and nature recovery.

# Agenda Item 4

This option is recommended as it provides the opportunity to reassert the Council's stance on these important topics.

**Option 3:** Take no action. This option is not recommended as the referral of the Motion to the Executive provides the opportunity to reassert and confirm that Council's commitment to taking action on climate change and nature recovery – to take no action would be to miss the chance to do this.

## Legal Implications

39. There are no legal implications directly arising from the recommendations within this report.

## Financial Implications

40. There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations within this report.

## Equalities Implications

41. No equality implications have been identified as arising from the recommendations within this report.
42. There are however equality issues in relation to climate change, including the ability of people from differing backgrounds and equality groups to access information about climate change, and the more vulnerable residents in our communities being most at risk from the impacts of a changing climate. Both these issues will continue to be considered as the Council implements its ES Strategy and Action Plan.

## Communication Implications

43. There are no communications implications directly arising from the recommendations within this report.
44. Communication and engagement is (and will continue to be) a central element of the Council's environmental sustainability activity. It is identified in the current ES Strategy as essential for the effective implementation of the Action Plan.

## Environmental Sustainability Implications

45. The Council is committed to taking action to address environmental sustainability and climate change issues. The current ES Strategy includes themes not only relating to reducing energy use and carbon emissions, but also reducing the consumption of natural resources and protecting and enhancing nature and the environment.
46. The recommendations in this report are consistent with our current ES Strategy and underline the Council's commitment to taking action – alone and in partnership - to tackle climate change.

## Risk Management Considerations

47. No specific risk management considerations have been identified relating to the recommendations within this report

## **Procurement/Contract Management and Subsidy Considerations**

48. No specific procurement, contract management or subsidy considerations have been identified relating to the recommendations within this report.

## **Consultation**

49. Informal consultation with Executive Members has been carried out to inform the preparation of this report.

## **Policy Framework**

50. The Council's Corporate Plan, Reigate & Banstead 2025 includes an objective about Environmental Sustainability, which is to "Reduce our own environmental impact, support local residents and businesses to do the same, and make sure our activities increase the borough's resilience to the effects of climate change.

51. The ES Strategy is subsidiary to the Corporate Plan – while not part of the formal Policy Framework as defined by the Constitution it provides more detail about how the Council will achieve its Corporate Plan objective. As noted in the earlier sections of this report, the ES Strategy is in the process of being updated having been in place for 3 years.

## **Background Powers**

1. Corporate Plan 2025 - [www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/rbbc2025](http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/rbbc2025)
2. Environmental Sustainability Strategy - [https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20065/environmental\\_sustainability\\_and\\_climate\\_change/1220/our\\_approach\\_to\\_environmental\\_sustainability](https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20065/environmental_sustainability_and_climate_change/1220/our_approach_to_environmental_sustainability)
3. Council motion to Full Council, 30 November 2023 - <https://reigate-banstead.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s29703/23.11.30%20Climate%20motion%20docx.pdf>

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<b>Signed off by</b>	Head of Housing
<b>Author</b>	Alison Robinson, Housing Strategy and Performance Manager
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<b>Email</b>	Alison.Robinson@reigate-banstead.gov.uk
<b>To</b>	Executive
<b>Date</b>	Thursday, 1 February 2024
<b>Executive Member</b>	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Support

<b>Key Decision Required</b>	Y
<b>Wards Affected</b>	(All Wards);

<b>Subject</b>	Housing Rent Review and Debt Recovery Policy
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<b>Recommendations</b>
<p><b>That the Executive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>(i) Approves a 7.7% rent increase for Council-owned social and affordable rent homes in 2024/25, being the lower of a 7.7% increase or the Local Housing Allowance rate;</b></li> <li><b>(ii) Delegates authority to agree the annual service charge to the Head Housing in consultation with the Head of Finance; and</b></li> <li><b>(iii) Approves the Write Off Policy for Housing Service Debts at Annex 1</b></li> </ul>
<b>Reasons for Recommendations</b>
<p>The Council is permitted by Government and the Regulator of Social Housing to increase rents annually.</p> <p>The proposed 7.7% rent increase is necessary to meet the ongoing and rising costs of management, maintenance, and improvement of Council-owned homes.</p> <p>The proposed Write Off Policy for Housing Service Debts (at Annex 1) is necessary to set out the circumstances in which debts are considered irrecoverable and to set the levels of authority to approve debt write-off.</p>

# Agenda Item 5

## Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek agreement to the annual rent increase to be applied to Council-owned social and affordable rent homes in 2024/25.

The rent increase formula is set by the Government and Regulator of Social Housing each year.

It is recommended that a 7.7% increase is applied to rents, being the lower of a 7.7% increase or the Local Authority Housing Allowance rate.

Rent income supports the on-going management, maintenance, and improvement of Council-owned homes.

The Council aims to collect all housing charges due for accommodation and other charges from debtors wherever possible and it is cost effective. The Write Off Policy for Housing Service Debt (at Annex 1) sets out the circumstances in which debts are considered irrecoverable and the levels of authority and process to approve write-off.

**Executive has authority to approve the above recommendations.**

## Statutory Powers

1. The Housing Act 1985 gives social 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 updated December 2022) housing applies.

## Background

2. The Council currently owns and manages 18 self-contained properties and a 10 room shared facility property that are used exclusively as accommodation for homeless households. Additional homes are planned to be being purchased with some Government funding support. These are all classified as Social Rent homes.
3. In addition, the Council owns 32 homes that are let on introductory or secure tenancies at Affordable Rents. They are managed and maintained by a registered provider on the Council's behalf.
4. All Council-owned homes are subject to the Rent Standard and Consumer Standards.
5. The Government's *Policy Statement on rents for Social Housing* prescribes that social housing providers should not increase rents from 2020/21 until at least 2024/25 by more than the previous September Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate +1% annually.
6. The level of CPI in September 2022 would have led to a maximum increase of 11.1% in 2023/24, however the Government capped the maximum increase permitted to 7%. In January 2022 the Executive agreed an annual rent increase of 2.2% for 2023/24. This lower increase was agreed because residents in the 32 unit scheme had only moved in four months prior to the increase.



## Key Information

### Local Housing Allowance

7. The Government's Autumn Statement in November 2023 included a commitment to raise national Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates to the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile of local market rents from April 2024.
8. Department for Work and Pensions Official statistics published in November 2023 on benefit uprating, forecast the numbers of types of individuals and families benefiting from the uprating of benefits in 2024/2025. This indicates that the estimated average annual financial gain for households in England from the increase in LHA to the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile in 2024/25 will be £785. Caution must be applied however as it is not yet apparent, how much this borough's LHA rate may increase. Publication of the revised local LHA rate is expected in January 2024.
9. LHA represents the maximum amount of benefit for housing costs that will be paid to qualifying households. Households in receipt of the housing costs element of Universal Credit, typically working households, must fund any rent charges above this maximum benefit level.
10. LHA is therefore a factor when considering the level of rent charged by the Council.
11. Maintaining the affordability of social rent homes supports the Council's Corporate Plan commitments on meeting affordable housing challenges.

### Rent Policy

12. The Council's Rent Policy was agreed by the Executive in January 2023 the proposed rent increase is set on accordance with this Policy, a link to this is given in Background Documents.
13. The Policy sets out the legislative and regulatory framework which governs rent setting for social housing and the Council's approach to rents.
14. The Policy also explains how Social Rents are calculated and charged, how Affordable Rents are set, also the approach to service charges.

### Recommended Rent Increase for 2024/25

15. As explained above, the Government's *Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing 2022*, prescribes the annual maximum increase.
16. CPI at September 2023 was 6.7%, therefore the maximum increase permitted for 2024/25 is 7.7%.
17. It is therefore recommended that Social Rents and Affordable Rents for Council-owned homes are increased by 7.7% for 2024/25 with the increase capped to the lower of the 7.7% increase or the Local Housing Allowance.
18. The application of a limit will support the long-term affordability in particular of Affordable Rent homes.
19. The Council's Social Rent homes continue to remain at a relatively modest level with rent costs entirely met by housing benefit, where eligible.

# Agenda Item 5

## Write Off Policy Housing Service Debts

20. The Council aims to collect all charges due for accommodation and other charges from debtors wherever possible and it is cost effective. In some circumstances this may not be possible.
21. The Write Off Policy (at Annex 1) therefore sets out the circumstances in which a Housing Service Debt may not be recoverable. It sets out how debt will be processed in accordance with the relevant Financial Procedure Rule in the Council's Constitution, the approval and reporting process.

## Service Charges

22. Some of the Council's Social Rent homes are subject to service charges for the provision of communal services. Whilst not subject to the Government's *Policy on Rents for Social Housing*, the Government Policy does recommend that they reflect the service being provided and increases are limited to CPI plus 1%. Service charges on relevant Council-owned Social Rent homes are not material and an annual review will assess they are reasonable and proportionate.
23. Service charges for the Council-owned Affordable Rent homes are included within the assessment of the rent because Affordable Rents are based on gross market rent, which is inclusive of service charges. The total Affordable Rent must not exceed 80% of gross Market Rent.

## Options

24. Executive has two options regarding the proposed rent increase:
  - Option 1:** To approve a 7.7% rent increase for 2024/25.  
This is the recommended option because it ensures that rent income remains sufficient to manage and maintain Council-owned homes.
  - Option 2:** To not approve the 7.7% rent increase.  
This is not recommended as it will prevent compliance with the Council's rent setting responsibilities.
25. Executive has two options regarding the Write Off Policy for Housing Service Debts:
  - Option 1:** To approve the Write Off Policy for Housing Service Debt.  
This is the recommended option because it ensures Housing Debt management is transparent and is processed in line with the relevant Finance Procedure Rule in the Council's Constitution.
  - Option 2:** To not approve the Write Off Policy for Housing Service Debts and request Officers develop alternative proposals.  
This is not recommended as it will prevent compliance with the Council's debt recovery responsibilities.

## Legal Implications

There are no legal implications. 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 Regulator of Social Housing. There is no requirement to apply either a rent increase or the maximum rent increase permitted. In the event the Council does increase charges, it may do so once annually and give tenants a minimum of 28 days written notice of change.

## Financial Implications

26. As explained above, the Council currently owns the following properties:

- 18 Social Housing self-contained homes
- 10 Social Housing shared-facility homes
- 32 Affordable Rent homes.

27. Forecast income and operating costs in 2023/24 is summarised below:

<b>Table 1: Forecast Income &amp; Expenditure</b>	2023/24 £000	2023/24 £000
Rent & Service Charge Income		
• Social Housing	141	
• Affordable Housing	300	
<b>Total Rent Income</b>		441
Operating Costs		
• Social Housing	130	
• Affordable Housing	111	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>241</b>

28. The recommended rent increase in 2024/25 is forecast to yield a modest rental income of up to £34,000 depending on voids and rent arrears, to meet forecast management, maintenance, and other operating costs of the accommodation at a time of rising costs of materials and labour.

29. The first call on the net income received from Wheatley Court each year will be to offset pressures elsewhere in the Housing Service budget, in particular to meet increases in demand for homelessness support, and any residual net income balance at year end will be transferred to the Homelessness Prevention Reserve.

## Equalities Implications

30. The Council has a statutory duty to consider and demonstrate this in all of our decisions.

31. This duty has been considered and an Equality Impact Assessment of the Rent Policy 2023 was completed. 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.

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<b>Communication Implications</b>
32. There are no specific communications implications arising from the rent increase. All households will receive written notification of their revised charges at least a month before they take effect.
<b>Environmental Sustainability Implications</b>
33. There are no environmental sustainability implications arising from the rent increase.
<b>Risk Management Considerations</b>
34. No risk to the provision of services to the Council's temporary accommodation or permanent homes has been identified by the recommendation to increase rents in 2024/25.
<b>Procurement/Contract Management and Subsidy Considerations</b>
35. Procurement for goods and services to manage and maintain council-owned homes will be conducted in line with the Council procurement rules and the relevant public sector procurement regulations.
<b>Consultation</b>
36. No consultation has been carried out.
<b>Policy Framework</b>
37. The recommendations in this report support objectives within the Council's Corporate Plan themes of People and Organisation which include a focus on local housing challenges, supporting those with a housing need, housing costs and financial sustainability.
38. As a registered social landlord, the Council is committed to continuing to deliver high quality housing and other services to households living in temporary and permanent accommodation to meet our Corporate Plan objectives.
<b>Background Papers</b>
Corporate Plan 2025 - <a href="https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20205/plans_and_policies/280/reigate_and_banstead_2025">https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20205/plans_and_policies/280/reigate_and_banstead_2025</a> Report to Executive, Council's Social Landlord Functions – Supporting Policies, 26 January 2023 <a href="#">Rent Policy: Council owned accommodation</a> : Item 60 Annex 1
<b>Annexes</b>
1. Write Off Policy: Housing Service Debts

# Annex 1

## Write Off Policy: Housing Service Debts

### 1. General

- 1.1. Reigate & Banstead Borough Council aims to collect all charges due for accommodation and other services from debtors wherever it is possible and cost effective to do so. In some circumstances this may not be possible for one or more reasons, as detailed below.

### 2. Purpose of this Policy

- 2.1. To describe the circumstances when debts are considered as irrecoverable and to set out the levels of authority to approve a write off.

### 3. Types of Debts Covered by the Policy:

- (i) Housing accommodation rent and service charges, including court costs;
- (ii) Re-charges for damage to property and loss of keys.

### 4. Circumstances where a Debt may be considered to be non-recoverable:

- The debtor has absconded;
  - The debtor is insolvent;
  - The debtor is deceased and there is no estate;
  - The physical or mental condition of the debtor prevents recovery;
  - Small debts under a specified value;
  - Debts which are uneconomical to collect and where all avenues for collection have been exhausted;
  - Debts which cannot be legally enforced; and
  - Debts where all or part have been remitted by an order of the Magistrates Court due to hardship.
- 4.1. In some cases, further action may be required before a debt is written off, such as referring the debt to a Tracing or Recovery Agent.

### 5. Irrecoverable Debt Write Off, Approval and Reporting

- 5.1. Irrecoverable debt write-offs will be processed in line with the relevant Finance Procedure Rule in the Council's Constitution.

- 5.2. Debts written off will be charged to Housing Service budgets. Only in exceptional cases will the Chief Finance Officer authorise the write off directly against the Council's general bad debt provisions.
- 5.3. Approval of debt write off will be in accordance with the following limits:
- (i) For debts up to £1,000 - Head of Housing
  - (ii) For debts between £1,000 and £10,000 - Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Head of Housing
  - (iii) For debts over £10,000 Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Head of Housing and the Portfolio Holders for Finance & Governance and Housing.
- 5.4. A summary of all debts written off under delegated authority will be included in the Chief Finance Officer's annual Debt Write Off report that is presented to Executive in March each year.
- 5.5. Should a debtor be traced subsequently the debt will be re-instated to enable recovery action to continue.

## **6. Commitment**

- 6.1. All of customers will be treated in a fair and equitable manner having particular regard to human rights and equalities legislation and any other legislation or Council policies, which may have an impact on the application of this Policy.

**January 2024**



FTE

<b>SIGNED OFF BY</b>	Chief Finance Officer
<b>AUTHOR</b>	David Brown, Finance Manager, Management & Commercial Accounting  Pat Main Chief Finance Officer
<b>TELEPHONE</b>	Tel: 01737 276680 / 276063
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<b>TO</b>	Executive
<b>DATE</b>	Thursday 1 February 2024
<b>EXECUTIVE MEMBER</b>	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance & Governance

<b>KEY DECISION REQUIRED:</b>	YES
<b>WARD (S) AFFECTED:</b>	ALL

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>BUDGET 2024/25 and CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 to 2028/29</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>	
That Executive recommend to Council:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The latest Medium-Term Financial Plan forecast at Annex 1;</li> <li>(ii) An increase in Reigate &amp; Banstead’s Band D Council Tax of £7.47 (2.99%) and a final taxbase of 64,252.30 Band D equivalents;</li> <li>(iii) A Revenue budget requirement of £23.167 million for 2024/25, as set out in this report and at Annex 1, which reflects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Service budget growth proposals totalling £1.112 million, savings of (£1.754) million, including fees and charges income of (£0.540) million, plus forecast issues, risks and opportunities totalling £0.304 million;</li> <li>b) Central Revenue Budget net savings and growth proposals totalling (£0.431) million and £1.750 million growth for the 2024/25 pay award plus forecast issues and risks totalling £0.694 million;</li> </ul> </li> <li>(iv) The forecast for Revenue Reserves (Annex 3) and the recommended use of £0.998 million from Reserves in 2024/25 comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) £0.304 million from the IT Strategy Reserve to fund implementation of the approved IT Strategy (as detailed in the Services budget); and</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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- b) Up to £0.694 million from the Government Funding Risks Reserve, where necessary, to fund the forecast reduction in housing benefit subsidy (as detailed in the Central budget);
- (v) A Capital Programme of £53.680 million for 2024/25 to 2028/29 as set out in this report, including net Capital Programme Growth Proposals of £6.919 million (net after allowing for a reduction of (£0.796) for capital programme re-profiling);
- (vi) That the following changes to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme be approved and adopted from 2024/25:
  - a) Removal of the maximum award of 90% Council Tax liability for 1,800 households and increasing the award to 100%;
  - b) Removal of the minimum requirement for a household to qualify for £5 per week before support is provided;
  - c) Expansion of support awards to cover full Council Tax liability for residents in Bands F to H;
- (vii) That the following changes Council Tax premiums on empty properties be approved and adopted from 2024/25:
  - a) Removal of the empty homes discount of 28-days where a property becomes empty and unfurnished;
  - b) For empty and furnished second homes – charge 200% council tax after the first 12 months; and
  - c) For long-term empty properties – commence charging the 100% premium after 12 months.
- (viii) Continued funding support for Banstead Commons Conservators for a further three years (2024/25 to 2026/27);
- (ix) Agreement of a new 10 year Section 136 funding agreement with Horley Town Council;
- (x) The Chief Finance Officer's report on the robustness of the Budget estimates and adequacy of Reserves

That Executive authorise:

- (xi) 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:



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This report sets out the recommended Revenue Budget and a £7.47 (2.99% per annum) increase in Band D Council Tax for 2024/25. It also presents the recommended Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2028/29.

**Recommendations (i) to (x) are subject to approval by the Council. The Executive has authority to approve recommendation (xi).**

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## 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 2024 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 new and revised Local Council Tax Support Scheme as detailed in this report is recommended to commence for the Council from 1 April 2024.

## FINANCIAL CONTEXT

6. The purpose of this report is to:
  - Set out the recommended Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2024/25 following scrutiny of the draft budget proposals and the Provisional Local Government Funding Settlement announcement on 18 December 2023;
  - Set out the proposed Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2028/29;
  - Set out the proposed new Local Council Tax Support Scheme that is recommended to commence from 1 April 2024; and
  - Receive a commentary on the budget and adequacy of reserves from the Chief Finance Officer, in accordance with the statutory duty under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003.

### Government Funding

7. The 2024/25 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was published on Monday 18 December 2023. The settlement follows the announcement of the Autumn Statement on 22 November 2023 and a policy statement that was issued on 5 December 2023. The 2024-25 settlement is effectively the second year of a two-year settlement. In short, the settlement rolls-over of the core elements of Spending Review 2021 (SR21) funding levels and funding principles already announced in the previous years' Autumn Statement of 2022.
8. The emphasis of the Settlement once again this year, is to provide stability by rolling forward key elements of 2023/24 funding alongside extra funding 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).

9. The 2024/25 settlement has again provided a Minimum Funding Guarantee grant increase of 3% plus the ability for district and borough councils to increase their Council Tax by up to 2.99% without the need for a council tax referendum. In addition to the other elements received in the Settlement (summarised below) the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) advises that this effectively, increases council resources by at least 6.5%, after taking account of the increased council tax referendum limit. While the Settlement is welcomed it is important to note that CPI still remains high at 4.0% at January 2024 and a cost of living crisis still exists across the UK therefore council budgets remain pressured.
10. The key principles of one-year settlement are listed below. It should also be noted that the current expectation again, is that local government funding reforms will not take place until after the next general election, therefore no earlier than 2025/26.

The main points from the settlement are set out below:

- **Council Tax** – the council tax referendum limit will be 3% for lower tier authorities. There will be a continuation of the adult social care precept (to benefit the County Council) allowing a further 2% on Band D council tax.
- **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 2023/24 levels. However, the Under-Indexing Multiplier Grant has been increased to £0.491m 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, DLUHC has eliminated the negative RSG impact for another year.
- **Lower Tier Services Grant** – this grant has been deleted from 2023/24
- **Services Grant** – this grant has been retained but reduces to £0.015m
- **Minimum Funding Guarantee Grant** – this continues from 2023/24 onwards – and represents funding to ensure an increase in all authorities' Core Spending Power for his Council has increased to £1.329m
- **New Homes Bonus** – for 2024/25 one year allocations are announced. The 'deadweight' of 0.4% has been maintained but there are no longer any 'legacy' payments in respect of previous years' allocations. The allocation for this council for 2024/25 is £0.806m – a reduction compared to 2023/24.
- **Revenue Support Grant** an amount of £0.158m has been allocated to this Council to fund continuation of the Local Council Tax Administration Grant and the Family Annex Allowance which is a council tax discount that is applied.
- **Homelessness Prevention Grant** – £0.695 million Homelessness Prevention Grant for 2024/25 was announced in the Settlement which is the second year allocation from the existing Government scheme.

## MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLANNING

11. The Council has been planning for the continued 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

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generating new sustainable sources of additional income.

12. An updated Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was approved on 13 July 2023 and forecasts were refreshed in November 2023 with latest information. 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 2024/25:
  - 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 the Council has 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;
  - 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; and
  - To maintain an adequate and prudent level of **reserves** and regularly review their planned use and allocation to support delivery of our priorities.
13. The latest MTFP forecasts are set out at Annex 1 and indicates a forecast budget gap of £2.353 million for the Council in 2025/26, increasing to £5.586 million by 2028/29. Further work will commence to update MTFP forecasts to support service & financial planning for 2025/26 onwards. The outcome will be reported to Executive in summer 2024.

## Financial Sustainability Programme

14. 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 over the MTFP period.
15. A Financial Sustainability Programme has been implemented, focussing on four key areas:

Income Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pursuing opportunities to generate new income streams;</li><li>• Optimising Fees &amp; Charges; and</li><li>• Implementation of the Commercial Strategy.</li></ul>
Use of Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Making effective use of existing assets, including the repurposing and sale of surplus properties.</li></ul>

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## 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.

16. 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.
17. Progress is reported to Executive, Overview & Scrutiny and individual Portfolio holders as part of quarterly performance reporting. A further update on the programme was provided in the Service & Financial Planning report presented in November 2023 at Annex 2 (Appendix 5).

## Commercial Strategy

18. 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 operates more commercially in some areas, where this is consistent with the ethos of the 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 risk – but it will also enable the Council to develop and grow into a self-sustaining organisation.
19. To guide its work in this area, the Council has adopted a Commercial Strategy (Part 1 - November 2020 and Part 2 - December 2021).
20. The definitions and principles that the Strategy includes, and the categories of activities it sets out, are intended to assist in the understanding of why this Council needs to undertake commercial activity, and how such activity will be approached, and future investment focused.

Part 1 sets out three guiding principles for commercial activity:

- **Principle 1:** Our commercial activity will be ethical, and consistent with the Council's statutory responsibility to promote economic, environmental and social wellbeing in the borough, and our corporate objectives as well as in line with all relevant advice and guidance;
- **Principle 2:** Any decisions which have a commercial aspect will be based on a robust assessment of the business case using consistent relevant criteria, and appropriate due diligence and risk assessment; and

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- **Principle 3:** Surplus income generated through our commercial activities will be used to ensure the financial sustainability of the Council and continued delivery of services for local people.

Part 2 explains that the main elements of a commercial approach will be:

- A project pipeline to establish new income streams from asset activity while also delivering broader corporate objectives.
- Ensuring that existing income streams that the Council already relies on from its assets are maintained and where possible increased; and that assets are repurposed, redeveloped or disposed of where they are a cost to the Council to retain them.
- Investing in new assets to secure income or deliver savings whilst also delivering corporate priorities.
- Continuing to sell or trade services where the Council already does this; and looking to introduce new trading activity where this aligns with the Council's local government remit and areas of expertise.
- Taking a more commercial approach to fees and charges.

21. The Strategy also includes a Commercial Activity Action Plan, progress on which will be reported annually. The Action Plan will support delivery of new income generation opportunities for inclusion in future MTFP forecasts. An annual report on progress against Strategy objectives is presented in December each year. As noted above, for this Council, consideration of commercial matters is now primarily taking place within the context of the wider Financial Sustainability Programme. This shares many of the objectives of the Commercial Strategy but also reflects the recent tightening of the Prudential Code 2021 and considers financial sustainability from a broader, more complete perspective. The Prudential Code 2021 specifically restricts councils from borrowing in advance of need, i.e. borrowing to purchase assets with the sole intention of making a return or yield. The Commercial Strategy adheres to these requirements.
22. The Partner, 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 potential investment opportunities, opportunities to improve the performance of the Council's existing asset portfolio and activity in relation to companies within which the Council has an interest. The sub-committee considers all potential and existing commercial activity in the context of the wider economic and policy framework within which the Council needs to operate.
23. The 2024/25 budget proposals and MTFP include forecasts for income from the newly-constructed leisure and commercial units at The Rise (Marketfield Way) development. These are based on an assessment of confirmed rental income net of landlord overheads and handover expenses. Forecasts will be updated in future budget and MTFP reports as the remaining units at the development are handed over and tenancies are signed.
24. Work also continues under the Strategy to review the Council's property assets in order to identify potential development opportunities that can be formulated into a project pipeline, notwithstanding the requirements to comply with the Prudential Code

restrictions in terms of borrowing in advance of need. An annual report on progress against the Council’s Commercial Strategy was provided in December 2023.

## REVENUE BUDGET

25. 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 2024/25 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 future 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.

26. The table below summarises the final Revenue Budget for 2024/25

<b>Table 1: BUDGET SUMMARY</b>	Budget 2023/24 £m	Budget 2024/25 £m
1. Net Cost of Services	20.618	18.578
2. Central Budgets	2.576	4.589
<b>NET EXPENDITURE 2023/24</b>	<b>23.194</b>	<b>23.167</b>
3. Council Tax	16.293	16.675
4. Business Rates (NNDR)	3.994	3.344
5. Other Un-ringfenced Grants		
• Services Grant	0.093	0.015
• New Homes Bonus Grant	1.034	0.806

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<b>Table 1: BUDGET SUMMARY</b>	Budget 2023/24 £m	Budget 2024/25 £m
• Minimum Funding Guarantee Grant	0.803	1.329
<b>6. Grants Transferred to Reserves:</b>		
• Homelessness Prevention	0.686	0.695
• Transfer to Reserves	(0.686)	(0.695)
<b>7. Call on Earmarked Reserves:</b>		
• Government Funding Risks Reserve	0.484	0.694
• IT Strategy Reserve	0.493	0.304
<b>NET SOURCES OF INCOME</b>	<b>23.194</b>	<b>23.167</b>

**NOTE**

- The actual sum to be drawn from Reserves to support the budget will depend on the budget outturn position for 2024/25. Over recent years the budget outturn has been an underspend position with no requirement to call on Reserves. The call on Government Funding Risk Reserve will depend on the extent of additional excessive demand for supported housing which is unmatched by Housing Subsidy Grant from Government.

## 2024/25 Service Budget Proposals

27. Service budget proposals are summarised below:

<b>Table 2: SERVICE BUDGET PROPOSALS</b>	Approved Budget 2023/24 £m	Proposed Budget 2024/25 £m	Net Budget Increase / (Decrease) £m
<b>ORGANISATION</b>			
Communications / Customer Service	1.170	1.171	0.001
Finance	1.260	1.260	-
ICT	1.903	2.183	0.280
ICT - Reserve-funded growth for Strategy implementation	0.493	0.304	(0.189)
Legal & Governance	2.358	2.223	(0.135)
Organisational Development & HR	0.733	0.733	-
Corporate Policy, Projects & Performance (including Environmental Sustainability)	0.447	0.515	0.068
Property & Commercial	0.431	(0.581)	(1.012)
<b>PLACE</b>			
Economic Prosperity	0.288	0.276	(0.012)
Neighbourhood Operations	4.803	4.542	(0.261)
Place Delivery	0.334	0.334	-
Planning	0.595	0.455	(0.140)
<b>PEOPLE</b>			
Community Partnerships	1.306	1.271	(0.035)



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<b>Table 2: SERVICE BUDGET PROPOSALS</b>	Approved Budget 2023/24 £m	Proposed Budget 2024/25 £m	Net Budget Increase / (Decrease) £m
Housing	0.898	0.848	(0.050)
Revenues, Benefits & Fraud	1.597	1.621	0.024
Revenues, Benefits & Fraud–growth for Reserve funded government funding risk	0.564	-	(0.564)
Leisure & Culture	0.408	0.393	(0.015)
SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM	1.030	1.030	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20.618</b>	<b>18.578</b>	<b>(2.040)</b>

28. From 2023/24 onwards the cost of housing benefit payments and associated government funding has been 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.

### Grant Funded Posts

29. 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 10.9 FTE £0.409m
- Revenues, Benefits & Fraud 1.0 FTE £0.033m

30. The 2023/24 Homelessness Prevention grant allocation of £0.668 million was confirmed in December 2022 along with £0.011 million of new burdens funding 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 remains a risk that the grant may cease and a decision will be required whether to continue to fund these posts through the Revenue budget as part of next years' service & financial planning process

31. Other posts that are funded fully or in part from fixed term resources include:

- Community Partnerships 1.0 FTE £0.045m E. Surrey Heartlands NHS
- Community Partnerships 0.4 FTE £0.019m Surrey County Council
- Community Partnerships 0.2 FTE £0.008m Safer Streets Redhill
- Leisure & Intervention 4.3 FTE £0.167m Refugee Support Grants
- Leisure & Intervention 4.0 FTE £0.158m East Surrey Partnership
- Planning & Development 2.0 FTE £0.087m Community Infrastructure Levy
- Corporate Policy 0.8 FTE £0.042m UK Shared Prosperity Fund

32. As reported to Executive in 2023/23, work is underway on preparing the new Local Plan which will continue until 2028, funded through a call on the Corporate Plan Delivery Fund Reserve. The Council's response to the Development Consent Order relating to Gatwick airport expansion is also in progress and is expected to be completed by the end of 2024/25.

33. Net Service savings, additional income and growth proposals of £0.776 million (consisting of £0.943 million growth minus savings of (£1.719) million were approved

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in the Service & Financial Planning 2024/25 report to Executive on 16 November 2023. This included the deletion of 1.0 FTE vacant funded post and (£0.540) million additional income from Fees & Charges.

34. Since the Service & Financial Planning report to Executive on 16 November, there have been new Service revenue budget growth proposals identified which total £0.169 million and new proposals or revisions to savings/income which total (£0.035) million. A number of these items relate to recommendations that were approved by Executive on 14 December 2023. Details are provided at Annex 2.

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

35. In addition to the service budget growth proposals in this report there are other potential service budget pressures and opportunities, risks and opportunities that will have to be addressed in 2024/25 onwards:

### Issues:

#### (i) Temporary accommodation crisis and costs

- Councils provide a safety net for the most vulnerable people including refugees who need help, the cost and availability of this is a significant budget risk for this Council for 2024/25 and future financial years.
- Figures from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities indicate that the cost of temporary accommodation to local authorities reached £1.7bn last year and is increasing rapidly.
- In October 2023 the District Councils Network issued a cross-party letter ahead of the Autumn Statement urging the Government to adopt measures to mitigate the impacts. Councils have shared information and are exploring solutions amid the ‘escalating social and financial crisis’ created by the soaring need for temporary and emergency housing.
- An increase to the previously frozen Local Housing Allowance (LHA) was announced in the Autumn statement, any increase is welcome and needed however the level of increase is not due to be announced until the end of January. The increase is supposed to bring the LHA back up to the 30th percentile of local private rents.

#### (ii) Harlequin Theatre

- Following confirmation of the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) at the Harlequin Theatre in September 2023, there is an emerging a risk of income loss and additional costs.
- Work is in progress to confirm the extent of the problem and the remedial action required with the timeframe for executing the rectification.
- It had previously been forecast that increased income would be possible for 2024/25, however the RAAC discovery has negated this opportunity for the time being. The impacts on ongoing service delivery were being assessed at the time of preparing this report and further updates to Executive are planned when the outcome of that work is confirmed.

### Risks:

## (i) Government Resources & Waste Strategy

- An announcement on 20 October 2023 confirmed the outcomes of consultation on proposals set out in the Waste & Resources Strategy from 2018. These outcomes will be introduced via secondary legislation following enactment of the Environment Bill.
- 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:
  - Invoke the 'polluter pays' principle and extended 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 implementing the Simpler Recycling system for all local authorities.
- These measures will have a considerable impact on local authorities, particularly the Simpler Recycling scheme, which will affect how kerbside recycling services are delivered.
- Timescales were recently confirmed:
  - EPR and DRS elements to be implemented by October 2025;
  - Simpler Recycling scheme for all households by March 2026; and
  - Full recycling for businesses with more than 10 FTE by March 2025 and for micro business 2 years later.
- The Simpler Recycling scheme will require the Council to introduce recycling collections of Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR) and Food Waste to the 5,500 properties that do not yet have the full service by the end of March 2026. The additional costs will have to be assessed as part of service & financial planning for 2025/26 onwards, taking into account the additional funding provided announced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on 9 January 2024.
- In summary, Defra has announced grants for the capital transitional costs for the introduction of weekly food waste collections. This capital funding is intended for the purchase of food bins (including internal kitchen caddies, external kerbside caddies and communal bins) and food waste collection vehicles.
- Confirmed funding comprises:
  - a capital grant for transition costs in 2023/24. The grant for this Council is £201,834 of which £102,300 is allocated for vehicles;
  - Further transitional funding from 2024/25 from Defra. These funds will be provided to authorities that have to implement a weekly food waste collection service either partially or fully.

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- Ongoing funds will then be provided from April 2026 to all waste collection authorities, including those that have already fully implemented a food waste collection service.
- Defra is currently calculating transitional and ongoing resource allocations and they are expected to be confirmed in due course for Local Authorities.
- Current recycling budgets are experiencing significant volatility due to rapid pricing changes. At times the Council generates an income from recycles while during other periods it has to pay to dispose of the same waste. This makes future budget planning challenging.
- Further updates will be provided to Executive as plans for implementing the Strategy are developed and further funding from Defra is confirmed.

## (ii) Geopolitical and economic pressures

- World-wide pressures and international crises continue to have a significant impact on the world economy and this impacts on the UK business, including local government. Inflationary fears and interest rate rises have affected most councils and there are still concerns over how long inflation and interest rates will remain at current levels and a recession. These pressures, particularly on the supply side impact on prices of energy and other supplies including oil, which are a key element of local council costs. The current level of CPI inflation as announced on 17 January 2024 increased to 4.0% from the December indicator at 3.9% and inflation this impacts on the cost of council borrowing and overall treasury management. A cost of living crisis is affecting the country nationally in all regions.
- The next general election is drawing nearer and the latest date this could be is January 2025, falling within financial year 2024/25. Any resulting policy or funding changes could have a significant impact on local government.

## (iii) Energy Prices

- Escalating electricity and gas costs were flagged as a significant issue when setting the budget for 2023/24 and £0.650m growth was included to address the forecast additional cost.
- 12 month contracts were subsequently renewed in March 2023 (gas) and October 2023 (electricity) and the budget has been adjusted to reflect the new lower tariffs and forecast energy prices in 2024/25. Action also continues to be taken to reduce consumption wherever possible. Ongoing work to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings and introduce renewable energy generation will in the longer term provide more resilience to price volatility.
- This has resulted in a reduced budget requirement (saving) of £0.350m as detailed in the 2024/25 service proposals above. However there remains

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uncertainty due to the volatility of the supply market and the impact of CPI inflation on prices.

## (iv) External Audit fees

- The Public Sector Audit Authority (PSAA) published their decision and new fee levels by 30 November 2023 and they are within the budget allocation allowed for 2024/25 which the council had already planned and budgeted for.

## (v) Property Rental Income

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

## Opportunities

### (i) IT Strategy

- The IT Strategy was approved in April 2022 focussing on high priority projects:
  - Improvements in Disaster Recovery;
  - Improvements in Cyber Security;
  - Replacement of the Telephony systems; and
  - Customer Relationship Management (CRM) developments.
- Progress at the time of preparing this report includes:
  - The Disaster Recovery implementation has started with go live expected in December 2023;
  - The new contract for the Cyber Security managed service is in the deployment phase;
  - The Telephony system replacement took place in November 2023;
  - Development of the CRM system continues with over one hundred online processes now available for use by staff and the public; and
  - Planning for the further transition of locally-hosted systems to the Cloud.
- 2024/25 budget proposals are based on continuation of implementation, utilising the IT reserve that was allocated to fund the Strategy.

### (ii) Environmental Sustainability Strategy

- Embedding awareness of sustainability more consistently across the work of the Council and utilising capital and revenue investment to generate efficiency such as solar panels and use of electric vehicles or changes of fuel use to Hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO). Since the Service & Financial Planning report to Executive in November further capital growths requests have been approved by Executive for inclusion in the final budget with regard to the purchase of one electric garden waste collection vehicle. The transition of the existing diesel refuse collection vehicle fleet to run on

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Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) was also endorsed at this Executive meeting (with revenue funding to cover the additional costs associated with this already having been included in the draft budget. The growth proposals for these items are included in Annex 2 and 4 of this report.

- Capturing the need to balance different competing demands upon greenspaces, such as recreation, biodiversity, health, and sustainable practices.
- New Capital Growth items in Annex 4 which are funded by Community Infrastructure (CIL) or borrowing and are being specifically introduced for environmental and sustainability consideration over the next five years.
- By ensuring a stronger focus on providing environmentally sustainable behaviours within the borough as a whole including businesses and for residents.

## (iii) Investment in Procurement Service Capacity

- Over recent years the Council has been increasingly reliant on external and interim support to manage procurement of the goods and services that support service delivery. This has ensured that contract-letting activity has continued but has also resulted in a lack of in-house skills and knowledge in this area.
- A short-term focus on meeting contract-letting deadlines has also tended to restrict opportunities to take a strategic oversight of future planned procurements and seek opportunities to secure cost savings and/or quality improvements.
- It is therefore important that the Council rebuilds in-house capacity to manage and deliver procurement activities to ensure the Council secures value for money.
- A business case for investment in the service is being developed and will be presented for consideration as part of future budget proposals.

## (iv) Tenancy and Property Rental Income

- Wheatley Court: After taking account of annual rental income of up to £0.326m per annum, a property maintenance sinking fund will be established of circa 8% along with an allowance for service charges, management fees and property operating costs. Budgets for the property will be based on a housing income (from the tenant rent debit) and expenditure basis model to ensure that the residual income from tenancies is allocated to support housing service delivery.
- Income from the commercial units at Wheatley Court, when let, will continue to support the budget in general.
- The Rise: £0.720m income is forecast from confirmed lettings for 2024/25; this has been factored into the budget proposals in this report.

## (v) Leisure Contract Renewal

- A two-year extension with the current provider has been agreed with effect from 1 April 2024. The extension is as per the previous contract's terms, with a management fee paid to the Council subject to an annual inflationary uplift.

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36. In the Service & Financial Planning report to Executive in November 2023, total net savings and growth for Service budgets was reported at (£1.316) million and net savings and growth for Central budgets, excluding the £1.750 million growth for the pay award, was reported at (£0.376) million. A grand total of (£1.692) million of net savings and growth overall.
37. Since November further net growth for Service budgets has been identified of £0.134 million and net savings for Central budgets has been identified of (£0.055) million. A grand total of £0.079 million of net growth, which is detailed Annex 2.
38. Therefore in total, the Service and Central budget proposals for growth and savings have reduced to (£1.613) million at January which compares to the (£1.692) million reported to Executive in November 2023.

<b>Table 3.1: SERVICE AND CENTRAL BUDGET PROPOSALS (November and January combined)</b>		2024/25	
		FTE	£m
<b>Budget Movements:</b>			
November report and this report			
Annex 2	Services – Pay (excluding pay award provision)	5.0	0.172
Annex 3	Services – Non-Pay	-	(1.785)
<b>NET BUDGET GROWTH / (SAVINGS)</b>		<b>5.0</b>	<b>(1.613)</b>

NOTE 1: The above proposals are detailed in Annex 3 of the November Budget report and Annex 2 of this report.

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

<b>Table 3.2: FORECAST SERVICE BUDGET ISSUES, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>		2024/25	
		FTE	£m
November Report Annex			
3.4	Budget Risks – Government Funding Reductions	-	0.694
3.5	Budget Opportunities – IT Strategy Implementation	-	0.304
<b>BUDGET GROWTH FOR FORECAST ISSUES, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>0.998</b>

Note 1 – these amounts will be financed by a call on Reserves and are dependent upon in-year demand and therefore may not be fully utilised during 2024/25.

### Central Budget Proposals 2024/25

40. 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.
41. Since the Service & Financial Planning report to Executive on 16 November, there have been two changes to Central revenue budget growth proposals identified, firstly a movement of (£0.270) million, being a reduction in the forecasts risks relating to housing benefit subsidy shortfalls compared to that originally proposed to Executive on 16 November 2023. The revised net growth is therefore £0.694 million, as set out in the table below. Secondly there has been an increase in Treasury Management

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savings of (£0.055) million which reflects the final interest and investment income forecasts.

42. Overall there is a net budget increase compared to 2023/24 as detailed in the table below which highlights the variations between financial years. The main reason for the increase is the Pay increase provision required of £1.750 million.

<b>Table 4: CENTRAL BUDGETS</b>	Approved Budget 2023/24 £m	Proposed Budget 2024/25 £m	Net Budget Increase / (Decrease) £m
Insurance	0.467	0.516	<b>0.049</b>
Treasury Management <sup>3</sup>	(0.087)	(0.342)	<b>(0.255)</b>
Housing Benefits – net cost	(0.714)	(0.020)	<b>0.694</b>
Unused Historic Budget for Pay	0.243	-	<b>(0.243)</b>
Pay increase 2024/25 <sup>2</sup>	-	1.750	<b>1.750</b>
Employer Pension Costs <sup>1</sup>	2.240	2.240	-
Central Vacancy Turnover Provision	(0.150)	(0.150)	-
Apprenticeship Levy	0.080	0.080	-
Central Recruitment & Visa Expenses	0.045	0.045	-
Central Training Budget	0.082	0.082	-
External Audit Fees	0.150	0.159	<b>0.009</b>
Internal Audit Fees	0.065	0.071	<b>0.006</b>
Preceptor Grants – Horley Town Council Double Taxation	0.044	0.047	<b>0.003</b>
Funding Contribution – Banstead Commons Conservators	0.111	0.111	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2.576</b>	<b>4.589</b>	<b>2.013</b>

NOTES:

1. Annual employer deficit contribution and compensated added years payments.
2. The budget for 2023/24 pay increases has been previously allocated to service budgets.
3. The Treasury Management Budget has been re-aligned for final movements in capital financing requirements.

### Central Budget Risks

43. The most significant risk for Central Budgets is the continued Housing Benefit Subsidy pressures:
- Up to £0.694 million of budget growth may be required in 2024/25 to fund the forecast shortfall in housing benefit subsidy and grants from Government (Department for Work and Pensions - DWP). This is a worst case scenario estimate and has been reduced from the figure of £0.964m previously reported



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to Executive on 16 November 2023 due to more up to date information being available regarding potential demand;

- There are several factors, including the loss of government funding, that can impact upon housing benefit. The most significant national concerns affecting all councils are the cost of supported housing payments and discretionary housing payments. In many of these cases councils are required to fund some of the costs from their own resources as the level of DWP subsidy does not equal the costs of benefits paid, due to the level of costs included in claims by landlords and housing providers along with the difference between benefits and Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates; and
- This budget forecast is included on a contingency basis; zero, part or all of it may be required in 2024/25, depending on housing need and the level of subsidy received from government.

44. Other key reasons why housing benefit subsidy is forecast to be lower than the costs incurred include:

- The continued transition of claims to Universal Credit leaving this authority to manage those claims where a subsidy shortfall is likely;
- Cost to the council of recovering housing benefit overpayments; and
- The increased cost of Discretionary Housing Payments, providing support to some residents with their rent where they also receive housing benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit. The DWP provides some funding to local authorities for this but it is not always sufficient to meet demand. Local authorities are able to make payments above DWP funding, but the additional cost has to be met from the Council's budget. This Council's funding for 2023/24 was just £0.188m and this remains a risk.

45. Other proposed changes in Central Budgets in 2024/25 were set out in the November Service & Financial Planning 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 mid-February 2023; an inflationary increase has been assumed based on current CPI levels.
Treasury Management	<p>This Budget has been reviewed in detail to ensure that it reflects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forecast interest on balances. Interest rates have risen to over 5.25% 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.</li> <li>• Forecast borrowing costs (interest and Minimum Revenue Provision for loan repayment) in line with the proposed Capital Programme (including capital growth any re-profiling of existing capital schemes) and Treasury Management Investment 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</li> </ul>

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Table 5: CENTRAL BUDGETS	Outcome of Review
	<p>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) are still subject to final consultation that was issued in December 2023; the outcome will not be known until later in 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Current capital expenditure plans at January 2024; the budget implications of any new schemes or reductions in planned capital spends will be considered when considering overall capital financing levels.</li> <li>• Investment in any new capital projects to support, for example, delivery of the Commercial Strategy and Housing Delivery Strategy will be assessed when individual business cases are submitted for approval.</li> <li>• As a result of the factors explained above, a reduction in forecast treasury management costs of (£0.342) million is forecast for 2024/25.</li> </ul>
Housing Benefits	These sums and resulting budget pressures of £0.694m have been explained in detail above.
Budget for Pay Increases	Capacity of £1.75 million has been included in the budget for forecast contractual pay increases and the annual cost of living of living for 2024/25. This budget is held centrally and, now that the pay award has been confirmed with union representatives, will be allocated to services ready for the start of the new financial year.
Pensions	<p>The budget includes funding for the employer secondary contribution of £2.240 million that is due in April 2024 following the last triennial Pension Fund revaluation in 2023. The secondary contribution covers historic deficit payments and compensated added years costs.</p> <p>This Council's element of the Pension Fund was 94% funded at the last revaluation and has sufficient assets to meet fund accrued benefits over the medium term.</p>
Central Vacancy Turnover Provision	Retention 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 due to staff turnover generates a reduction in budget of – (£0.150) for 2024/25.
Apprenticeship Levy, Central Recruitment and Visa Costs, Central Training Costs	No changes are proposed.

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<b>Table 5: CENTRAL BUDGETS</b>	<b>Outcome of Review</b>
External and Internal Audit Fees	Forecast inflationary increases are factored in for both, the recent change in Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) fees have also been adjusted for. The latest PSAA fees increase levels following consultation are within the budget above.
Horley Town Council Double Taxation	Central budgets include £0.047 million funding for a preceptor grant to Horley Town Council. This is to fund a new 10-year agreement (2024/25 to 2033/34) to eliminate 'double taxation' whereby Horley residents pay direct to the Town Council for the local services that it provides.
Banstead Commons Conservators	This funding will continue to assist the Conservators in delivery of current operations and the funding will be annual for the three year period from 2024/25 through to 2026/27.

## Revenue Budget Funding 2024/25

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

<b>Table 6: REVENUE BUDGET FUNDING</b>	Approved Budget 2023/24 £m	Proposed Budget 2024/25 £m	Net Budget Increase / (Decrease) £m
Council Tax	16.293	16.675	0.382
National Non-Domestic Rates	3.994	3.344	(0.650)
Other Un-ringfenced Grants:			
• Services Grant	0.096	0.015	(0.081)
• New Homes Bonus Grant	1.034	0.806	(0.228)
• Minimum Funding Guarantee Grant	0.803	1.329	0.526
Call on Earmarked Reserves:			
• Government Funding Risks Reserve	0.484	0.694	0.480
• IT Strategy Reserve	0.493	0.304	(0.189)
Use of funds from the General Fund Balance to support the Revenue Budget	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23.194</b>	<b>23.167</b>	<b>(0.027)</b>

47. Work is now complete to update the Funding forecasts that have been taken into account when arriving at the final budget proposals for 2024/25. Factors taken into account include:

Council Tax

- The 2024/25 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

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- December 2023. This also includes the council's share of the historic Collection Fund surplus for the Council Tax element.
- Business Rates (NNDR)
- Includes continued funding for the tariff payment (with no reduction for negative RSG) as confirmed in the December Provisional Settlement. Also includes the Council's share of the historic Collection Fund surplus for the business rates element.
- New Homes Bonus Grant
- Includes updated allocations for New Homes Bonus based on the December 2023 Provisional Local Government Settlement announcement.
- Other Grants
- The December Provisional Settlement included a number of grant changes that have been reflected in the updated budget proposals.
    - Reduction of the Services Grant
    - A continued Minimum Funding Guarantee Grant to ensure that all lower tier councils see a 3% increase in their Core Spending Power before Council Tax increases.
- Contributions (To)/From Reserves
- There is no requirement for a contribution from the General Fund Balance as there is no forecast Revenue Budget gap in 2024/25.
  - As reported to Executive in November 2023 – the Council faces budget pressures and risk of which some may have required funding from reserves. The December Provisional Settlement announcement has however provided confirmation a balanced budget can be set without calling on Reserves.
  - There remains a call on:
    - the IT Strategy Reserve (£0.304m) to fund delivery of the approved Strategy; and
    - the Government Funding Risks Reserve (£0.694m) as a maximum where necessary, to fund the forecast reduction in Housing Benefit subsidy.

## **COUNCIL TAX 2024/25 AND LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2024/25**

48. In setting the Council Tax Requirement for 2024/25 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.
49. 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 Provisional Local Government Settlement as being the higher of 2.99% or £5.00 for District and Shire Councils.
50. The Council is also required to agree a Local Tax Support Scheme annually and a revised scheme for 2024/25 is outlined in the section of the report. This follows its presentation and recommendation approval at Executive Committee on 16 November 2023.

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## Council Tax – Taxbase

51. 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.
52. The Taxbase increase was agreed by Council on 30 November 2023 is unchanged and the recommendation is to adopt an increase in the council tax base from 63,495 to 64,252 properties representing a taxbase increase of 757 (1.19%) compared to 2023/24.

## Council Precept

53. The recommendation is to set an annual precept increase for Reigate & Banstead Borough Council for 2024/25 of 2.99% taking the Council precept to £257.18 for a Band D property. This represents an increase of £7.47 compared to 2023/24.
54. This increase will yield an additional £0.669 million in income, comprising an increase of £0.195 million from the increase in the tax base and £0.474 million from the 2.99% Band D increase.

## Collection Fund Outturn

55. Another factor that has to be taken into account when forecasting council tax income for 2024/25 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.
56. It is anticipated that at the end of 2023/24 the collection fund (for Council Tax and not Business Rates) will have a net surplus of £1.307 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 £0.151 million.
57. Historically, the authority has had a very strong performance record, consistently recovering 99.7% (0.3% shortfall) of income due. Recovery performance was impacted during the original COVID-19 pandemic years, however the forecast since 2023/24 has been restored to pre-pandemic levels to reflect the forecast recovery position and this has given rise to a Collection Fund surplus for 2024/25 which has been taken into account when setting the budget for 2024/25 as the table below identifies.

## Council Tax Requirement 2024/25

58. Based on the above recommendations the Council Tax Requirement for 2024/25, (compared with 2023/24) is set out below.

<b>Table 7: COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>Movement</b>	<b>Impact On Yield</b>
<b>Taxbase Band D Equivalents Forecast at October</b>	67,019.80	67,590.90	571.10	Positive : Increase
Forecast Growth in New Homes	205.67	287.90	82.23	Positive - Increase
	0.31%	0.43%	0.12%	
	(188.23)	(180.40)	7.83	Positive : Increase

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<b>Table 7: COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>Movement</b>	<b>Impact On Yield</b>
Allowance for Non-Collection in 2023/24	(0.28%)	(0.27%)	0.01%	
Reduction in Band D equivalents due to increased demand for the Local Concessionary Support Scheme	(3,541.92)	(3,446.10)	95.82	Positive : Decrease
	(5.28%)	(5.10%)	0.18%	
<b>Forecast Average Band D Taxbase</b>	63,495.32	64,252.30	756.98	Positive : Increase
Council Tax Band D	£249.71	£257.18	£7.47	
<b>Council Tax Requirement</b>	<b>£15,855,416</b>	<b>£16,524,407</b>	<b>£668,991</b>	
Forecast share of Collection Surplus/ (deficit) brought forward	£437,838	£150,695	(287,143)	
<b>Net Council Tax Income for this Council</b>	<b>£16,293,254</b>	<b>£16,675,102</b>	<b>£381,848</b>	

## Precepting Authorities

59. 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:

<b>Table 8.1: ANALYSIS OF DRAFT COUNCIL TAX BY PRECEPTOR</b>		
	<b>£000</b>	<b>% share</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>%</b>
Surrey County Council <sup>1</sup>	111,922,366	74.67%
Surrey Police & Crime Commissioner <sup>1</sup>	20,790,117	13.87%
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	16,524,407	11.03%
Horley Town Council	604,096	0.40%
Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council	46,664	0.03%
	<b>149,887,650</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

<b>Table 8.2: ANALYSIS OF DRAFT COUNCIL TAX CHANGES BY PRECEPTOR</b>				
<b>Authority</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Increase<sup>1</sup></b>	
			<b>£</b>	<b>%</b>
Surrey County Council <sup>1</sup>	1,675.08	1,741.92	66.84	3.99
Surrey Police & Crime Commissioner <sup>1</sup>	310.57	323.57	13.00	4.19
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	249.71	257.18	7.47	2.99
Horley Town Council	47.76	54.00	6.24	13.07
Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council	29.72	32.10	2.38	8.01
	<b>2,312.84</b>	<b>2,408.77</b>	<b>95.93</b>	<b>4.15%</b>

NOTE 1 Subject to confirmation by Surrey County Council on 6 February and the PCC on 2 February 2024.

60. Based on the Council Tax base of 64,252.30 (set out above), each 1% increase in Council Tax generates £0.160 million additional income for this borough. A 2.99% increase in 2024/25 will yield additional income as highlighted in the table below.

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61. For MTFP modelling purposes, based on a 2.99% increase in the taxbase, the Council Tax income forecast at January 2024 is set out below:

<b>Table 9: COUNCIL TAX FORECAST</b>	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Forecast Resources	15.855	16.524	17.228	17.921	18.641	19.390
Annual Increase in Income (including base growth)	0.756	0.669	0.704	0.693	0.721	0.749
And Cumulative Increase in Income	0.756	1.425	2.129	2.821	3.542	4.291
<b>Band D (increased at 2.99%)</b>	<b>£249.71</b>	<b>£257.18</b>	<b>£264.87</b>	<b>£272.79</b>	<b>£280.95</b>	<b>£289.35</b>
Band D Increase	£7.25	£7.47	£7.69	£7.92	£8.16	£8.40
Taxbase Increase	1.96%	1.19%	1.23%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%
Annual Band D % Increase	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%

62. 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.
63. 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.

### Council Tax Policy and Local Council Tax Support Scheme

64. Under the Local Council Tax Support Scheme this Council, as the billing authority, awards council tax reductions to eligible working-age claimants. The cost of lost council tax income falls on the Collection Fund as a consequence of these claims resulting in a reduction in the council tax base which is calculated as part of budget-setting.
65. The precepting authorities collectively fund the cost of Local Council Tax Support Scheme claims as the costs fall on the Collection Fund and are distributed between authorities in line with their share of the council tax bill.
66. In addition, the full administration costs of processing awards, and of any discretionary awards, are met directly by this Council as the billing authority. Caution therefore has to be exercised when amending the Scheme to ensure that the cost to this Council of administering changes does not exceed any reduction in the cost of the Scheme overall.
67. There are several factors that make the annual cost of funding Council Tax Support very difficult to predict:
- Council tax increases by precepting authorities will increase overall Scheme costs;
  - There was an increased number of claims during the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of claims has been steadily decreasing since then, and has reduced by 11% since April 2022, and is now back at pre-pandemic levels;

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- The scheme has on average 3,300 claims. Of these 59% are classed as vulnerable, through receiving related disability benefits and premiums. This group can receive support covering up to 100% of their Council Tax liability; 41% are either from employed households or those receiving other benefits. These groups can only receive support covering up to 90% of their Council Tax liability.

68. The Local Scheme applies to working age households; pensioner claims are assessed and funded through a national scheme. It covers claims from three main categories of claimants:

<b>Table 10: LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME (January 2024)</b>		<b>Number of Claims</b>		<b>Annual Cost £m</b>	
<b>Category</b>		2022	2023	2022	2023
Vulnerable		1,875	1,951	2.923	3.201
Working Age – employed		601	374	0.552	0.349]
Working Age – not employed		1,178	949	1.512	1.196
<b>Annual Cost to Preceptors</b>				<b>4.987</b>	<b>4.746</b>

69. The Vulnerable group is mainly made up of households with a disability benefit in payment. The two Working Age groups have to pay at least 10% of their Council Tax, and there are several other restrictions in place, including a cap to Band E and no awards below £5 per week.
70. Historically, the December 2022 Settlement Announcement also included funding for additional Council Tax Support in 2023/24, representing up to an extra £25 in support for working age and pensioner households for cost of living pressures.
71. The Scheme was scheduled for review during 2023/24. Any changes proposed are subject to consultation and would need to take into account the impacts on recovery performance if support is reduced.
72. There have been no major changes to the Scheme since its introduction in 2013, other than to increase support in line with other national benefits. After seeking Member and Officer views during 2023/24 on potential scheme designs, the law requires consultation with taxpayers and preceptors as well as advice groups and other stakeholder before any final decisions are made on changes.
73. Options for change would be to :
- Reduce the level of support to households, which would have negative impacts on household finances;
  - Increase the level of support, by allowing all households receiving support to qualify for up to 100% of their Council Tax liability to be covered; or
  - Maintaining the scheme as it is.
74. After considering the options and taking into consideration the cost-of-living pressures on households, the planned approach is to increase levels of support for 2024/25.
75. Before considering the proposed increases for the Council Tax Support Scheme, it should be noted that all Council Tax support awards are strictly means tested before



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approval and for claimants and this is dependent upon a number of conditions. The key criteria for these conditions are:

- Claimant's circumstances (for example income, number of children, benefits and residency status);
  - Overall household income available (including savings, pensions and a partner's income) and
  - How many children or other adults live with the resident of the Borough.
76. The following increases are recommended for the revised Council Tax Support Scheme; that the maximum 90% support for households is increased to 100%, and other restrictions are removed. These other restrictions include removing the minimum limit of support of £5 per week, lifting the Band restriction of Band E and above and increasing capital limits to match those within the vulnerable scheme.
77. The implementation of these changes would increase the level of LCTS by approximately £0.250 million.
78. The costs of this increase will be offset by removing the 28-day discount to homes that are empty and unfurnished.
79. A full breakdown with further explanation is provided at Annex 8.

## Council Tax Policy

80. Changes to council tax charges on empty homes were approved during 2019/20 and further updated in 2020/21:
- Homes that have been empty and substantially unfurnished for more than two years and less than five years are charged a Council Tax long term empty premium equivalent to 100% of the Council Tax in addition to their current Council Tax;
  - Homes that have been empty and substantially unfurnished for more than five years and less than ten years are charged a Council Tax long term empty premium equivalent to 200% of the Council Tax; and
  - Homes that have been empty and substantially unfurnished for ten years and more are charged a Council Tax long term empty premium equivalent to 300% of the Council Tax.
81. As these changes help deliver a county-wide initiative to reduce the number of empty properties throughout Surrey, the County Council has agreed to reallocate its share of the increased funding that results from changes in Empty Homes policies. Under this commitment the Boroughs and Districts receive reallocated funding where agreed conditions are met.
82. No new changes to council tax policy were introduced in 2023/24 but as part of budget-setting for 2024/25 onwards consideration has been given to new opportunities to levy additional council tax premiums to encourage owners to bring properties back into use:
- Empty and unfurnished properties - removal of the 28-day council tax discount. This will mainly affect landlords and housing providers, in relation to the turnaround time between tenants. The level of this discount in 2022/23 was £0.521m, and in the first two quarters in 2023/24 is £0.262m.

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- Empty and furnished second homes – charge 200% council tax after the first 12 months - this is part of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill which received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023 and therefore is now an Act of Parliament and the changes will be enacted for 2024/25; and
- Long-term empty properties – commence charging the 100% premium after 12 months - instead of the current 24 months – again this is also part of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill and now an Act of Parliament and therefore the changes will also be enacted in 2024/25.
- Any changes above will be consulted upon with relevant stakeholders including Raven Housing Association.

83. It is proposed that these changes will be introduced for 2024/25 as it is now lawful.
84. The changes will offset the costs of increasing Local Council Tax Support to low-income households.
85. 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.

## **RETAINED BUSINESS RATES (NNDR)**

86. 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.
87. For 2024/25 the Council's NNDR Baseline income (before adjustments) will be £2.590 million out of a total estimated income of £56.884 million.
88. 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.
89. 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.
90. 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 £22.754 million Baseline sum this Council must return an additional £21.884 million to the Government and retain just £0.870 million.
91. There are then three further adjustments for Section 31 grants, multiplier gap adjustments and levy payments which collectively add a further £1.473 million to the NNDR contribution to the Council funds in the year 2024/25. The section 31 grants help offset the loss of income due to the continuation of reliefs announced by Government.
92. 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

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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.

93. The final adjustment relates to this Council's share of historic Collection Fund surpluses or deficits; representing £0.754 million additional funding for 2024/25

## Summary Forecast

94. In summary this means that the total contribution from NNDR to this Council in 2024/25 will be £3.344 million

Table 11: NNDR ANALYSIS	2023/24	2024/25
	£m	£m
<b>Gross NNDR Income</b>	52.162	54.175
<u>Plus</u> Forecast Growth	2.013	2.709
<b>Gross NNDR Income</b>	<b>54.175</b>	<b>56.884</b>
<u>Less</u> Government share (50%)	(27.088)	(28.442)
<u>Less</u> Surrey County Council share (10%)	(5.418)	(5.688)
<b>Forecast Gross NNDR Income - Reigate &amp; Banstead share (40%)</b>	<b>21.669</b>	<b>22.754</b>
<u>Less</u> Tariff due to Government	(20.255)	(21.884)
<b>Forecast Net NNDR Income - Reigate &amp; Banstead after Tariff</b>	<b>1.414</b>	<b>0.870</b>
<u>Plus</u> Section 31 Grant for Reliefs	1.000	1.473
<u>Plus</u> Multiplier gap/Inflation adjustment	-	0.575
<u>Plus</u> Levy Payment/Receipts from Government	0.064	(0.328)
<b>Forecast NNDR Income - Reigate &amp; Banstead</b>	<b>2.478</b>	<b>2.590</b>
Forecast Net Share of previous years' Surplus / (Deficit)	(1.516)	0.754
<b>Forecast NNDR Income - Reigate &amp; Banstead</b>	<b>3.994</b>	<b>3.344</b>

95. The 2024/25 budget is therefore based on a total of £3.344 million income from NNDR, a reduction of £0.650 million as compared to 2023/24. These forecasts will be subject to in-year monitoring as more up to date information is received.

## **USE OF RESERVES**

96. As set out above, there is no requirement to draw on the General Fund Balance to support Revenue Budget in 2024/25.
97. Forecast balances on Revenue Reserves at 1 April 2024 are summarised below and detailed at Annex 3.

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<b>Table 12: RESERVES SUMMARY</b>	<b>Forecast Balance<sup>1</sup> at 1 April 2024 £m</b>
General Fund Balance	3.500
Other Earmarked Reserves	26.913
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30.413</b>

NOTE 1 Forecast balances after decisions made during year end for 2023/24 and budget setting 2024/25 – excludes balances on historic COVID-19 Reserves and addition of the 2024/25 Homelessness Prevention Grant of £0.695 million.

98. The Policy on the use of Reserves was approved by Executive on 16 November 2023.
99. 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.
100. 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.
101. 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.
102. 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.
103. The Council has set a minimum level of unallocated General Fund reserves of 15% of the net revenue budget (£23.264 million for 2024/25), which equates, when rounded, to £3.500 million The forecast unallocated balance on the General Fund at 31 March 2024 is consistent with this limit.

## FORECAST BUDGET GAP AT JANUARY 2024

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

<b>Table 13: MEDIUM TERM REVENUE BUDGET FORECAST</b>	<b>Forecast Budget 2023/24</b>	<b>Forecast Budget 2024/25</b>	<b>Forecast Budget 2025/26</b>	<b>Forecast Budget 2026/27</b>	<b>Forecast Budget 2027/28</b>	<b>Forecast Budget 2028/29</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>FORECAST GAP</b>	Balanced	Balanced	2.253	3.849	5.357	5.586
Annual Increase in Gap	-	Balanced	2.253	1.596	1.508	0.229
Gap as % of 2024/25 budget requirement	-	n/a	10.07%	16.47%	22.93%	23.91%

105. Medium term forecasts are based on a cautious estimate of future costs and income streams. They will be updated and reported to Executive in July 2024 in preparation for 2025/26 service & financial planning.

## CAPITAL PROGRAMME

### Capital Investment Strategy and Capital Programme

106. The latest Capital Investment Strategy was approved by Executive in July 2023 and sets out how the Council plans to invest in assets to generate income.

### 2024/25 to 2028/29 Approved Capital Programme

107. The Capital Programme that was approved in January 2023 and the unspent balance on previously-approved schemes is summarised below:

<b>Table 14: CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 to 2027/28 by SERVICE</b>	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	<b>TOTAL £m</b>
	BFWD £m	Budget £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	
<b>ORGANISATION SERVICES:</b>							
Property Services	6.383	1.420	1.307	0.909	1.597	0.089	<b>11.705</b>
IT Services	-	0.260	0.250	0.200	0.200	0.500	<b>1.410</b>
Organisational Development	-	0.250	0.250	-	-	-	<b>0.500</b>
Environmental Strategy	0.236	-	-	-	-	-	<b>0.236</b>
<b>PEOPLE SERVICES:</b>							
Housing	7.444	1.412	1.419	1.419	1.419	1.419	<b>14.532</b>
Leisure & Culture	0.064	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	<b>0.564</b>
Community Partnerships	0.108	-	-	-	-	-	<b>0.108</b>
<b>PLACE SERVICES:</b>							
Neighbourhood Operations	1.659	0.897	0.996	1.177	0.902	3.853	<b>9.484</b>
Place Delivery	8.222	-	-	-	-	-	<b>8.222</b>
Economic Prosperity	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL APPROVED CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>	<b>24.116</b>	<b>4.339</b>	<b>4.322</b>	<b>3.805</b>	<b>4.218</b>	<b>5.961</b>	<b>46.761</b>

### Capital Programme Growth 2024/25 onwards

108. Capital Programme growth proposals totalling £3.175 million for 2024/25 to 2028/29 were set out in the Service & Financial Planning report to Executive on 16 November 2023.

<b>Table 15: CAPITAL PROGRAMME GROWTH 2024/25 to 2028/29</b>	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	<b>TOTAL £m</b>
	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	
Organisation	0.829	0.162	0.876	0.117	-	1.984
People	0.101	0.012	0.012	0.012	-	0.137
Place	0.804	0.250	-	-	-	1.054
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.734</b>	<b>0.424</b>	<b>0.888</b>	<b>0.129</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3.175</b>

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109. The reasons for this growth were detailed in the Service & Financial Planning report.

## Additional Capital Programme Growth 2024/25 onwards

110. Following the November report, additional Capital Programme growth proposals totalling £4.540 million have been identified for 2024/25 to 2028/29; these are included in the table below.

<b>Table 16: CAPITAL PROGRAMME GROWTH 2024/25 to 2028/29</b>	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	<b>TOTAL</b>
	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	
Organisation	(0.205)	(0.141)	(0.350)	-	-	<b>(0.696)</b>
People	-	-	-	-	-	-
Place	4.390	(0.150)	0.100	0.100	-	<b>4.440</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4.185</b>	<b>(0.291)</b>	<b>(0.250)</b>	<b>0.100</b>		<b>3.744</b>

111. This additional growth represents £4.298 million investment approved by Executive on 14 December 2023 for completion of the Marketfield Way development and £0.242 million for purchase of an electric refuse vehicle. Further details are provided at Annex 4.

112. The table above also includes £0.796 million relating to previously-approved capital schemes where minor historic balances that are no longer required have been deleted or where funds have been re-profiled between years to reflect future spending plans. Further details are provided at Annex 4.

## Capital Programme 2024/25 onwards

113. The Capital Programme for 2024/25 onwards, including approved budget growth, is therefore:

<b>Table 17: CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 to 2028/29 by SERVICE</b>	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	<b>TOTAL</b>
	BFWD £m	Budget £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	
<b>ORGANISATION SERVICES:</b>								
Property Services	6.383	1.420	1.831	0.930	2.123	0.206	-	<b>12.893</b>
IT Services	-	0.260	0.250	0.200	0.200	0.500	-	<b>1.410</b>
Organisational Development	-	0.250	0.250	-	-	-	-	<b>0.500</b>
Environmental Strategy	0.236	-	0.100	-	-	-	-	<b>0.336</b>
<b>PEOPLE SERVICES:</b>								
Housing	7.444	1.412	1.520	1.431	1.431	1.431	-	<b>14.669</b>
Leisure & Culture	0.064	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	-	<b>0.564</b>
Community Partnerships	0.108	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>0.108</b>
<b>PLACE SERVICES:</b>								
Neighbourhood Operations	1.659	0.897	1.892	1.277	1.002	3.953	-	<b>10.680</b>
Place Delivery	8.222	-	4.298	-	-	-	-	<b>12.520</b>
Economic Prosperity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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Table 17: CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 to 2028/29 by SERVICE	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	TOTAL £m
	BFWD £m	Budget £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	Projected £m	
<b>TOTAL APPROVED CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>	<b>24.116</b>	<b>4.339</b>	<b>10,241</b>	<b>3,938</b>	<b>4,856</b>	<b>6,190</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>53.680</b>

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

- £64.0 million in Commercial income-generating assets; and
- £30.0 million 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 business cases are developed.

### Capital Programme Funding

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

Table 18: CAPITAL PROGRAMME FUNDING 2022/23 to 2028/29	2022/23 BFWD £m	2023/24 Projected £M	2024/25 Projected £M	2025/26 Projected £M	2026/27 Projected £M	2027/28 Projected £M	2028/29 Projected £M	TOTAL
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE 2022/23 to 2028/29</b>	<b>24.116</b>	<b>4.339</b>	<b>10.241</b>	<b>3.938</b>	<b>4.856</b>	<b>6.190</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>53.680</b>
<b>FUNDED BY:</b>								
Capital Reserves	0.989	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>0.989</b>
Capital Receipts	5.157	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>5.157</b>
Capital Grants & Contributions	9.370	1.613	2.600	1.520	1.700	1.637	-	<b>18.440</b>
Prudential Borrowing	8.600	2.726	7.641	2.418	3.156	4.553	-	<b>29.094</b>
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL FUNDING 2022/23 to 2028/29</b>	<b>24.116</b>	<b>4.339</b>	<b>10.241</b>	<b>3.938</b>	<b>4.856</b>	<b>6.190</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>53.680</b>

Note 1. Prudential Borrowing represents forecast internal borrowing (from the Council's cash-backed resources) and plus external borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board or other sources that the Council utilises, in accordance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy.

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

Table 19: CAPITAL PROGRAMME FUNDING	
Capital Reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 remains as nil.</li> </ul>

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<b>Table 19: CAPITAL PROGRAMME FUNDING</b>	
Capital Receipts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sale of capital assets results in a capital receipt that can be used to invest in new capital assets or to repay prudential borrowing.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Flexible use of capital receipts – there are no current plans for use of this funding option.</li> </ul>
Capital Grants & Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forecasts of the future grant funding allocation for Disabled Facilities works have been updated to reflect forecast allocations.</li> <li>• They also include the Council’s share of Section 106 and CIL funding.</li> <li>• Revenue funding equivalent to the historic New Homes Bonus (NHB) grant allocation up to 2020/21 was allocated to support implementation of the Housing Delivery Strategy. New NHB allocations are included as funding for the 2024/25 Budget as reported within this report.</li> </ul>
Prudential Borrowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The primary source of long-term funding for the Capital Programme is now prudential borrowing, primarily from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB).</li> <li>• Loans are managed through the approved Treasury Management Strategy and policies.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Revenue Budget Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no expectation that significant capital expenditure will be funded from the revenue budget in 2024/25.</li> </ul>

## Capital Programme – Revenue Budget Implications

117. 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 (from either internal borrowing or external borrowing sources). The costs of repaying this borrowing fall on the revenue budget as treasury management costs in Central budgets.
118. Treasury management budgets have been updated to reflect the costs of borrowing for the approved Capital Programme for 2024/25 onwards net of interest on forecast balances. There is an additional reduction in Treasury Management costs for 2024/25 due to the re-profiling of the capital programme and the resulting funding requirement which can be met from internal borrowing to minimise borrowing costs where possible.



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Final details will be confirmed in the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 will be reported to Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Executive and Full Council for approval in March.

119. 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.

120. 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)

121. The Local Government Act 2003 (Section 25) 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.

122. 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 2024/25;
- 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

123. 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>.

<b>Table 20: CIPFA RESILIENCE INDEX INDICATORS at March 2021 and March 2022<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>This Council’s Relative Risk Compared to Similar Councils</b>	<b>This Council’s Prospects over the Medium Term</b>
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	

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<b>Table 20: CIPFA RESILIENCE INDEX INDICATORS at March 2021 and March 2022<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>This Council's Relative Risk Compared to Similar Councils</b>	<b>This Council's Prospects over the Medium Term</b>
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	
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

124. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA) Financial Management Code ('the FM Code') was introduced in April 2021. It is intended to support good financial management and stability and applies to all local authorities, including police, fire and other bodies.
125. The detailed requirements were set out in the MTFP that was approved in July 2023. 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.
126. Authorities have been required to adopt the requirements of the FM Code with effect from April 2021.
127. 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.
128. The latest assessment of this Council's compliance with the requirements of the Code and any areas for further development areas were outlined in the Medium Term Financial Plan report to Executive in July 2023.

## Robustness of Reserves

129. As highlighted in the Service & Financial Planning report to Executive on 16 November 2023 and in this Budget report both general and earmarked reserves remain relatively healthy. The planned use of reserves in 2024/25 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 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

130. As explained in this report, the budget proposals for 2024/25 are robust. There remain a number of uncertainties and risks which are summarised in the following paragraphs.

131. Geopolitical and the national economy:

- Geopolitical and economic pressures exist nationally and globally – they 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.
- Inflationary pressures persist despite recent drops in CPI and are a significant risk, in particular with regard to fuel, energy and building costs. UK interest rates remain high at over 5% which affects the cost of borrowing and puts further pressure on residents and local businesses.

132. Future Government Funding:

- The future of local government funding and business rates remains uncertain and an area of concern. All Councils still await news of the Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Reforms and these may not be available until 2025/26 at the earliest. The date for a General Election is also drawing nearer and will fall into the coming financial year 2024/25 with policy changes likely to follow.
- Other Government strategies such as the Resources and Waste Strategy may also pressurise domestic council budgets and are likely to require consideration and have budgetary implication from 2025/26 when implementation plans are confirmed.
- The end of New Homes Bonus payments over the coming years will have an impact on available resources if this ceases after 2024/25.
- There is a temporary accommodation crisis nationally and 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.
- There is further pressure due to the shortfalls expected in Housing Benefit Subsidy grant from Government due to the increased cost of supported housing claims and discretionary housing payments – many of these additional costs

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have to be borne by the Council's Revenue Budget and Government risk reserve.

## 133. Revenue Budget Savings:

- Following budget reductions in past years, it has become increasingly difficult to generate additional ongoing savings at the margins whilst protecting and preserving both services to residents and essential council resources.
- The continued development of the Financial Sustainability Programme remains a priority over the next couple of years to address the forecast MTFP gap and to establish a framework of initiatives to protect the financial future of the council.
- If the Council is to deliver financial sustainability then it will need to continue 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' and the limitations imposed on councils from the 2021 introduction of the new CIPFA Prudential Code 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. The Fees & Charges Policy was approved in November 2023.

## 134. Corporate Plan:

- The Council is currently reviewing its Corporate Plan, and starting to develop its next plan for 2025-2030.
- This review process will take account of developing context and a range of local engagement and consultation.
- Where any new or revised priorities are identified, these elements and necessary resourcing will be considered within the Service & Financial Planning process.

## 135. 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 3).
- 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 the fund investments and liabilities. However, current employer contributions remain affordable within existing resources.
- Given the uncertainty over future geopolitical and national economic conditions and the business rates regime, it is prudent to maintain the Council's capacity through its reserves to protect services from unforeseen financial pressures. Once used however, it may prove difficult to replenish reserves.
- It should be noted that the Council retains a General Fund working balance in-line with the approved Reserves Policy and has been able to set a prudent

'balanced' budget for 2024/25 as detailed on this budget report to Council. As a result of this prudent budget as detailed in this report.

- The Council is therefore not at risk, based on current medium term forecasts (unlike some councils), of having to consider the issue of a S114 notice.

136. Overall, the Council has made prudent budgetary provision for its commitments for the 2024/25 financial year and can set a balanced budget, within the legislative framework that governs its operations and within other constraints, such as the Council's policy framework.

## OPTIONS

137. 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 2024/25.

**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 2024/25.

**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 2024/25.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

138. There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report subject to the Council adopting a balanced budget for 2024/25 by March 2024 to meet the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992

139. The Local Council Tax Support Scheme changes have been subject to consultation to ensure that any changes agreed are compliant with the relevant regulations.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

140. These are addressed throughout the report.

## EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

141. 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](https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/6490/corporate_equality_policy_2020.pdf)

142. 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

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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 increase car park charges; and
- Proposals to increase some community centre room hire charges.

143. 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.

144. Since the draft budget proposals were published, consultation has been undertaken, and the equality impact assessments have been finalised. The final assessments are attached at Annex 7 to inform Members' decision making.

145. 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 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. The parking team will continue to monitor levels of car parking usage / ticket sales to understand the overall impact of the proposals. Consideration will be given to whether a survey of car park users would be beneficial to allow a better understanding of the demographics and protected characteristics of those who use 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). 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.

146. A small number of service budget changes have been included in the final proposals that were not included at draft budget stage. These have been considered and no

associated equality impacts have been identified associated with them.

## Local Council Tax Support

147. An equality impact assessment has also been undertaken on proposed changes to Local Council Tax Support. This is included as part of Annex 6. This has concluded no negative impact, and the potential for positive impact on residents with protected characteristics who either already access support or may newly become eligible.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

148. Proposals within this budget respond to a number of the 'next steps' set out in the covering paper to the Executive which accompanied the latest Environmental Sustainability Strategy Annual Report (September 2023).
149. Revenue budget growth is being sought for the following, which will contribute to the delivery of the Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan:
- 1 FTE Sustainability Manager (£0.068m), to provide additional capacity within the Corporate Policy, Projects & Performance service and support the Council work towards its net zero organisation and borough-wide targets, and other sustainability objectives;
  - 0.5FTE Ecology Officer (£0.020m), to assist the Council in implementing biodiversity improvements; and
  - £0.121m increase to base budget in Neighbourhood Services to enable the Council to transition the running of its compatible HGV fleet from diesel to HVO, delivering an estimated 76% reduction in carbon emissions per vehicle and an overall 24% reduction in total annual Council carbon emissions (approx. 475 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year). This revenue growth request figure is based on the purchase of ethically sourced HVO, and is based on 2022/23 vehicle fuel usage, current diesel prices and HVO prices quoted by reputable suppliers. In addition to this, growth of £0.016m has been allowed to cover projected electricity charging costs for one new electric refuse collection vehicle.
150. Revenue savings are identified of £0.025 million associated with the installation of CIL-funded solar compacting bins. This saving results from reduced frequency of refuse bin emptying which will also deliver (currently unquantified) carbon emission reductions from reduced vehicle mileage.
151. Capital growth is being sought for the following:
- £0.100m of capital growth for the installation of upgraded energy management systems across key operational buildings. This will contribute to achieving carbon emissions reduction as it will enable better understanding (and therefore control) over energy use in our buildings. This therefore represents an 'invest to save' project. It will also mean the Council has access to more up to date and reliable data for reporting purposes;
  - Environmental upgrades to a range of Council buildings to deliver recommendations from the commissioned Energy Audit reports. This includes the approx. £0.800m of strategic CIL secured for the delivery of solar panels, energy management and energy efficiency measures across 9 Council buildings. In addition, capital growth of £1.145m is being sought, which will fund the installation of measures such as anti-glare film, LED lighting and lighting sensors, sub-metering and switching from gas boilers to either heat pumps or

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hybrid heating systems. The carbon savings associated with measures delivered through CIL and this additional capital growth combined is estimated at in the region of 330 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year. Should this capital growth be funded from external borrowing over 50 years, borrowing costs of around £0.090m per year are projected; however it should also be noted that investing in energy reduction measures across our operational assets will reduce council energy bills and thus deliver associated revenue savings.

- £0.250m of capital growth to fund the cost uplift associated with purchase of one electric garden waste collection vehicle. The purchase of this vehicle will be part funded by the existing fleet replacement capital programme allocation; however additional funding is required due to the cost premium associated with an electric vehicle. This growth was considered and agreed for inclusion in the budget at the Executive meeting in December 2023.

152. The environmental sustainability implications of other 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:

- Potential positive impact from the proposed increase in parking fees, encouraging car users to consider alternative modes of transport.
- Potential positive impact from leasing new street sweepers which are HVO compatible.

153. It is not considered likely that there will be any sustainability implications from the proposed fee increases in relation to allotments, garden waste and bulky waste – the fee increases implemented last year did not have a notable negative impact on service usage and indeed garden waste registrations increased.

154. More generally, the proposed approach for funding the Council's environmental sustainability activity is as follows:

- Base budget funding within the corporate policy team for one sustainability project officer, with non-base budget funding for a second sustainability project officer;
- Retention of the Environmental Sustainability Reserve to progress corporate sustainability project activity;
- Service-specific initiative costs funded within the relevant Council departmental budgets (for example, Fleet, Facilities), with the above sustainability reserve serving to provide 'top up' funding in some instances; and service-level capital funding requests progressed on a project-specific basis; and
- Drawing on external or third party funding opportunities wherever possible, either by the Council working alone or in partnership.

## **COMMUNICATION IMPLICATIONS**

155. The Council continues to offer value for money for Council residents – in 2024/24, the average household will pay just £4.95 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.

156. 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 & 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

157. 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.
158. 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.
159. 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.
160. The Local Council Tax Support scheme has now been reviewed and changes recommended and this de-risks the potential for not having a scheme which is up to date and reflective of current needs. Changes have been subject to wide consultation to avoid the risks of legal challenge, which again are borne entirely by this authority. This has also not prevented the Council from managing and controlling other areas of the Council Tax base, such as discounts and exemptions.

## HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

161. The Council will need to maintain workforce capacity and skills to enable the organisation to diversify and deliver again Corporate Plan ambitions.
162. The service & financial planning proposals for 2024/25 result in an overall change in FTE numbers as set out in the table below.

<b>Table 21: STAFF ESTABLISHMENT – FORECAST FTE MOVEMENTS 2023/24 TO 2024/25</b>		
<b>STAFF ESTABLISHMENT 2023/24 (including fixed term posts)</b>		<b>530.0</b>
<b>Net Permanent Posts to be created / (deleted) as part of 2024/25 Service &amp; Financial Planning Savings and Growth proposals:</b>		
Annex		
2	Corporate Policy	1.0
2	ICT	3.0
2	Legal Services	(1.0)
2	Environmental Health & Licencing	1.5

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<b>STAFF ESTABLISHMENT 2023/24 (including fixed term posts)</b>		<b>530.0</b>
2	Planning & Development	0.5
<b>FORECAST STAFF ESTABLISHMENT 2024/25</b>		<b>535.0</b>
<b>NET INCREASE / (DECREASE)</b>		<b>5.0</b>

163. The final budget proposals and Medium Term Financial Plan forecasts include provision for an annual pay award for staff. This award has been subject to negotiations with staff union representatives and takes into account 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

164. An increase of £1,800 for 2024/25 for all staff was offered and can be accommodated within the budget; consultation with the recognised trade unions has now concluded with formal acceptance of this offer.

## **CONSULTATION**

#### Public Consultation

165. Consultation has been carried out in line with the Constitution. The 8 week public consultation ran from 20 November 2023 until 15 January 2024. 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 comment by email to a dedicated Council email address or via a 'Freepost' option.

166. 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 520 stakeholders. Recognising that some residents may not be able to take part on-line, hard copy paper surveys in an accessible format were made available on request from the Customer Contact Team.

167. The Council received 73 surveys (17 of which were only partially completed), and a further 1 representation by other means.

168. 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, including written comment provided as part of the survey, is included at Annex 6. Headline messages include:

- The proposal to increase Council Tax by the referendum limit was supported by a majority of respondents, receiving 60% of responses in agreement;
- There was a mixed response in relation to proposals for changes to fees and charges. While some were supported by a majority of respondents (for example locally set environmental health and licencing charges and planning charges both received 69% support or over), levels of support for other proposed changes were considerably lower (for example, increased charges for garden

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waste (31%) and bulky waste collection (31%), for allotments (44%) and cemeteries (33%), and at Council car parks (33%);

- Proposals to reduce the Council's direct costs, and to generate more income were strongly supported (ranging from 72% to 93% support);
- However there were mixed views for proposals to increase direct costs. Some proposals – such as using more environmentally fuels – received a good level of support (78%); others had less support – for example, increased budget to cover external ICT support and maintenance costs, and funding to make council buildings more energy efficient both received less than 50% support.

169. Comments raised via the survey suggest value for money continues to be important for residents, along with the provision of high quality services. Some respondents expressed that further savings should be made before costs are increased. While views are mixed as to where the Council should prioritise its focus, a number of responses highlighted the need to consider the 'knock on' impacts of any choices. This included concerns about a potential increase in fly-tipping as a result of increased optional waste collection charges, a reduction in physical activity levels and mental health benefits from increases to sports pitch charges and allotment fees, and an increase in anti-social parking as a result of paid car park fee increases.

170. One response not using the survey format was received, from Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council, specifically requesting inclusion of budget dedicated to the provision of community transport for more vulnerable residents. The relevant service area has confirmed that no change to the budget for 2024/25 is proposed, but that the Council will continue to work with SCC and local partners to explore potential local transport initiatives while also continuing with the existing taxi voucher arrangements.

#### Consultation with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

171. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee established a Budget Scrutiny Panel to support this work. The Panel met on 29 November 2023 and their report was considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 7 December 2023 and presented to the Executive on 14 December. The Committee is also due to consider the final Budget proposals on 25 January 2024.

#### Consultation With Business Representatives:

172. 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**

173. 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 2024/25 to 2028/29*, report to Executive on 13 July 2023

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*Capital Investment Strategy 2024/25, report to Executive on 22 June 2023*

*Service & Financial Planning 2024/25 to 2027/28, report to Executive on 16 November 2023*

*Budget Scrutiny Panel Report, Service & Financial Planning 2024/25, report to Executive on 16 December 2023*

*Equality Impact Assessment: Service & Financial Planning 2024/25, January 2024*

## **ANNEXES:**

1. Medium Term Financial Plan Summary
2. Additional Revenue Budget Growth & Savings Proposals
3. Forecast Revenue Budget Reserves
4. Additional Capital Programme Growth Proposals
5. Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2028/29 – All Schemes
6. Draft Budget 2024/25 – Consultation Report
7. Equality Impact of 2024/25 Budget Proposals
8. Local Council Tax Support Scheme – New Scheme Details

# MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - SUMMARY

2024/25 to 2028/29

January 2024

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## REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 & 2024/25

REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 & 2024/25	Approved Budget 2023/24 £m	Recommended Budget 2024/25 £m
<b>ORGANISATION</b>		
Communications & Customer Service	1.104	1.171
Finance	1.235	1.260
IT	1.851	2.183
ICT - Reserve-funded growth for Strategy implementation	0.493	0.304
Legal & Governance	2.406	2.223
Organisational Development & HR	0.716	0.733
Corporate Policy, Projects & Performance (incl. environmental sustainability)	0.429	0.515
Property & Commercial	(1.222)	(0.581)
Property & Commercial – growth for issues & risks	1.350	-
<b>PLACE</b>		
Economic Prosperity	0.277	0.276
Neighbourhood Services	4.336	4.542
Place Delivery	0.326	0.334
Planning	0.593	0.455
<b>PEOPLE</b>		
Community Partnerships	1.184	1.271
Housing	0.926	0.848
Revenues, Benefits & Fraud	0.487	1.621
Leisure & Culture	0.335	0.393
<b>SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM</b>	0.988	1.030
<b>SERVICE BUDGETS TOTAL</b>	<b>17.815</b>	<b>18.578</b>
<b>CENTRAL BUDGETS</b>	<b>5.380</b>	<b>4.589</b>
<b>NET EXPENDITURE 2020/21</b>	<b>23.194</b>	<b>23.167</b>
Council Tax	16.293	16.675
National Non-Domestic Rates	3.994	3.344
Other Un-ringfenced Grants	1.930	2.150
Grants transferred to Reserves	0.686 (0.686)	(0.694) (0.694)
Call on Earmarked Reserves <sup>1</sup>	0.977	0.998
Use of funds from the General Fund Balance to support the 2021/22 revenue Budget <sup>1</sup>	-	-
<b>NET SOURCES OF INCOME 2020/21</b>	<b>23.194</b>	<b>23.167</b>
<b>BUDGET GAP</b>	<b>NIL</b>	<b>NIL</b>

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 2024/25 to 2028/29 at January 2023

MEDIUM TERM REVENUE BUDGET FORECAST	Approved Budget 2023/24 £m	Cumulative Impact 2024/25 £m	Cumulative Impact 2025/26 £m	Cumulative Impact 2026/27 £m	Cumulative Impact 2027/28 £m	Cumulative Impact 2028/29 £m
<b>Current Year Budget Requirement</b>	<b>23.194</b>					
Service Budgets - Pay		1.750	4.000	6.250	8.500	9.500
Service Budgets – Savings/Income		(2,294)	(2.259)	(2.259)	(2.259)	(2.259)
Service Budgets – Growth		1.112	0.943	0.943	0.943	0.943
Service Budget risks – Government funding cuts H.B.		0.694	-	-	-	-
Call on Government Funding Risks Reserve to fund HB costs		(0.694)	-	-	-	-
Central Budgets - Treasury Management – net savings		(0.255)	(0.200)	(0.200)	(0.200)	(0.200)
Other Central Budgets – net savings		(0.176)	(0.176)	(0.176)	(0.176)	(0.176)
<b>Council Tax</b> 2.99% increase plus forecast taxbase increase and share of Collection Fund surplus		(0.382)	(1.425)	(2.129)	(2.821)	(3.542)
<b>Business Rates (NDR)</b> Latest Forecast		0.650	1.470	1.420	1.370	1.320
<b>Grants and other Reserves</b> Net change in call on Grants		(0.304)				
<b>Forecast Gap Compared to Current Budget</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>2.353</b>	<b>3.849</b>	<b>5.357</b>	<b>5.586</b>
Annual Increase in Gap		0	2.314	1.535	1.508	0.229
Gap as % of current budget requirement		0%	9.9%	16.6%	23.1%	24.1%

## EXTRACT: STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER STRATEGIC FINANCIAL RISKS

SR2	Financial sustainability	RED
<b>Description</b>	<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>	
<b>Owner</b>	<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	Cllr Schofield
	<b>Officers</b>	Pat Main
<b>Controls</b>	<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>	
<b>Mitigating actions/progress</b>	<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"> <li><b>1. Projects</b> – new ideas and opportunities for generating income and/or making savings.</li> <li><b>2. Service and financial planning (2024-25 onwards)</b> – 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.</li> <li><b>3. Fees and charges</b> – carrying out a fundamental review to ensure the full application of the fees and charges policy across the Council.</li> </ol> <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 2023 . 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		January 2024		

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**REVENUE BUDGET  
ADDITIONAL SERVICE & CENTRAL BUDGET GROWTH,  
INCOME AND SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2024/25**

## Service & Central Revenue Budget Growth, Income and Savings Proposals 2024/25 (additional proposals – since November 2023)

Pay Growth – Service - Organisation					
Head of Service	Service	Growth £M	Income / Savings £M	FTE Impact	Description
Joyce Hamilton / Alex Vine	Legal and Democratic Services	0.043	N/A	N/A	Legal and Democratic Services final restructure costs after confirmation of Surrey partner contributions to the net cost of the service. Includes savings of £0.144m in the Legal Services budget that were previously reported in the November 2023 Budget report.
<b>Total</b>		<b>0.043</b>	-	-	

## Service & Central Revenue Budget Growth, Income and Savings Proposals 2024/25 (additional proposals – since November 2023)

Non Pay Growth - Service – Organisation					
Head of Service	Service	Growth £M	Income / Savings £M	FTE Impact	Description
Pat Main	Property and Facilities	0.017	-	-	The Rise Redhill – operational budget for utilities and operating costs.
Pat Main	Property and Facilities	-	(0.020)	-	The Rise Redhill – additional forecast income from lettings.
Pat Main	Property and Facilities	0.035	-	-	Asset management system Cloud migration costs – funded from the IT Strategy Reserve.
Darren Wray	IT	0.069	-	-	IT Strategy implementation costs - funded from the IT Strategy Reserve.
<b>Total</b>		<b>0.121</b>	<b>(0.020)</b>	-	

## Service & Central Revenue Budget Growth, Income and Savings Proposals 2024/25 (additional proposals – since November 2023)

Non Pay growth - Service - People					
Head of Service	Service	Growth £M	Income / Savings £M	FTE Impact	Description
Duane Kirkland	Leisure	-	(0.015)	-	Additional inflationary income from the leisure service operator contract fee
<b>Total</b>		-	<b>(0.015)</b>	-	

## Service & Central Revenue Budget Growth, Income and Savings Proposals 2024/25 (additional proposals – since November 2023)

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Non Pay Growth - Service – Place					
Head of Service	Service	Growth £M	Income / Savings £M	FTE Impact	Description
Morag Williams	Fleet	(0.011)	-	-	Reduction in forecast budget growth for introduction hydrogenated vegetable fuel – £0.132m growth was previously approved in the November Budget report – net growth is now £0.121m
Morag Williams	Fleet	0.016	-	-	Vehicle charging costs for operating the new electric refuse vehicle that was approved for purchase by Executive in December 2023.
<b>Total</b>		<b>0.005</b>	-	-	

Non Pay Growth – Central Budgets					
Head of Service	Service	Growth £M	Income / Savings £M	FTE Impact	Description
Pat Main	Organisation	(0.270)	-	-	Reduction in the forecast Housing Benefit subsidy loss from supported and discretionary housing payments – shortfall risks to be funded from Reserves. Revised growth figure of £0.694m compared to the forecast in the November Budget report of £0.964m – a net reduction of (£0.270)m.
<b>Total</b>		<b>(0.270)</b>	-	-	

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## FORECAST REVENUE RESERVE BALANCES AT 1 APRIL 2024

	Forecast Balance at 1.4.24 £m	Purpose
General Fund Balance	<b>£3.500m</b>	Acts as a buffer against unpredicted budget pressures. The minimum level required is £3.5m

Earmarked Revenue Reserves	Forecast Balance at 1.4.24 £m	Purpose
Housing Delivery Strategy Reserve	17.920	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	1.172	Earmarked for the purpose of mitigating the impacts of delays in delivery of new sustainable commercial income streams.
Homelessness Prevention	1.170	Established to account separately for the funding set aside for homelessness prevention.
Capital Schemes Feasibility Studies Reserve	0.900	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)	0.918	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	0.861	Earmarked for the purpose of mitigating the planned reduction in Government funding pending delivery of new sustainable income streams.
IT Strategy Reserve	0.624	Established to support implementation of the new IT Strategy.
Economic Development Initiatives Reserve	0.615	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.

<b>Earmarked Revenue Reserves</b>	<b>Forecast Balance at 1.4.24 £m</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Family Support Programme	0.239	Established to carry-forward unused funding for use in future years.
Environmental Sustainability Reserve	0.146	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	0.117	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
Specific Budget Contributions ( various)	0.125	Established to carry forward unused balances for specific projects
Revenue Grants Reserve	0.837	Established as to carry-forward unspent grants during the year for future use.
Wheatley Court Reserve	0.011	Established to carryforward unused net income to cover future expenditure.
<b>Total Earmarked Revenue Reserves:</b>	<b>£26.913m</b>	

<b>COVID-19 Revenue Reserves</b>	<b>Forecast Balance at 1.4.23 £m</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
COVID-19 – Council Tax Hardship Funding	0.240	Established to unused funding for use in future years.
COVID-Test & Trace Admin Funding	0.100	Established to unused funding for use in future years.

<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>£30.753m<sup>1</sup></b>
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1. Subject to final review as the Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 is not finalised

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**CAPITAL PROGRAMME  
ADDITIONAL CAPITAL GROWTH AND SAVINGS  
PROPOSALS  
2024/25 to 2028/29**

## Capital Programme – Additional Growth Proposals – 2024/25 to 2028/29

Head of Service	Growth Proposal	Source of Funding	Growth 2024/25 £M	Growth 2025/26 £M	Growth 2026/27 £M	Growth 2027/28 £M	Growth 2028/29 £M	Total £M
<b>PLACE DELIVERY</b>								
Peter Boarder	Marketfield Way/The Rise – final allocation for completion of the development, as approved by Executive in December 2023.	Prudential Borrowing	4.298	-	-	-	-	<b>4.298</b>
<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES</b>								
Morag Williams	Purchase of one electric refuse collection vehicle, as approved by Executive in December 2023.	Prudential Borrowing	0.242	-	-	-	-	<b>0.242</b>
Morag Williams	Ponds de-silting – reprofiling of existing budget allocation to align with funding allocation	CIL	(0.150)	(0.150)	0.100	0.100	-	<b>(0.100)</b>
<b>Total - Neighbourhood Services</b>			<b>0.092</b>	<b>(0.150)</b>	<b>0.100</b>	<b>0.100</b>		<b>0.142</b>

### Capital Programme – Additional Savings Proposals – 2024/25 to 2028/29

Head of Service	Saving proposed and capital scheme	Source of Funding	Saving 2024/25 £M	Saving 2025/26 £M	Saving 2026/27 £M	Saving 2027/28 £M	Saving 2028/29 £M	Total £M
<b>ORGANISATION</b>								
Pat Main	Leisure Centres – reprofiling / reduction of existing budget allocation	Prudential Borrowing	(0.030)	(0.036)	(0.175)	-	-	<b>(0.241)</b>
Pat Main	Harlequin Building – reprofiling / reduction of existing budget allocation	Prudential Borrowing	(0.100)	(0.030)	(0.100)	-	-	<b>(0.230)</b>
Pat Main	Crown House – reprofiling of existing budget allocation	Prudential Borrowing	(0.075)	(0.075)	(0.075)	-	-	<b>(0.225)</b>
<b>Total – Organisation</b>			<b>(0.205)</b>	<b>(0.141)</b>	<b>(0.350)</b>	-	-	<b>(0.696)</b>
<b>PLACE</b>								

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## CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2028/29 - SUMMARY - ALL SCHEMES

## ORGANISATION SERVICES

STRATEGIC PROPERTY	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total
	BFWD £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £000	Projected £m	£000
<b>Pat Main</b>								
<b>Rolling Property Maintenance Programmes:</b>								
Temporary Accommodation – Cyclical Repairs & Improvement	-	40	40	40	40	40	-	200
Temporary Accommodation - New Pond Flat Works	95	-	-	-	-	-	-	95
Massetts Road	21	21	21	21	21	21	-	126
Operational Buildings	370	95	80	69	492	96	-	1,202
Community Centre Programme	81	67	632	32	125	-	-	937
Existing Pavilions Programme	97	50	50	50	150	21	-	418
Leisure Centre Maintenance	159	190	-	-	-	-	-	349
Harlequin Property Maintenance	270	120	-	-	-	-	-	390
Tenanted Properties	167	100	100	100	100	-	-	567
Crown House	285	75	-	-	-	-	-	360
Units 1-5 Redhill Dist Centre Salfords	115	17	17	17	25	-	-	191
Linden House, 51B High Street Reigate	0	12	12	12	15	-	-	51
Unit 61E Albert Road North	74	12	12	12	75	-	-	185
Forum House, Brighton Road Redhill	270	150	150	100	100	-	-	770
Beech House, London Road Reigate	3,000	0	0	0	0	-	-	3,000
Regent House, 1-3 Queensway Redhill	175	90	90	75	90	-	-	520
Tenanted Property Assets	135	76	76	50	76	-	-	413
Infra-structure (walls)	31	10	60	10	20	-	-	131
Car Parks Capital Works Programme	563	195	332	242	75	-	-	1,407
Earlswood Depot/Park Farm Depot	61	20	20	20	417	-	-	538
Public Conveniences	21	10	20	10	158	-	-	219
Cemeteries & Chapel	80	20	40	20	54	-	-	214
Allotments	42	12	22	12	12	-	-	100
Building Maintenance - Capitalised Staff Costs	28	28	28	28	28	28	-	168
Pavilion Replacement - Woodmansterne	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Priory Park	223	10	30	10	50	-	-	323
	<b>6,383</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>1,831</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>2,123</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12,893</b>

<b>CORPORATE RESOURCES</b>		<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Darren Wray</b>		<b>BFWD £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Rolling Investment Programmes:</b>									
ICT Replacement Programme		-	200	250	200	200	200	-	1,050
ICT Data Refresh		-	-	-	-	-	250	-	250
Replacement Printers and Photocopiers		-	60	-	-	-	50	-	110
		-	<b>260</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>500</b>	-	<b>1,410</b>
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY</b>									
<b>Cath Rose</b>		<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>	<b>Total</b>
		<b>BFWD £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Environmental Strategy Delivery		236	-	100	-	-	-	-	<b>336</b>
<b>ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>									
<b>Kate Brown</b>		<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>	<b>Total</b>
		<b>BFWD £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>Projected £000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Great Workplace Programme - Phase 2		-	250	250	-	-	-	-	<b>500</b>

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

PEOPLE SERVICES								
HOUSING	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total
Richard Robinson	BFWD	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Grant-Funded Schemes</b>								
Home Improvement Agency & Handy Person Scheme	-	125	144	144	144	144	-	701
Disabled Facilities Grant	-	1,287	1,287	1,287	1,287	1,287	-	6,435
<b>Housing Development</b>								
Temporary Accommodation – Stirling House	120	-	-	-	-	-	-	120
Temporary Accommodation – Mitchell Court	240	-	-	-	-	-	-	240
Purchase of Temporary & Emergency Accommodation	3,997	-	89	-	-	-	-	4,086
Purchase of Temporary Accommodation - Local Authority Housing Fund (Round 1)	2,967	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,967
Purchase of Temporary Accommodation - Local Authority Housing Fund (Round 2)	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Octavia Court (Lee Street Bungalows)	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Development of Court Lodge Residential Site	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Wheatley Court (Cromwell Road Development)	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	100
	<b>7,444</b>	<b>1,412</b>	<b>1,520</b>	<b>1,431</b>	<b>1,431</b>	<b>1,431</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,669</b>
<b>LEISURE &amp; INTERVENTION</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>	<b>Total</b>
Duane Kirkland	BFWD	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Rolling Maintenance Programmes:</b>								
Harlequin - Service Development	64	100	100	100	100	100	0	564
<b>COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>	<b>Total</b>
Justine Chatfield	BFWD	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Rolling Maintenance/Investment Programmes:</b>								
CCTV Rolling Programme	105	-	-	-	-	-	-	105
UKSPF - Digital Connectivity for Local Community Facilities	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
	<b>108</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>108</b>

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

## PLACE SERVICES

PLACE SERVICES								
NEIGHBOURHOOD OPERATIONS	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total
Morag Williams	BFWD	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Rolling Maintenance/Investment Programmes:</b>								
Vehicles & Plant Programme	1,022	582	923	837	562	3,668	-	7,594
Fleet Vehicle Wash-Bay Replacement	350	-	-	-	-	-	-	350
Workshop Refurbishment	160	-	-	-	-	-	-	160
Memorial Park works	-	-	134	-	-	-	-	134
Ponds De-Silting	-	-	100	100	100	100	-	400
Solar Compacting Bins	-	-	420	-	-	-	-	420
Play Area Improvement Programme	-	230	230	230	230	100	-	1,020
Parks & Countryside - Infrastructure & Fencing	-	45	45	45	45	45	-	225
Air Quality Monitoring Equipment	-	40	40	65	65	40	-	250
Contribution to Surrey Transit Site	127	-	-	-	-	-	-	127
	<b>1,659</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>1,892</b>	<b>1,277</b>	<b>1,002</b>	<b>3,953</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,680</b>
PLACE DELIVERY	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total
Peter Boarder	BFWD	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Pay-on-Exit Car Parking at Central Car Park and Victoria Road Car Park, Horley	46	-	-	-	-	-	-	46
Horley Public Realm Improvements - Phase 4	565	-	-	-	-	-	-	565
Horley Town Centre - Outdoor Recreational Facilities	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subway Refurbishment, Horley	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marketfield Way Redevelopment	5,575	-	4,298	-	-	-	-	9,873
Redhill Public Realm Improvements	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
Merstham Recreation Ground	1,465	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,465
Preston - Parking Improvements	542	-	-	-	-	-	-	542
	<b>8,222</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,298</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12,520</b>

<b>ECONOMIC PROSPERITY</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Simon Bland</b>	<b>BFWD</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Vibrant Towns & Villages	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL APPROVED CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>	<b>24,116</b>	<b>4,339</b>	<b>10,241</b>	<b>3,938</b>	<b>4,856</b>	<b>6,190</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>53,680</b>

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# ANNEX 6

## 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 can 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 73 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 60% of responses in agreement, with 34% opposed and 6% other.
- Although the proposed Council Tax increase was supported by the majority of respondents, there were a range of comments expressing concern over the impact of increases on residents facing cost of living pressures.
- Views on Fees and Charges proposals were mixed. Price increases were generally supported for hire of community centre rooms, environmental health and licensing, planning related charges, and charges for Council Tax summons and liability orders. Views on parking fees were mixed, with increases for car park permits and the introduction of free 20 minute parking in Horley supported, but other increases in parking charges opposed by a majority of respondents. Increases in fees for paid-for greenspaces and waste and recycling services, including regarding sports pitch hire, cemeteries and allotments, garden waste, bulky waste and waste containers were

opposed by a majority of respondents, although there was majority support for increases to trade waste charges and banner advertising charges.

- The most common theme in comments regarding Fees and Charges was concern regarding the secondary impacts of increases, such as potential increases in fly-tipping, discouragement of residents from utilising amenities such as allotments and sports pitches, and fears of potential disruptive parking practices.
- For Service Budget proposals, all proposals for savings and income generation were supported by a majority of respondents, with all such proposals receiving over 70% support. There was also generally support for increases in service costs from a majority of respondents, but this was more mixed, with the balance generally between 50% and 60% being in favour. Support was strongest for moving to more environmentally friendly fuels for bin lorries (78%), upgrading street sweepers (72%) and for supporting Environmental Health enforcement and housing inspections (69%), but views were mixed on spending on making Council buildings more energy efficient (47% agree, 45% disagree), and increasing budgets to cover ICT costs (44% agree, 42% disagree).
- Comments on Service Budget proposals were varied in content. A recurring theme was ensuring that spending secured good value for money for residents; there were mixed views on whether this should be focussed on statutory areas or if wider work towards local wellbeing should be a priority. There were also views expressed on ensuring spending is distributed across all areas of the borough, and that local amenities were maintained.

## Methodology

The consultation on the draft budget proposals for 2024-2025 was conducted primarily through a structured survey. The public were also invited to send any general comments relating to the 2024 – 2025 budget proposal to the Reigate and Banstead Borough Council engagement email inbox or via Freepost.

## The Survey

This survey deployed 'closed' questions for each budget proposal for 2024-2025. 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 2024-2025 survey, free text comment boxes were available. These qualitative free text boxes enabled respondents to provide any comments, concerns and suggestions relating to the 2024-2025 budget.



These free text comments and non-survey returns were analysed using a ‘thematic analysis’ approach. This 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 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.

The mixed method approach described above allowed for both an assessment of overall sentiment towards proposals and provided an awareness of specific concerns from individuals. In addition, this helped provide a deeper understanding of *why* respondents ‘agreed’, ‘disagreed’ or expressed an ‘other’ view towards each 2024-2025 budget policy proposal.

## Promotion

The consultation was promoted through a press release, social media, council e-newsletters to residents and businesses, and emails to approximately 530 stakeholders. 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 were invited to provide information on the capacity in which they were responding and demographic information to help provide an understanding of the overall characteristics 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 20 November 2023 until 15 January 2024 and received 73 survey returns, and 1 other response. 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 included. The full list of comments submitted is included as Appendix 1 to this report.

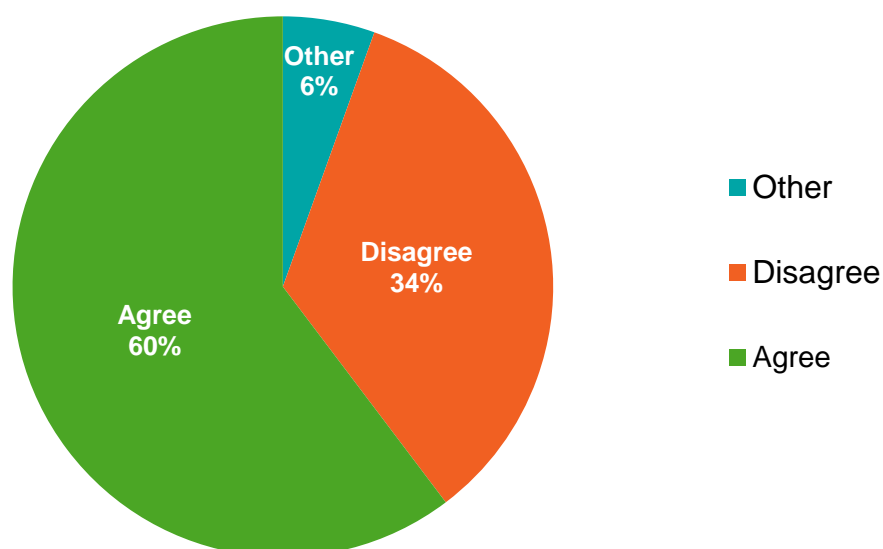
## Council Tax

The draft budget proposed an increase of 2.99% to the Borough Council's component of Council Tax (affecting approximately 11% of total Council Tax, and representing an annual increase of approximately £7.47 for a Band D property.)

The majority of responses (60%) were in favour of the proposed increase.

Figure 1: Support for proposed increase in Council Tax

On our proposal to increase Council Tax, do you?)



## Key Comment Themes

- There was concern expressed regarding the potential impact of Council Tax increases on those facing pressures around cost of living, the significant cost overall Council Tax can represent
- There was also a recurring theme of wishing to ensure that Council services delivered value for money

## 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 some environmental health and licensing charges, including private hire and hackney carriage licensing, business inspections, and pre-inspection advice.
- Changes to some 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, advertising and sports pitches
- Increases to planning pre-application charges and for street and numbering

Increases were generally supported for hire of community centre rooms, environmental health and licensing, planning related charges, and charges for Council Tax summons and liability orders.

Views on parking were mixed, with increases in fees for car park permits and the introduction of free 20 minute parking in Horley supported, but other increases in parking charges opposed. Increases in fees were generally opposed for greenspaces and waste and recycling, including regarding sports pitch hire, cemeteries and allotments, garden waste, bulky waste and waste containers, although there was support for increases to trade waste charges and banner advertising charges.

Views received for each category of changes are presented below. Percentages may not sum to 100 as not all respondents completed all questions and figures are rounded.

Figure 2: Support for proposed increases to revenues & benefits fees and charges

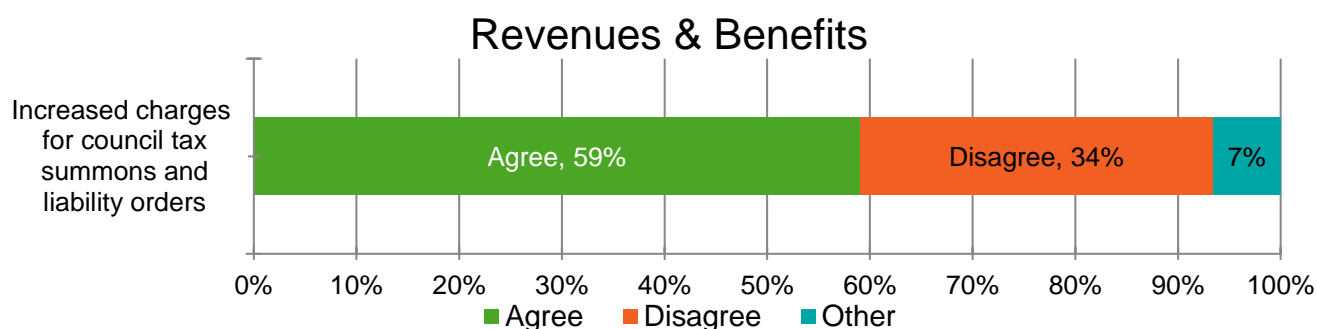


Figure 3: Support for changes to community centre fees and charges

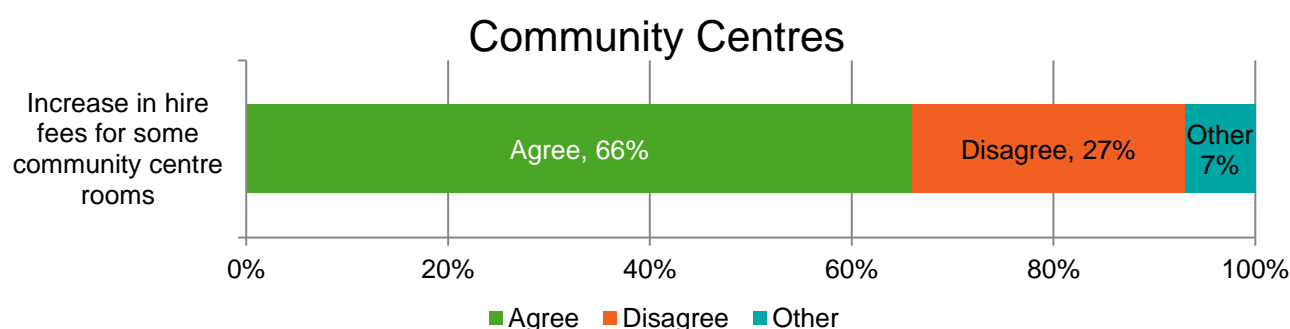


Figure 4: Support for changes for environmental health and licensing fees and charges

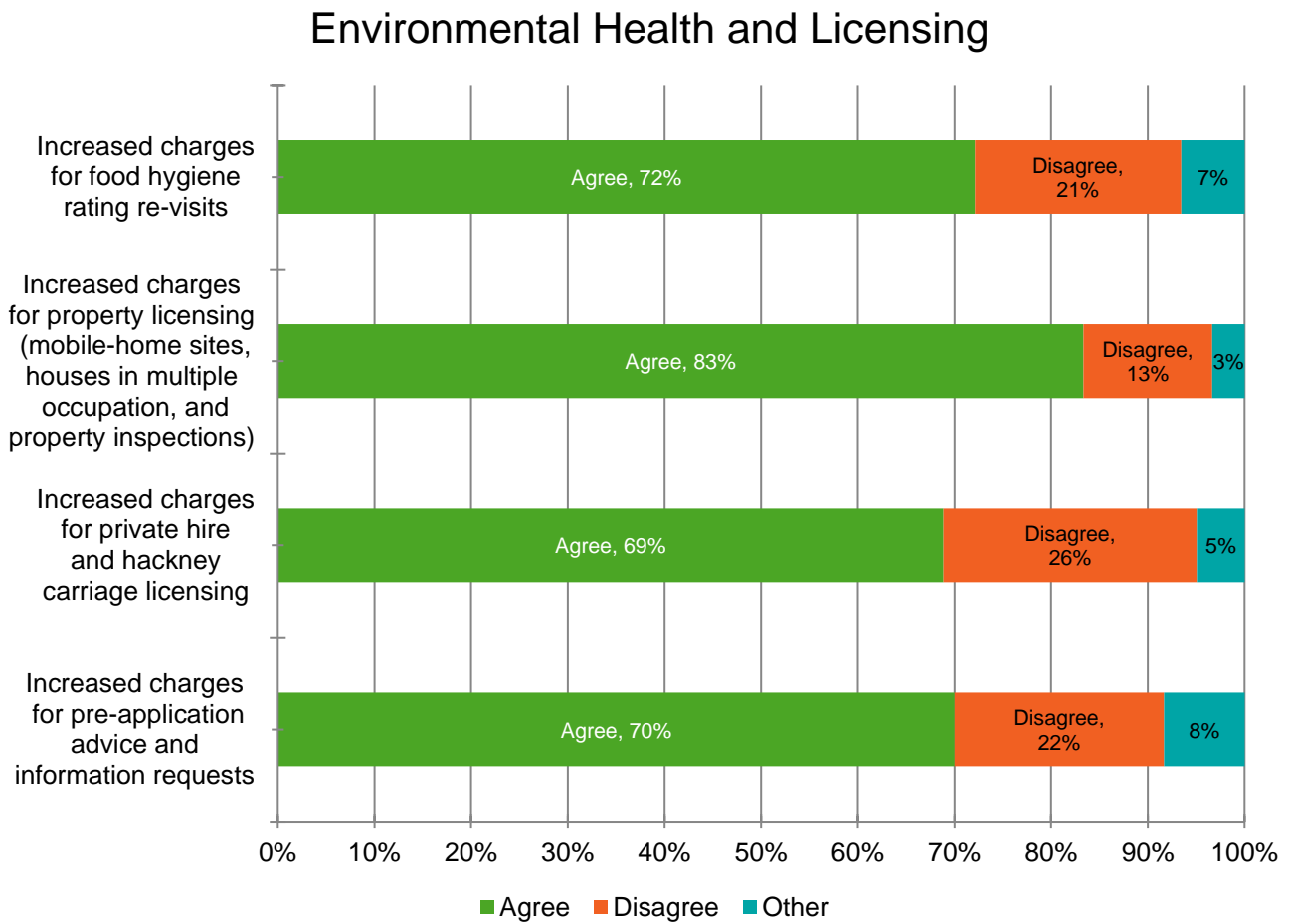


Figure 5: Support for changes to parking fees and charges

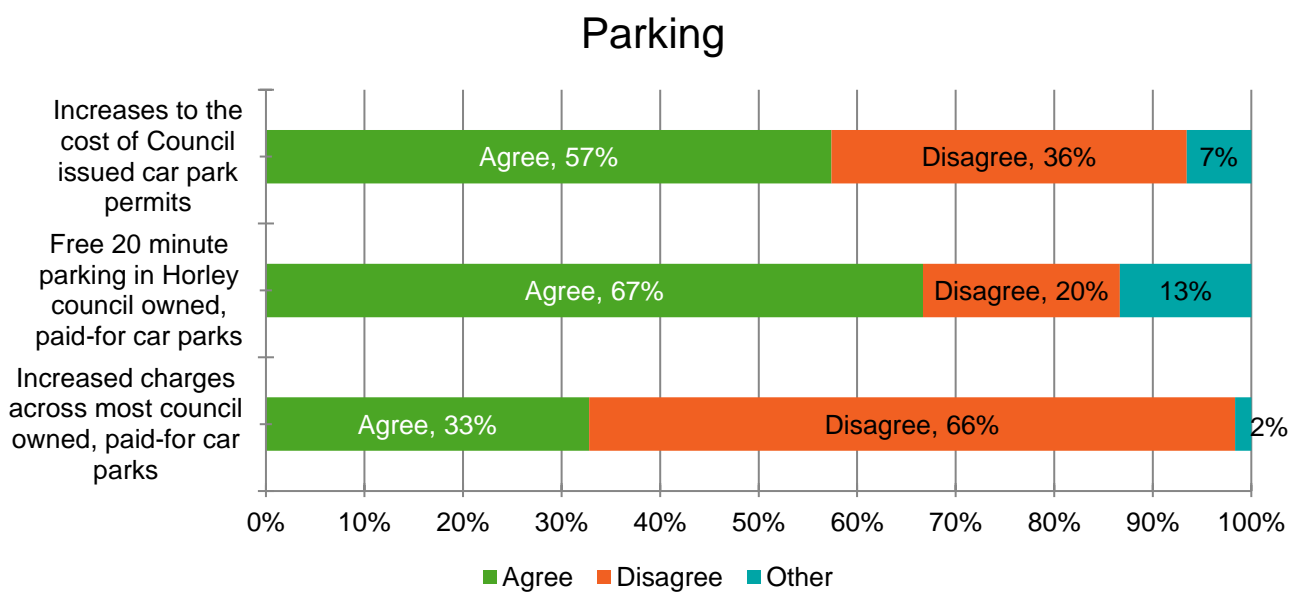


Figure 6: Support for increases to waste and recycling fees and charges

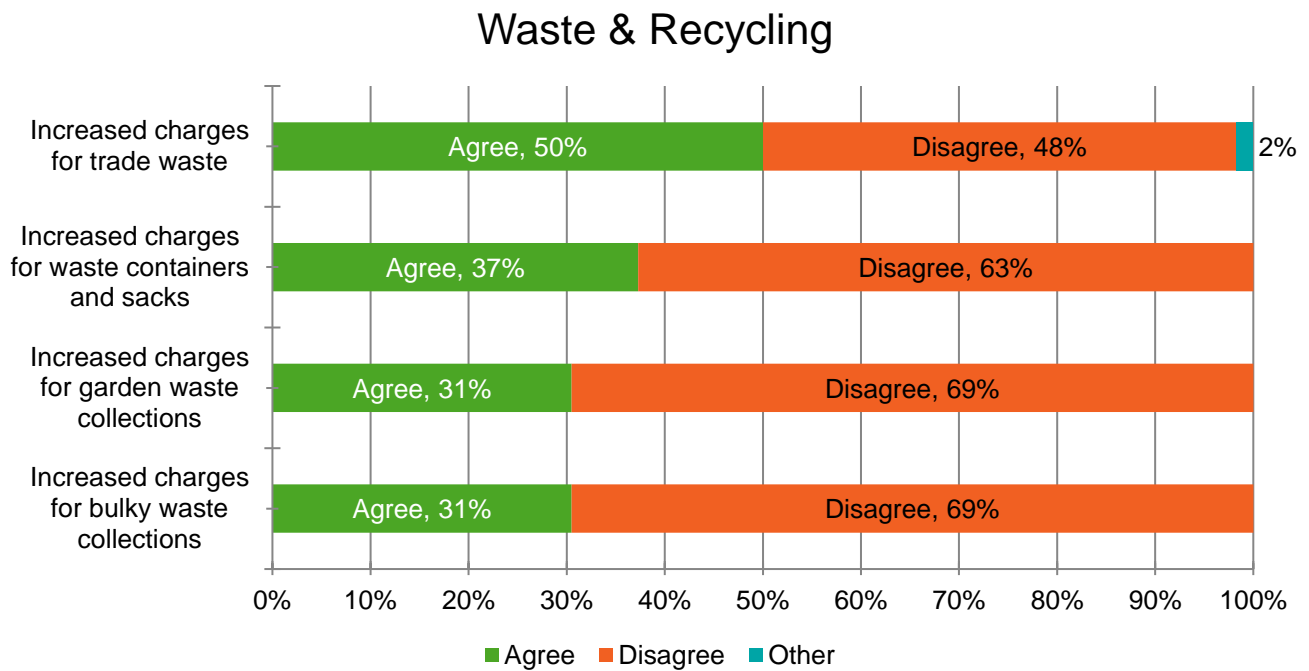


Figure 7: Support for increases to greenspaces fees and charges

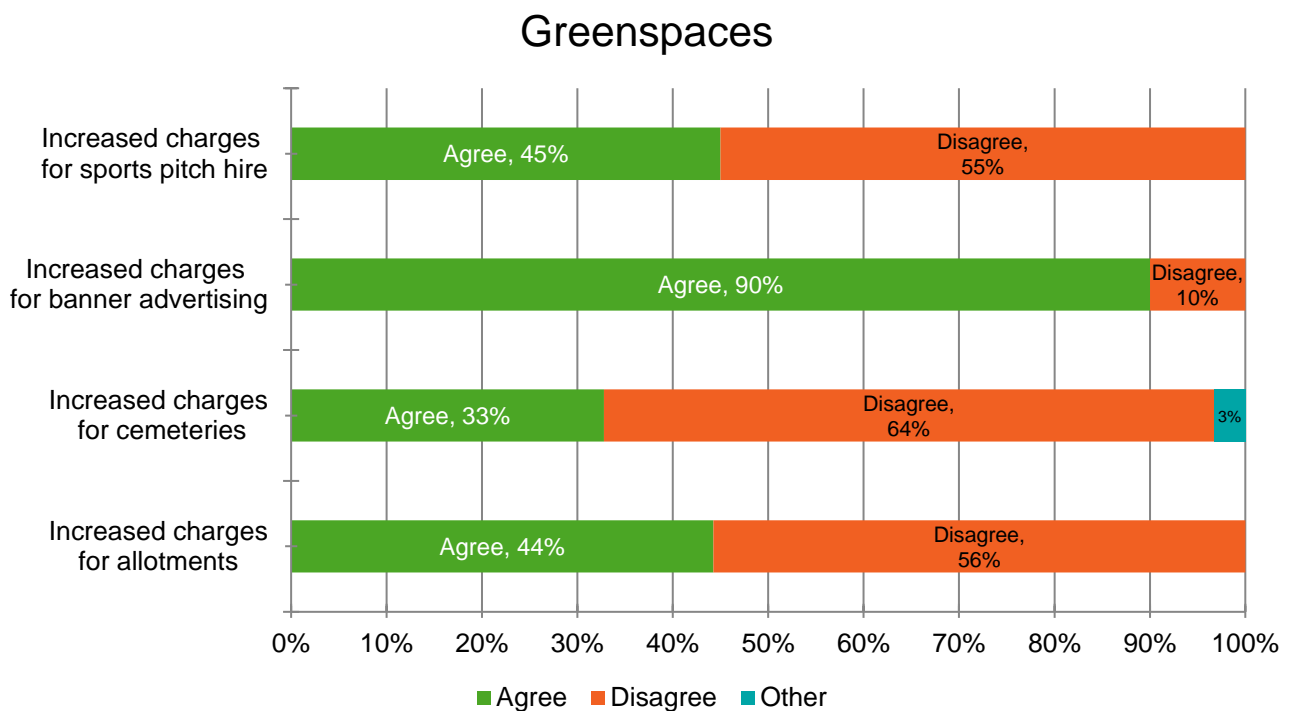
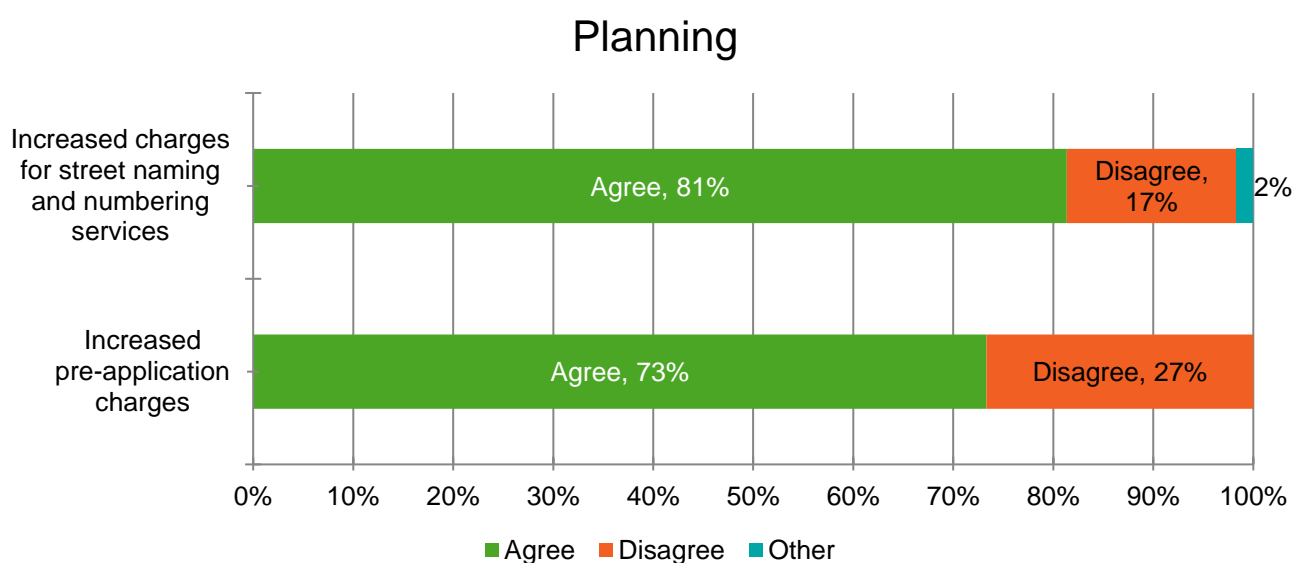


Figure 8: Support for increases to planning related fees and charges



### Key Comment Themes

- There were concerns regarding the secondary consequences of increases to fees and charges, including regarding risks of fly-tipping, reduced physical activity, and antisocial parking.
- There was interest in supporting town centres, including having appropriate and affordable parking, and interest in free 20-minute parking beyond Horley.

Legislation requires that consultation on matters regarding a range of licensing and parking matters be conducted according to separate statutory requirements, and there will therefore be separate statutory consultations for these areas. Responses to these consultations will be considered by the relevant service areas and the final approach to the proposed changes to the related fees and charges will then reflect these considerations.

### Service Budgets

Proposals for changes to service budgets included reductions to some costs, increases to direct income from assets, and a number of increases to costs. These encompassed:

- Savings from renegotiating contracts, utilising some external funding, and more efficient practices.
- Additional income from commercial properties, generating more income from markets, and encouraging more use of bookable community centre facilities.
- Investments in a range of measures around energy efficiency and environmental sustainability, increases in budgets to match increased costs (such as ICT systems and public amenity maintenance), contractual and cost of living pay increases, and targeted service improvements.

Responses indicated strong support for reductions to costs and additional income generation, with support for these elements ranging from 72% to 93%. Views on increases to costs were more mixed, although most proposals received over 50% support. Support was weakest for capital funding to make Council buildings more energy efficiency (47% agreement, 45% disagreement) and increasing budgets to cover increasing external IT systems support and maintenance costs (44% agreement, 42% disagreement).

Views received for each category of changes are presented below. Percentages may not sum to 100% as not all respondents completed all questions and figures are rounded.

Figure 9: Support for changes to service budgets



Figure 10: Support for generating additional direct income

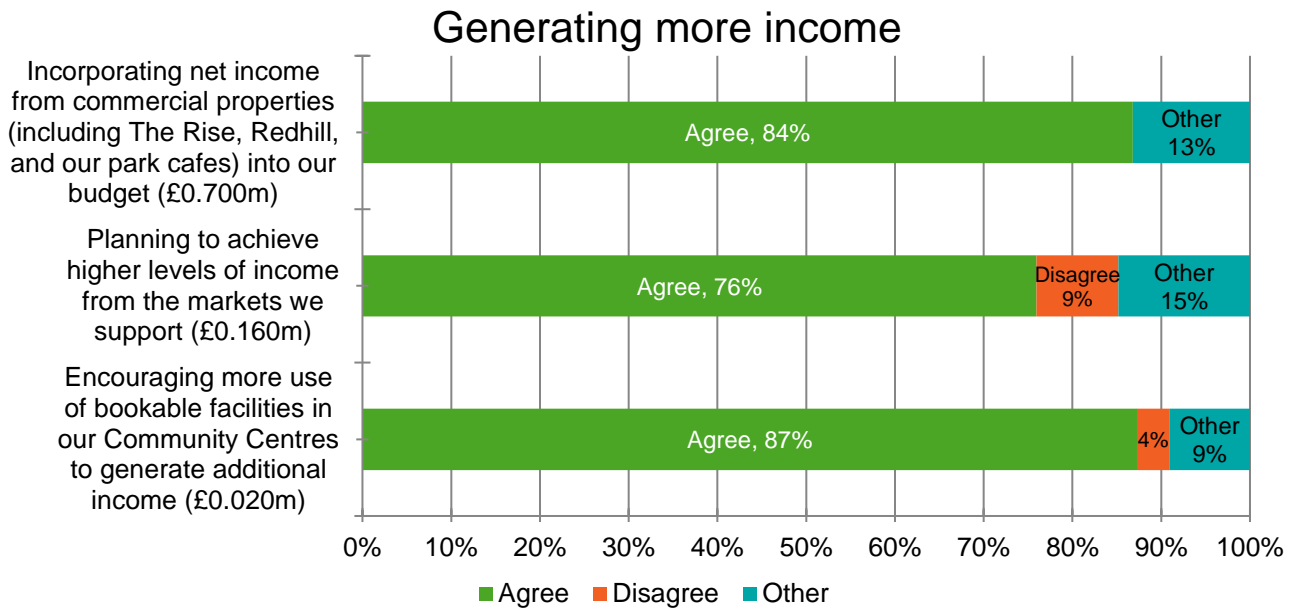


Figure 11: Support for increases to direct costs

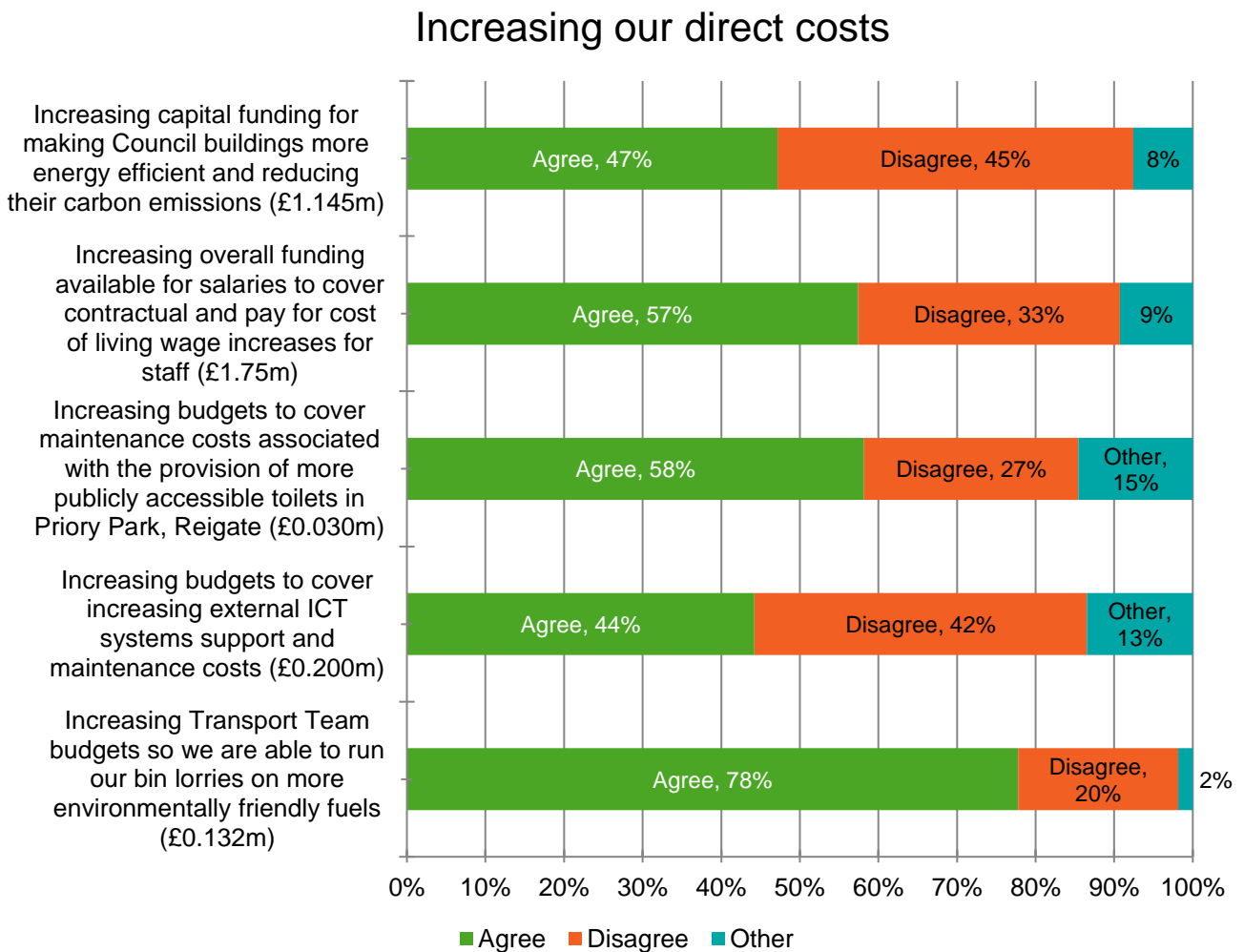
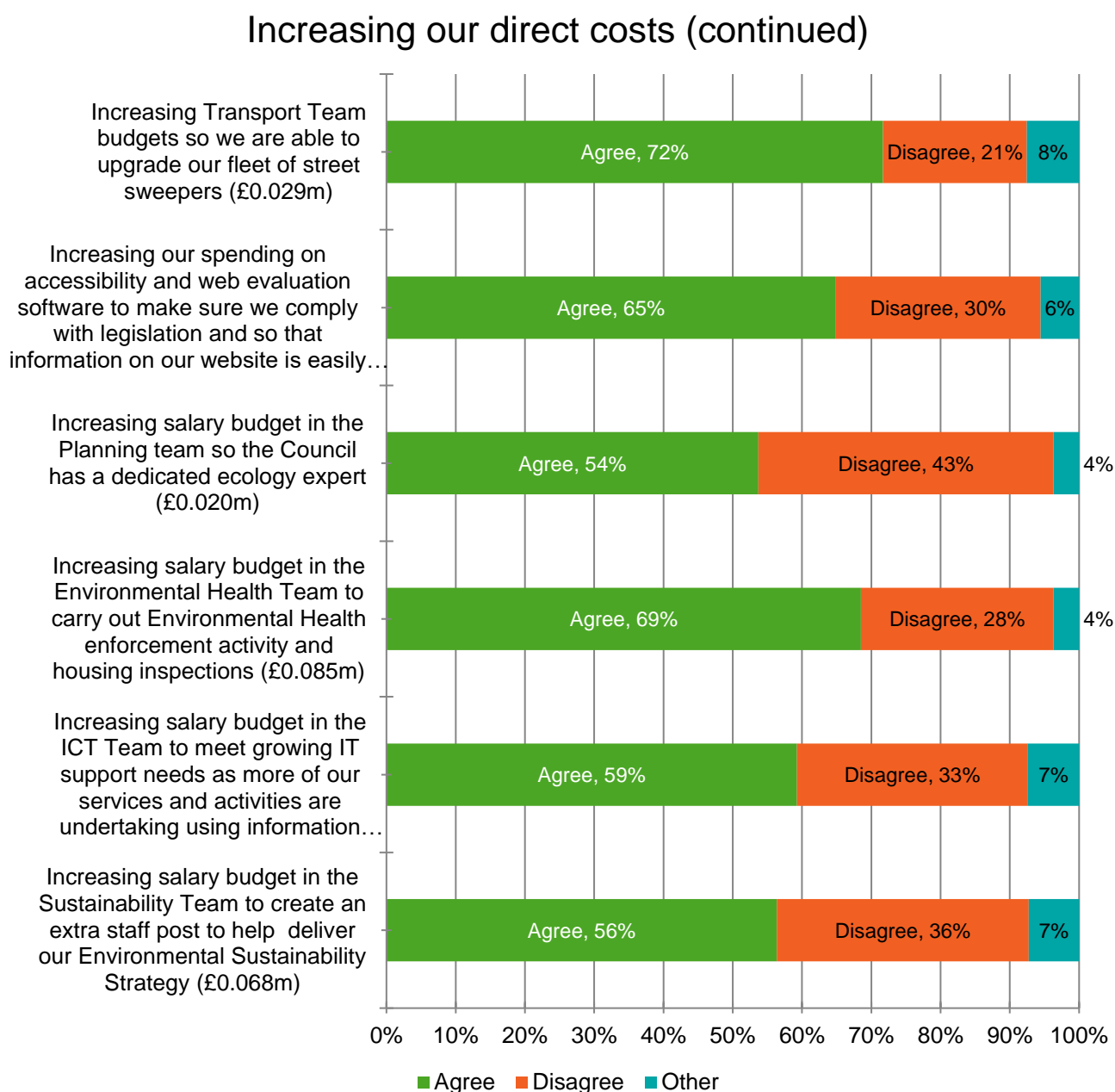




Figure 12: Support for increases to direct costs (continued)



### Key Comment Themes

- There was consistent interest expressed in ensuring that spending represents value for money for the borough and its residents, and that Council activities are efficient
- There were a number of comments expressing interest in seeing more detail of the proposals raised to help inform views.

## Other Feedback

In addition to the survey responses, the Council also received an email response from Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council.

This response requested that the Council consider funding community transport in the borough. Information was included on the local public transport context, the potential transport challenges faced by rural residents and those with limits on their access to personal vehicles or with disabilities limiting their ease of access to transport. Attention was drawn to the importance of reflecting equality considerations in planning such services. There was also reference to the Surrey County Council Digital Demand Responsive Service, which was identified as not yet being available within the borough.

The budget proposals do not currently include allocation of any new funding for community transport. The Community Partnerships team will continue to work with Surrey County Council and other local partners to explore potential transport initiatives, and will take account of the response from Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council, while also continuing with the existing taxi-voucher service. Where any service or funding changes are subsequently proposed, these will be included and consulted on as part of future service planning/budget setting rounds.

## Demographics

The Council received 74 responses to the consultation, including 55 completed surveys, 17 partial surveys and 1 other response. All survey respondent data was anonymised, and no personal identifiable data was collected in the survey, except for an option for respondents to provide their email address if they were interested in being contacted in relation to the Council's Corporate Plan review. 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.

Survey participants were asked to provide a range of demographic information to help inform the evaluation of the survey and the Council's engagement work. This included information on the capacity in which the participant was taking part (i.e. as a resident or a representative of an organisation), as well as information on age, gender, ethnicity and any impact on their lives from health problems or disabilities.

Most respondents identified themselves as residents (85%), with smaller numbers identifying themselves as representatives of a community or voluntary organisation (18%), working in the borough (15%), running a business in the borough (6%), as a visitor (3%), or other (3%). Respondents were able to select more than one response and percentage totals therefore exceed 100%.

With regard to other demographics, most elements were approximately aligned with the wider population of the borough, as captured by information from the 2021 Census. As compared to these levels, the largest variations from census figures were in terms of age and ethnicity.

A significantly higher proportion of respondents than the borough average identified themselves as being in the 45-54 and 55-64 age range, and there was a very low relative rate of response from those identified as being in the 25-34 and under 25 age range. Fewer respondents identified as belonging to a minority ethnic group relative to the borough population, with a higher proportion of respondents identifying as white (British), white (Irish), or white (other) background.

A slightly higher proportion of respondents identified themselves as female relative to the borough population; reported levels of health and disability impacts were broadly consistent with the borough population.

In considering the survey results and the reported demographics of respondents, there should be an awareness of the small sample size of the survey responses relative to the population of the borough. Results, whilst indicative of areas of interest and suggestive of broad sentiment, cannot necessarily be assumed to be representative of the wider population or the borough as a whole.

Collected demographic information is provided below.

Figure 13: Capacity in which respondents took part in the survey

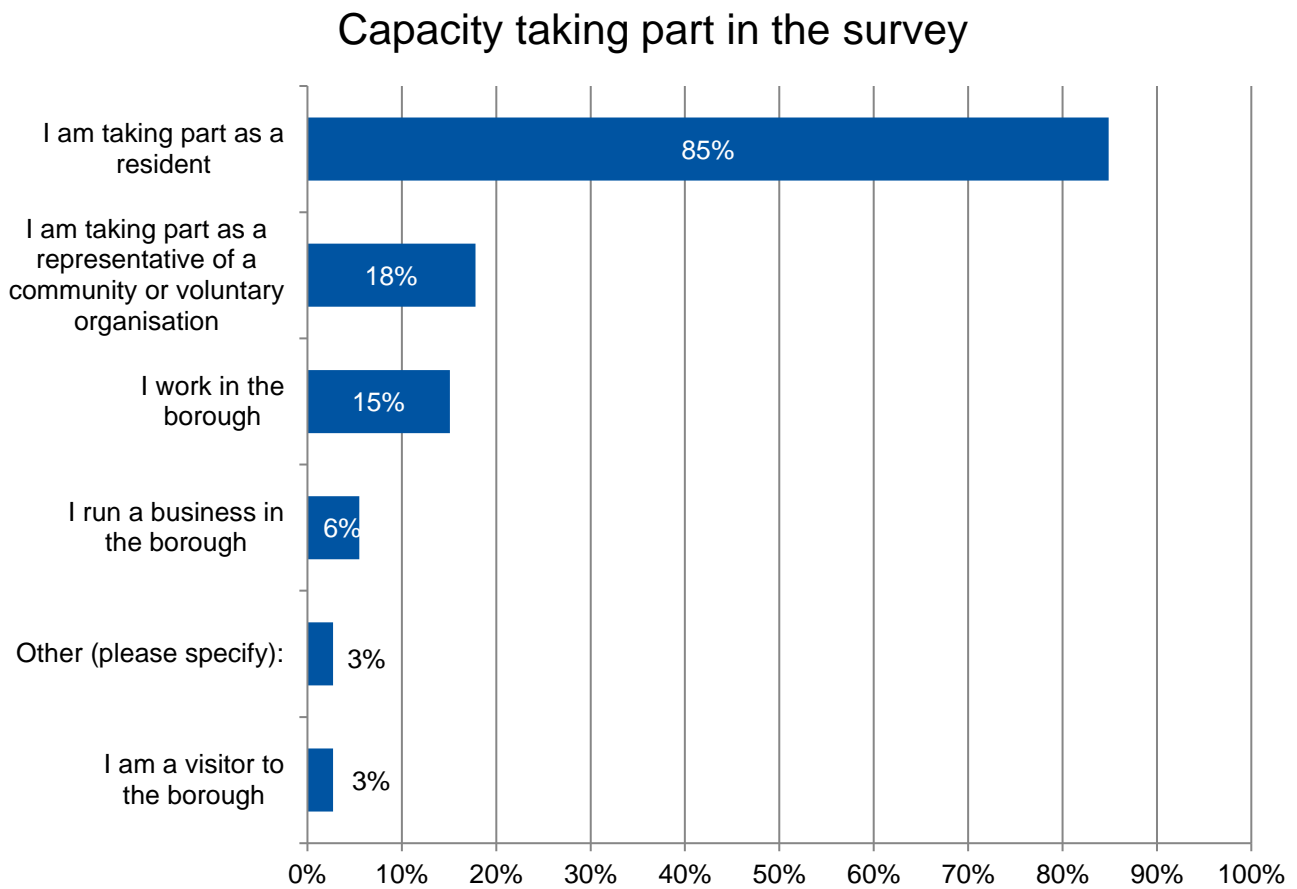


Figure 14: Gender of respondents taking part in the survey

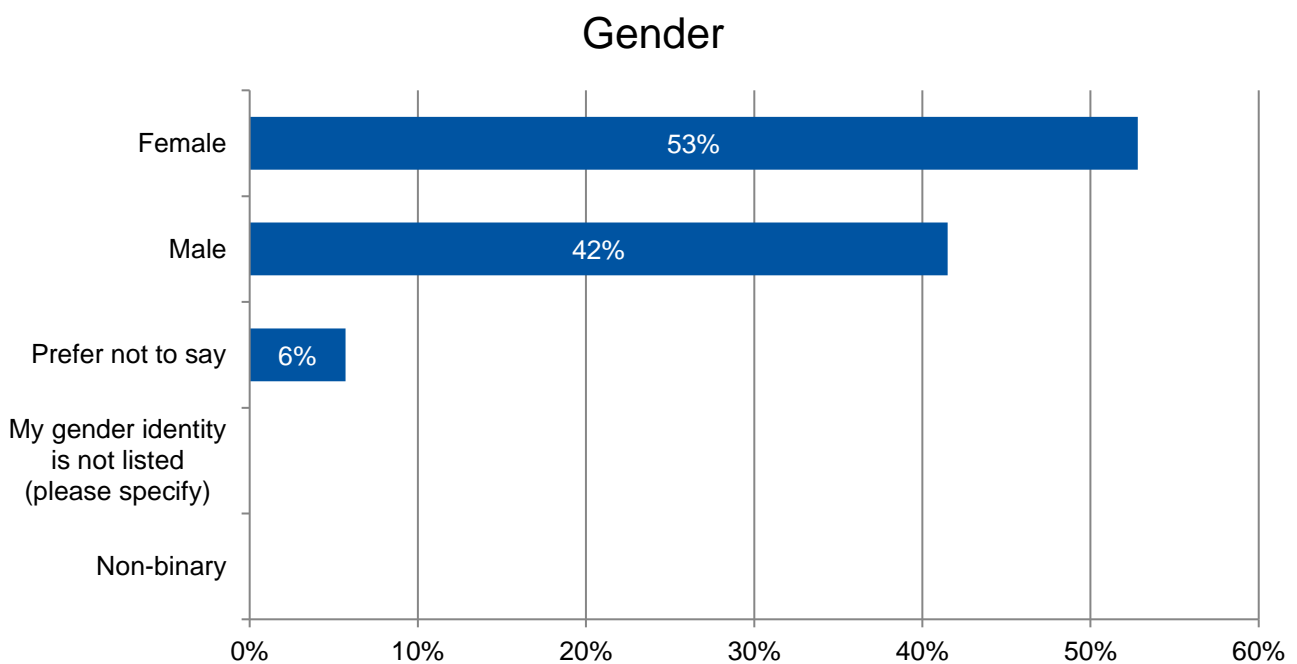


Figure 15: Age of respondents taking part in the survey

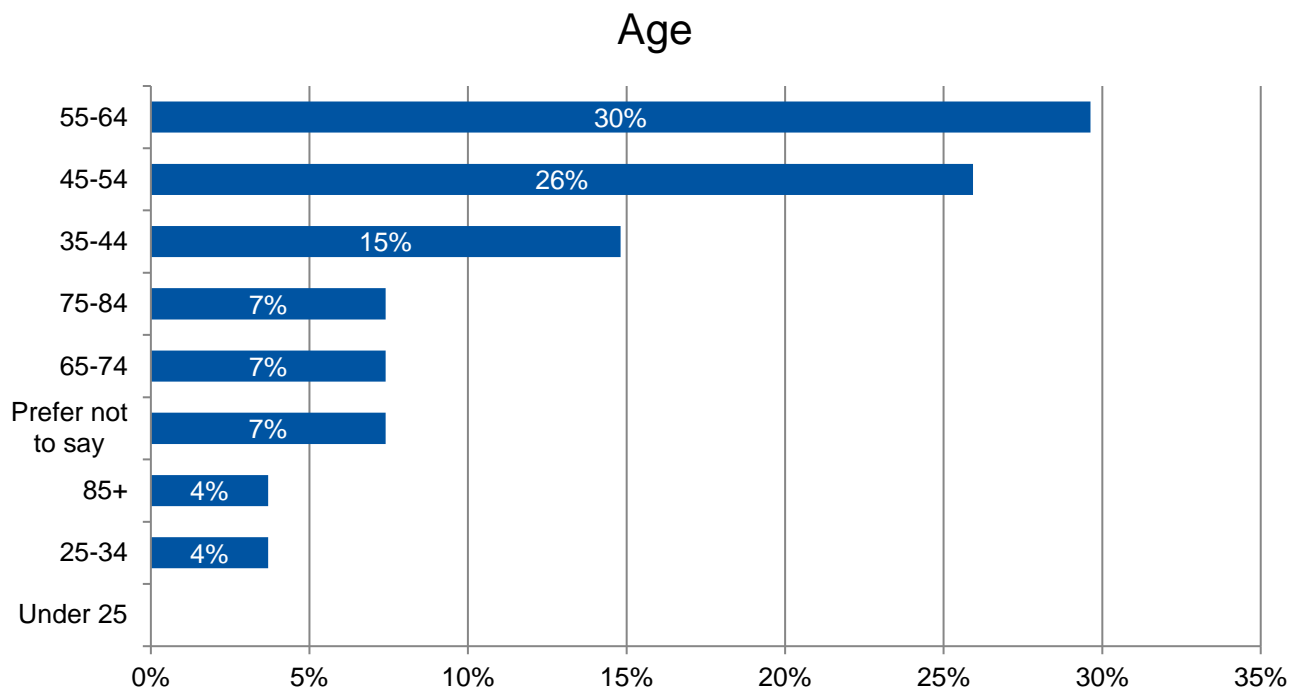
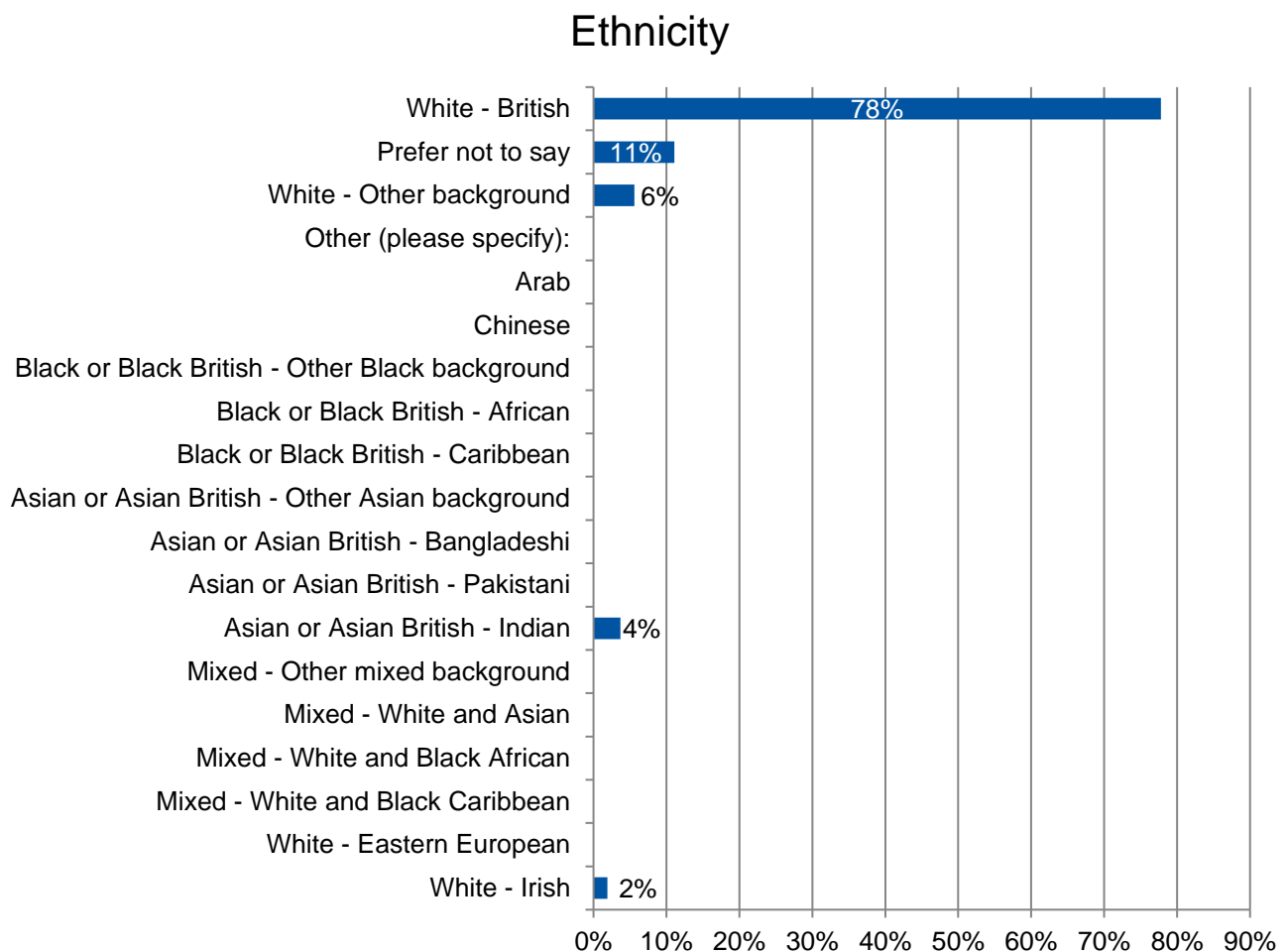


Figure 16: Ethnicity of respondents taking part in the survey



## Appendix 1: Comment Analysis

Comments on the survey were analysed using a thematic analysis approach. This involved a review of all 106 comments to identify themes relating to any observations, concerns or suggestions by respondents.

To ensure the themes identified are comprehensive and represent all views raised, the review of comments was repeated until no further themes could be identified. These themes were then categorised into topics.

The quotes below were chosen to represent the full range of observations, concerns and suggestions raised by the survey respondents.

### Comments by question

#### Council Tax

##### Topic 1: It is a fair increase if the money is spent well

- *Feel services are lacking and only agree to an increase if council tax is beneficial to the community*

##### Topic 2: Council Tax is too high at the moment

- *Because it is too high already!*

##### Topic 3: The council tax increase could negatively impact people who are vulnerable or experiencing a cost of living crisis

- *I am 85 and housebound due to disability. I receive no government benefits other than the state retirement pension. I find this regular annual increase in Council Tax a constraint on my resources.*
- *People are really struggling and council tax is not spent sensibly*

##### Topic 4: Reassess Council Tax Brackets

- *People are paying too much already, with incorrect banding on new builds a 3 bed is not a band E*
- *Our Council Tax brackets have not been looked at in years & properties not reassessed. I am aware of neighbours who have increased the size of their homes, considerably & yet they still pay lower CTAX than me.*

##### Topic 5: The Council should plan for a reduction of Council Tax in the future

- *You should be aiming to decrease council tax every year, not increasing it. With new events such as the Pub in the Park which would generate tens of thousands for the*

*council per event (at the expense of taxpayers losing the park for several weeks a year), you should have a lot more money and not need so much from council tax*

### **Topic 6: Suggestions**

- *Invest in young people, Mental health and recreational facilities like youth centres and talking therapies.*
- *There are plenty of cuts that can be made, such as reducing executive pay and stopping the allowance for a mayor. In tough times for residents a mayor is a total waste.*
- *The council should look to make savings against costs before seeking to raise council tax from residents already affected by the cost of living. Have the council considered increasing the charges to council tax payers in receipt of benefit for example?*
- *Council Tax is the largest single tax my household pays each year. I think that the Government central support grants, as they used to be, should be reinstated, so there is more of a contribution from central Government and income tax. Also, that the very wealthy / exceptionally wealthy should contribute more.*
- *Improve efficiency. Cut out waste. Stop spending MY money on pointless woke exercises. My income isn't increasing, why should yours.*

## **Fees and Charges**

### **Topic 1: Concern that increase in waste fees will cause more fly tipping**

- *Increased waste charges: the result will be more fly-tipping & consequently a higher burden on the council finances.*

### **Topic 2: Concern that increased sport facility hire charges will negatively impact health of residents**

- *There aren't enough sports pitch / facilities in the Borough. Increasing charges will result in more teams being unable to play and will negatively residents mental & physical health.*

### **Topic 3: Disagreement with increased allotment hire fees**

- *With the cost of living rising & people wanting to grow their own food, why would you want to increase Allotment costs?*
- *Allotments are a resource that provide food, social interaction, health and fitness benefits and environmental benefits and the cost of these have gone up a lot already*

### **Topic 4: Parking should be kept at an affordable amount**

- *Pavement parking is ridiculous at the moment so need to keep car parks at a reasonable amount. Remember those who park in a car park are considerate drivers, those who don't are inconsiderate. Focus getting money from those who park irresponsibly.*

- *Ridiculous to increase cost of car parking in town centres. People can't afford the charges, so park on residential streets, leaving car parks half empty. If the car parks were a sensible price, more people would use them.*
- *I suspect increase in parking charges will lead to an increase in antisocial parking.*
- *Why is the free 20min parking only being applied to Horley?*

#### **Topic 5: Concern that VCS sector may be negatively impacted**

- *I believe community spaces need to remain at the same cost as the local voluntary sector is already providing huge support to statutory services at a time of increased need and increased pressure to themselves. I believe the council needs to look at a creative partnership approach with the third sector in order to minimise risk and maximise services to all residents.*

#### **Topic 6: Suggestions**

- *Need to focus increase in charges on those who will be able to pay and not increase where it will impact on those who need services.*
- *There are plenty of savings that can be made such as reducing executive pay and scrapping the allowance for the mayor.*
- *We need to encourage people to take part in sports activities*
- *You could provide card once every 2 weeks if we had a proper bin rather than a small box, with more rubbish becoming recyclable we will get more and more card*
- *I hope the council will take into account the need to encourage a conscientious approach to waste and climate change. While charges may need to increase, I hope this will be balanced with some sort of incentive for behaving responsibly, sustainably and with consideration for the environment.*

### **Reducing direct costs**

#### **Topic 1: Need more information to make an informed decision**

- *Can't vote to remove unused budgets from service areas without knowing further detail e.g., which service areas?*
- *I have answered "other" to some questions as I'm unsure what impact these savings will have on services.*
- *External funding: Do you mean that you would fundraise to replace your level of funding on behalf of community partnership? Further discussion would be welcomed on this going forward. We feel there are partnership opportunities within RBBC and partners which could be advantageous across the borough.*

#### **Topic 2: Suggestions**

- *This is chickens feed - I want to see "sack half the admin staff because no one would notice anyway"*



- *Service reviews to consider whether discretionary services should be delivered by the third sector or other providers rather than the local authority.*
- *Housing Team: This would depend on the core services. Housing and homelessness is increasing and support mechanisms have a monetary value, to reduce this anywhere would be challenging. Bear in mind that tenants, clients on many occasions prefer independent advice and support which we do provide. Through partnership working or collaboration will aim to reduce the impact of housing and homelessness issues. We would welcome further discussion on this.*

## Generating more income

### Topic 1: Need more information to make an informed decision

- *I'm afraid I don't fully understand what your intentions are - again it is taking money from one area & adding it to another. It is not a genuine saving or increase in income.*
- *What markets do you mean? The market in the town centre or other markets?*

### Topic 2: Risk of overusing priory park for commercial events

- *I believe that Priory Park has reached a limit on its commercial exploitation. There is a risk that overuse by events, bouncy castles, fairs and music events will prejudice the appeal of the Park to those who simply wish to enjoy a quiet space. I doubt whether park run or football matches generate much income, but heartily support the Park's use for these purposes.*

### Topic 3: Do not increase community facility hire for charitable/community groups and individuals

- *Community facilities are vital. Any cost increase of hire should be based on who is hiring it - so for businesses or commercial entities - increase, for charities/community groups and individuals - no increase.*

### Topic 4: Suggestions

- *Could you install more solar energy to generate energy? It would pay back in a few years and then generate income*
- *Your income from commercial properties sounds very low. A prime location such as the cafe in Priory Park alone should be bringing in hundreds of thousands each year in rent.*
- *If it's the market in the town centre, don't increase the costs, you'll kill our town centres!*

## Increasing direct costs

### Topic 1: More information is needed to make an informed decision

- *Need further detail on external contracts etc*

- *It would be helpful to understand the financial benefit of a £1.145m spend on the buildings. What is the return on Investment ratio and breakeven period for this spend? What is the Council's statutory obligation and benefit to residents of an environmental sustainability strategy? If no quantifiable benefit or statutory obligation, there is no business case to have a team let alone increase the staffing budget*
- *Where I have replied 'other', this indicates that I would need more information to make an informed choice.*

## **Topic 2: Explore savings and diversion of other funds before increasing costs**

- *Before increasing costs please consider those who ultimately pay for them & who have not seen a commensurate increase in their income. I agree with your proposals but would like to see them achieved from your existing budget.*
- *Any staffing salary increases should be found internally. Every other company is having to do this without increasing costs*
- *I appreciate that Council wages need to keep up with the cost of living, but note that no details are given about the quantum of living wage increases save for the total amount, which is of course the largest budget increase listed.*
- *Could money be diverted from discretionary services like money support, which is not the council's responsibility to deliver and which there seem to be no outcome or output results for, to higher priority services without expecting the taxpayer to pick up the bill?*

## **Topic 3: Concerns about the scope and viability of the environmental sustainability strategy**

- *The phrases such as "environmentally friendly", "more energy efficient", "sustainability" and "reducing carbon emissions" are the latest "buzz" words and are very subjective. In themselves they mean little and are overused to gain popular support without understanding and explanation.*
- *I am increasingly sceptical about local efforts with respect to Environmental Sustainability Strategies, environmentally friendly fuel conversions and reduction of carbon emissions. I appreciate that this is counter to all current trends, but I am now of the view (given the minuscule efforts made by major polluting countries) that environmental damage is inevitable and that any expenditure should switch to meet the consequences of climate change rather than preventing it*
- *The sums for the improvement of energy efficient and reduction of carbon emissions look very high. If the proposals are offset by savings in energy use then that would be more acceptable*

## **Topic 4: Views on spending for toilet facilities in parks**

- *Public toilets need to be a priority for Priory Park but also Redhill and Earlswood Common.*
- *Reigate Park & toilets! Once again Reigate taking precedence over other areas in the borough who have been waiting years for any kind of investment. Not everything revolves around Reigate town centre.*

- *The council shouldn't be maintaining public toilets in Priory Park, build this into the contract with whoever hires the cafe and make them pay for it all.*

### **Topic 5: Suggestions**

- *While I appreciate everyone has a right to a living wage, some council employees are paid significant salaries, while the third sector has had to freeze or reduce wages and is heavily reliant on volunteers and the voluntary contributions of paid staff. So I would suggest a more granular approach to salary increases which take into account the huge variability of pay across all council roles.*

## **Any other comments**

### **Topic 1: Suggestions**

- *See very little spending in the Nork area? New income streams should be explored across the Borough. Do we need a Borough Council and all the expense of staffing, offices etc. when we have a County Council?!*
- *Increase funding to provide more traffic wardens to patrol schools during drop off/pick up times. This will pay for itself with the amount of daily violations. Increase funding to reinstate CCTV in Redhill town centre. Having a fixed camera in the McDonald's area that also targets number plates of the cabs that park illegally there will pay for itself. Redhill residents deserve more safety measures and this CCTV is critical.*
- *Cover car parks in solar panels to offset energy costs.*
- *Please maintain expenditure on biodiversity and countryside and countryside partnerships. Please maintain our greenbelt, and don't build new homes in areas likely to flood.*

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# ANNEX 7

January 2024

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## Overview

This document provides an assessment of the equality implications of the Council's final budget proposals for 2024/25.

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 have been finalised following the draft budget consultation, and are provided to assist members in taking a decision on the final budget proposals in February 2024.

Where additional proposals have been added between the draft and final budget proposal stages, this is indicated.

## List of budget proposals and summary of equality impact

### Council Tax

Service or function	Description	Initial impact assessment
<b>Revenues, Benefits &amp; Fraud / Finance</b>	To increase Council Tax by the referendum limit (which the Government has confirmed to be up to a 2.99% increase which equates to £7.47 per year for a Band D property)	May impact on those with protected characteristics, a full Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken.
<b>Revenues, Benefits &amp; Fraud / Finance</b>	Changes to Local Council Tax Support Scheme	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
<b>Corporate Policy</b>	Growth to fund additional staff post in the Sustainability Team (1FTE)	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Licencing</b>	Growth to fund additional staff post in the Environmental Health Team (1FTE)	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Licencing</b>	Growth to fund additional staff capacity for housing inspections (0.5FTE)	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>ICT</b>	Growth to fund additional staff posts (3 FTE)	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Legal Services</b>	Saving from deletion of a vacant post (1FTE)	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided



<b>Legal Services</b>	Saving due to review of historic salary budgets	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Legal Services</b> <i>Note that this is a new item introduced at the final budget proposals stage</i>	Legal and Democratic Services final restructure costs after Surrey partner contributions to the net cost of the service	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Planning &amp; Development Management</b>	Growth to fund additional staff post – ecology officer (0.5FTE)	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided

### Services: Non-Pay

<b>Service or function</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Initial impact assessment</b>
<b>Communications</b>	Purchase of accessibility and web evaluation software to comply with legislation	Positive – will help ensure website is accessible
<b>Community Centres</b>	Forecast income increase from bookable facilities	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	External funding contribution to reduce revenue spend	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Democratic Services</b>	Deletion of un-used budgets	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Economic Prosperity</b>	Increase in income forecast (markets)	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Licencing</b>	Cessation of pest control service (income reduction)	None – optional service for residents, other providers available

<b>Fleet</b>	Increase in sweeper leasing costs	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Fleet</b>	Additional cost of switching to HVO fuel	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Fleet</b> <i>Note that this is a new item introduced at the final budget proposals stage</i>	Electric vehicle charging costs for new refuse vehicle	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Housing</b>	Use of Homelessness Prevention Grant Reserve to support service delivery	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>ICT</b>	Increased cost of IT system support and maintenance contracts	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Leisure</b> <i>Note that this is a new item introduced at the final budget proposals stage</i>	Additional inflationary income from leisure service operator contract fee	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Parking</b>	Deletion of residual / now un-utilised budgets	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Property</b>	Income from new property acquisitions at Reading Arch Road, Redhill	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Property</b>	Rationalisation and renewal of energy contracts	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Property</b>	Forecast void costs and net rental increase at Forum House, Redhill	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided

<b>Property</b>	Additional costs associated with Priory Park toilets	Positive – toilets will no longer only be able to be accessed via the café
<b>Property</b>	Additional income from The Rise, Redhill	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Property</b>	Additional income from new café leases	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Property</b> <i>Note that this is a new item introduced at the final budget proposals stage</i>	Operational costs for utilities and scaffolding at The Rise, Redhill	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Property</b> <i>Note that this is a new item introduced at the final budget proposals stage</i>	New asset management system development costs	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided
<b>Waste &amp; Recycling</b>	Efficiency savings following installation of solar compacting bins	None – will not negatively impact on individuals or the overall service provided

### Changes to fees and charges

<b>Service</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Initial impact assessment</b>
<b>Community Centres</b>	Fee changes – Community Centres room hire	May impact on those with protected characteristics, a full Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken
<b>Data and Insight</b>	Street naming and numbering fee increase	None, service primarily used by developers, optional service for residents

<b>Environmental Health &amp; Licencing</b>	Fee increase – hackney carriage and private hire licensing and preapplication advice and information requests	None, changes proposed to ensure cost recovery and to address inflationary costs
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Licencing</b>	Fee increase – Property licensing (mobile home sites, houses in multiple occupation and property inspections)	None, charges apply to owners and operators of sites which are generally run as commercial businesses
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Licencing</b>	Increased charges for food hygiene rating re-visits	None, optional service for businesses
<b>Greenspaces</b>	Fee increase – allotments	None, charge increase limited to lower than inflation and represents marginal increase overall.
<b>Greenspaces</b>	Fee increase – cemeteries	None, changes proposed to ensure cost recovery and to address inflationary costs
<b>Greenspaces</b>	Fee increase - banner advertising	None, optional service for organisations
<b>Greenspaces</b>	Fee increases – sports pitch hire	None, changes proposed to ensure cost recovery and to address inflationary costs
<b>Parking</b>	Fee increase – car parking charges and permits	May impact on those with protected characteristic, a full Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken
<b>Planning &amp; Development Management</b>	Fee increase – pre-application fees	None, optional service for those considering development
<b>Revenues, Benefits &amp; Fraud</b>	Fee increase – summons and liability orders	May impact on those with protected characteristic, a full Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken

<b>Waste &amp; Recycling</b>	Fee increase – bulky waste collections	None, optional service
<b>Waste &amp; Recycling</b>	Fee increase – garden waste	None, optional service
<b>Waste &amp; Recycling</b>	Fee increase – waste containers and sacks	None, lower than inflation increase to cover rising costs
<b>Waste &amp; Recycling</b>	Fee increase – trade waste	None, optional service for commercial businesses



## Annex 1: Equality Impact Assessments

## **Proposal: To increase Council Tax by the referendum limit (up to a 2.99% increase which equates to £7.47 per year per Band D property in 2024/25)**

### **Introduction**

This document presents – in an accessible format – the outcomes of the Council’s Equality Impact Assessment for the proposal to increase Council Tax by the referendum limit (up to a 2.99% increase which equates to £7.47 per year per Band D property) for 2024/25, including the outcome of the Stage 1 Relevance Screening Assessment and the Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

### **Summary of the proposal**

To increase the Reigate & Banstead Borough Council element of Council Tax by the Government-set referendum limit from 1 April 2024. This is anticipated to be £7.47 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 2024/25 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 2023.

### **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](http://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 (who may also have protected characteristics as recognised by the Equality Act) is also held by the Council.

## Consultation

The Council conducted a public consultation on its draft budget proposals between 20 November 2023 and 15 January 2024, inviting responses from community members and local organisations on the proposals.

Overall, 60% of respondents supported the proposal. The results of the consultation and the feedback provided are captured within an annex to the budget report. Some comments made in response to the consultation did raise concern about the potential negative impact on people facing financial hardship of the council tax increases (see references to Local Council Tax Support Scheme below). Other suggestions were made about how the Council should prioritise spending Council Tax, including on younger people and support for mental health services.

## 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. It is proposed to remove some restriction from the scheme to offer additional support to our most vulnerable residents (see separate equality impact assessment). 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 Council Tax increase. It is proposed to remove some restriction from the scheme to offer additional support to our most vulnerable residents. 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: Changes to Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25

### Introduction

This document presents – in an accessible format – the outcomes of the Council’s Equality Impact Assessment for the proposal to make changes to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2024/25, including the outcome of the Stage 1 Relevance Screening Assessment and the Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

### Summary of the proposal

The Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) is reviewed annually. The same scheme has been in place since its introduction in 2013, providing reductions to Council Tax for working-age households. The scheme defines how income is taken into account, and the maximum awards that can be granted based on Council Tax liability. The scheme is current split into three categories for working-age households – vulnerable, employed and other.

The proposal seeks to align these schemes, removing the restrictions in place within the employed and other categories, which would increase the level of support for around 1,800 households. The vulnerable category already receives up to 100% of their Council Tax covered by support (around 1,900 households). Annual rises in allowances and premiums will be applied to all categories, as in previous years and in line with national increases.

The changes are being proposed for 2024/25 due to the rises in the cost of living, aiming to benefit low-income households with further support with their Council Tax.

### 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 residents currently receiving LCTS may benefit from increased levels of support, and the changes are likely to enable more households to receive reductions in the Council Tax where they may not qualify under the existing scheme.

This proposal affects all working-age households that currently qualify for LCTS in respect of their home (residential address), and will mean that some new households will be brought

into entitlement to LCTS. The list of liable parties is maintained in the Council Tax system, and details of current recipients of LCTS are help on the Benefits system.

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 have the potential to reduce inequality or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups as some households may qualify for support where they did not previously, and some households already benefitting may receive a greater level of support.

### **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](http://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 (who may also have protected characteristics as recognised by the Equality Act) is also held by the Council.

## Consultation

Consultation has been undertaken with preceptors in line with statutory requirements. No issues or concerns relevant to equalities have been identified.

The main budget consultation included some comments raising concerns about the council tax increase proposal and its impact on residents facing financial hardship, which the LCTS scheme seeks to address.

## Action to increase positive equality impacts or reduce negative equality impacts

The proposed changes to the LCTS scheme will be advantageous to existing recipients of LCTS and allow more households to become eligible. Should there be any household that is adversely affected, then the Council has discretion to provide a further reduction of Council Tax under Section 13(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992

## 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 may be positive impacts in relation to age for residents already receiving or newly eligible to receive LCTS. Other discretionary support may also be available.

### Disability

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to disability. There may be positive impacts in relation to disability for residents already receiving or newly eligible to receive LCTS. Other discretionary support may also be available.



### **Gender reassignment**

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to gender reassignment. There may be positive impacts in relation to gender reassignment for residents already receiving or newly eligible to receive LCTS. Other discretionary support may also be available.

### **Marriage and civil partnership**

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

### **Pregnancy and maternity**

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity. There may be positive impacts in relation to pregnancy and maternity for residents already receiving or newly eligible to receive LCTS. Other discretionary support may also be available.

### **Race or ethnicity**

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to race or ethnicity. There may be positive impacts in relation to race or ethnicity for residents already receiving or newly eligible to receive LCTS. Other discretionary support may also be available.

### **Religion or belief (or lack of)**

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to religion or belief. There may be positive impacts in relation to religion or belief for residents already receiving or newly eligible to receive LCTS. Other discretionary support may also be available.

### **Sexual orientation**

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to sexual orientation. There may be positive impacts in relation to sexual orientation for residents already receiving or newly eligible to receive LCTS. Other discretionary support may also be available.

### **Other vulnerabilities**

The assessment has indicated no disproportionate negative impact in relation to other vulnerabilities. There may be positive impacts in relation to residents with other vulnerabilities

already receiving or newly eligible to receive LCTS. Other discretionary support may also be available.

**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.

Systems reports are available on the cost, numbers and take-up of the LCTS.

## Proposal: Changes to room hire charges in community centres

### Introduction

This document summarises – in an accessible format – the outcomes of the Council’s 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.

### Summary of the proposal

The proposal is to increase community centre room hire charges by an average of 6.6% net (however differential price uplifts are proposed to reflect a range of considerations including current utilisation rates, competitors costs and balancing the need to cover costs while also delivering social and community benefits).

### Assessment of Relevance

The Stage 1 Relevance Assessment has concluded the following:

- The proposal will – in some centres and for some rooms - introduce a change which will affect how services or functions are delivered by increasing the charge for hire of space
- The proposals may 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 – whether this is the case will vary from location to location and room to room as differential price increases are being applied.
- 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 who either hire spaces directly or attend activities in the spaces provided by a third party
- Local businesses that currently hire spaces
- Partner organisations that currently hire spaces.

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

- Information about who currently hires rooms, how frequently and for how long, and the activities provided
- Utilisation rates
- Competitor rates

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.

In reviewing room rates, consideration has been given to current utilisation rates, service users and the need to balance cost recovery against social and community objectives.

## **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 there is also a growing number of newer family focused activities.

### **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 20 November 2023 and 15 January 2024, inviting responses from community members and local organisations on the proposals.

Overall, 66% 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 included some concern that the voluntary and community sector may be negatively impacted by the increase at a time when the sector is already under pressure, and suggestions that any increase in charges should be focused on commercial organisations with no increase applied for charities or community groups. A general point (unrelated to the specific budget proposal) was made that the council should consider the needs of disabled people when it comes to local community inclusion.

## **Action to increase positive equality impacts or reduce negative equality impacts**

Changes to room hire charges have been proposed based on an assessment of competitor costs, current hirers and patterns of use, but also the need to balance cost recovery against wider social and community objectives.

No or low cost increases are proposed where there is an opportunity to increase utilisation, or where costs are currently less competitive. Both these are intended to improve the attractiveness of the centre to hirers, which could result in a wider range of activities being provided, with associated positive benefits.

### **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 average increase in charges is 6.6% with charges not being increased at all in many cases.

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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

#### **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 average increase in charges is 6.6% with charges not being increased at all in many cases.

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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

### **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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

### **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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

### **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 average increase in charges is 6.6% with charges not being increased at all in many cases.

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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

### **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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase

utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

### **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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

### **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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

### **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 average increase in charges is 6.6% with charges not being increased at all in many cases.

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 result in a positive impact as it aims to increase utilisation of community centre spaces, which could lead to a wider range of support activities being provided.

### **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 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.

### 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 7%, however the proposal incorporates the proposal to introduce free short stay parking in Horley, the income loss for which is offset by higher charges for longer stays in car parks across the borough. Elsewhere due to rounding of figures the exact % increase for different time periods may be slightly higher or lower than the average. 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 (e.g. to run errands) will be small (generally 10-20p for a stay of up to 1 hour).

### 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.
- It remains the case that other parking and transport opportunities are also available for those who do not wish to pay increased charges in council car parks.

## **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.

The proposal to introduce free short stay parking in Horley may potentially benefit residents with protected characteristics other than disability by enabling them to pop into the town for short periods of time and park free of charge. However any car park user (including with protected characteristics – excluding disability) who uses long stay parking may relatively pay marginally more as these costs have been increased to mitigate income losses associated with free short stay parking in Horley. There is currently no evidence that longer stay parking is used more by residents with protected characteristics than without.

## **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](http://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 (149,243) there are approx 2,388 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 Council conducted a public consultation on its draft budget proposals between 20 November 2023 and 15 January 2024, inviting responses from community members and local organisations on the proposals.

33% of respondents supported the proposal to increase parking charges across most council-owned paid for car parks. There was 57% support for increases in the cost of car park permits and 67% support for free 20 minute parking in council-owned paid for car parks in Horley. 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 raised concerns about the potential for a knock on impact of increased parking on streets and pavements.

The process of raising fees and charges for off street parking also requires 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.

## **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 identify additional 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.

It is not considered that the scale of increase will result in an increase in anti-social parking elsewhere, but where this is contrary to highways regulations this can be enforced against (and levels monitored).

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 a jointly funded active travel officer working in identified community development areas and with target schools to encourage walking and cycling for daily trips – as part of this work, it may be possible to provide free bicycles to those who need and would benefit from them most. Together 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 – and in Horley it is proposed to be removed altogether for stays of 20 minutes or under. 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 – and in Horley it is proposed to be removed altogether for stays of 20 minutes or under. 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.

Consideration will be given to whether a survey of car park users would be beneficial to 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 could 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 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.

### Summary of the proposal

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 7% in line with inflation.

### 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.

In 2022/23 Summonses were issued to 3,686 residents and 177 businesses. Due to the closure of the Courts during 2020/21, recovery was paused for a number of prior year accounts, and the Council is now ensuring that these accounts are progressed through the recovery process which may result in a Summons.

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](http://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 20 November 2023 and 15 January 2024, 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.

## 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.



## LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

### New Scheme for introduction in 2024/25

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#### Background

Since 2013 Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) schemes provide help for people on low incomes with their council tax bill. The schemes apply differently in different parts of Great Britain, and in England they apply differently in different councils.

LCTS applies only to working age households only. Households of pensioner age receive support towards their Council Tax through a national scheme.

#### Legislation

The local scheme is regulated under new section 13A(1)(a) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Additional support can be offered as an discretionary reduction by the billing authority under section 13A(1)(c).

LCTS schemes must be approved by each Council annually.

#### Current Scheme

Reigate & Banstead introduced a scheme in 2013 which has largely remained unchanged, although it has allowed for cost of living increases in line with other benefits.

Broadly, support can be awarded:

- 100% of a person's council tax liability if the person is vulnerable and receiving certain disability benefits; and
- Up to 90% of the council tax liability if they are not in the vulnerable group.

Other restrictions on liability also apply in some instances, for example if the applicant lives in a property in Bands F to H. Also a minimum award is in place of £5 per week for households not in the vulnerable group.

Where a person is working, an additional earnings disregard is applied of £15 per week.

#### Number of Claims

The number of people claiming LCTS increased during the pandemic but has now reduced to around pre-pandemic levels. The breakdown at 30 September 2023 is summarised in the table below.

Scheme	Number of Claims	Value of LCTS
Working Age - vulnerable	1,930	£3.1m
Working Age - employed	601	£0.4m
Working Age – Other (not vulnerable and not employed)	1,178	£1.3m
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,709</b>	<b>£4.8m</b>

The cost of the scheme is shared between Reigate & Banstead, the County Council and Surrey Police, based on each preceptor's share of the council tax charge.

### New scheme changes

Scheme	Criteria	Current	Proposed
Working age – employed Working age – other	Maximum award	Capped at 90% of Council Tax liability	Increase to 100%
Working age – employed Working age – other	Band restriction	Capped at Band E	Remove cap to include liability to include Band F-H
Working age – vulnerable	Capital Limit	Limit of £16,000	Align with the other schemes to £10,000
Working age – vulnerable	Backdating	Backdating for up to 6 months	Align with the other schemes to 3 months
Working age – employed Working age – other	Minimum award	Set at £5 per week, any award less than this is not paid, which creates a “cliff edge” for some households	Remove the £5 minimum award, ensuring awards up to £5 per week are paid
Working age – employed Working age – other Working age – vulnerable	Premiums, allowances and non-dependant deductions	Uprated annually in line with national scheme for pensioners	Uprated annually in line with national scheme for pensioners
Working age – employed Working age – other Working age – vulnerable	Discretion to override DWP income figures	None	In cases where fraud has been investigated and cases where the DWP has used a “minimum income floor
Working age – employed Working age – other Working age – vulnerable	Discretionary Reduction	Section 13A(1)(c) reductions can be made in addition to LCTS	Ensure that anyone who may be adversely affected by the above changes is given a top-up via Section 13A(1)(c)

January 2024

# Agenda Item 7



<b>SIGNED OFF BY</b>	Chief Finance Officer
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Jacque Aboagye, Finance Manager
<b>TELEPHONE</b>	
<b>EMAIL</b>	<a href="mailto:Jacqueline.aboagye@reigate-banstead.gov.uk">Jacqueline.aboagye@reigate-banstead.gov.uk</a>
<b>TO</b>	Executive Council
<b>DATE</b>	Thursday, 1 February 2024 Tuesday, 20 February 2024
<b>EXECUTIVE MEMBER</b>	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance

<b>KEY DECISION REQUIRED</b>	Y
<b>WARDS AFFECTED</b>	(All Wards);

<b>SUBJECT</b>	Council Tax 2024/2025
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<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
<p>(i) It be noted that on 30 November 2023 the Council calculated:</p> <p>a) the Council Tax base 2023/24 for the whole Council as <b>64,252.3</b> [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"> <li>• Horley Town Council <b>11,186.2</b></li> <li>• Salfords &amp; Sidlow Parish Council <b>1,453.7</b></li> </ul> <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 &amp; 3.</p> <p>(ii) Calculate that the Council Tax requirements for the Council’s own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding Parish precepts) is <b>£16,524,407</b></p> <p>(iii) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:</p>	

# Agenda Item 7

- a) **£68,428,760** – 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) **£51,253,593** – being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3) of the Act.
- c) **£17,175,167** – 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) **£267.31** – 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) **£650,760** - 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) **£257.18** - 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	<b>£311.18</b>
Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council	<b>£289.28</b>

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 2024/25 for each of the categories of dwellings shown in Annex 3.
- (vi) It be noted that for the year 2024/25 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 2024/25 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 11 December 2023 based upon an amount of £32.10 for a Band D dwelling which is an increase of £2.38 for a Band D dwelling.
7. Horley Town Council set their budget on 12 December 2023 based upon an amount of £54.00 for a Band D dwelling which is an increase of £6.24 for a Band D dwelling.
8. Reigate and Banstead Borough Council's proposed annual Band D Council Tax rates are as follows:
  - £257.18 (or £4.95 per week) in non-parished areas (i.e. the Borough's Council Tax)
  - £311.18 (or £5.98 per week) in the Horley Town Council area
  - £289.28 (or £5.56 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 6 February 2024. For the purposes of this report a 3.99% increase in their council tax rate has been assumed. This equates to a Band D Council Tax of £1,741.92 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 20 February 2024.
11. Surrey Police & Crime Commissioner is due to set its budget on 2 February 2024. For the purposes of this report a £13.00 increase in their council tax rate has been assumed. This equates to a Band D Council Tax of £323.57. 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 20 February 2024.
12. The 2024/25 Council Tax for each area of the Borough is as detailed in Annexes 1, 2 and 3.

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<b>Table 1: Analysis of Council Tax by Preceptor</b>				
Authority	£		% share	
Surrey County Council <sup>1</sup>	111,922,366		74.67%	
Surrey Police & Crime Commissioner <sup>1</sup>	20,790,117		13.87%	
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	16,524,407		11.03%	
Horley Town Council	604,096		0.40%	
Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council	46,664		0.03%	
	<b>149,887,650</b>		<b>100.00%</b>	

<b>Table 2: Analysis of Council Tax Changes by Preceptor</b>				
Authority	2023/24 Band D £	2024/25 Band D £	Increase	
			£	%
Surrey County Council <sup>1</sup>	1,675.08	1,741.92	66.84	3.99
Surrey Police & Crime Commissioner <sup>1</sup>	310.57	323.57	13.00	4.19
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	249.71	257.18	7.47	2.99
Horley Town Council	47.76	54.00	6.24	13.07
Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council	29.72	32.10	2.38	8.01
	<b>2,312.84</b>	<b>2,408.77</b>	<b>95.93</b>	<b>4.15%</b>

<b>Table 3 Amount payable Band D</b>			
Area	Borough and Parish Services £	County and Police Services £	Total Payable at Band D £
Horley Town Council	311.18	2,065.49	2,376.67
Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council	289.28	2,065.49	2,354.77
Rest of Borough	257.18	2,065.49	2,322.67

## OPTIONS

13. The 2024/25 budget is based on a recommended Council Tax rise of £7.47 (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 2024.

## 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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<b>EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS</b>
16. These are covered in the Budget 2024/25 report elsewhere on the agenda
<b>COMMUNICATION IMPLICATIONS</b>
17. These are covered in the Budget 2024/25 report elsewhere on the agenda
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS</b>
18. These are covered in the Budget 2024/25 report elsewhere on the agenda
<b>CONSULTATION</b>
19. The approach to consultation is covered in the Budget 2024/25 report elsewhere on the agenda
<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK</b>
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)
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>
<i>Council Tax Base 2024/25, report to Council, 30 November 2023</i> <i>Budget 2024/25, Executive, 1 February 2024</i>



## COUNCIL TAX 2024/25

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

	RBBC average including parishes	RBBC excluding parishes	Horley Town Council area	Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council area
<b>Tax base</b>	64,252.30	64,252.30	11,186.20	1,453.70
	£	£	£	£
Gross expenditure (Borough)	68,081,000	68,081,000	68,081,000	68,081,000
Income (Borough)	(44,914,000)	(44,914,000)	(44,914,000)	(44,914,000)
	<u>23,167,000</u>	<u>23,167,000</u>	<u>23,167,000</u>	<u>23,167,000</u>
Contribution from other Reserves	(998,000)	(998,000)	(998,000)	(998,000)
Contribution from General Fund	0	0	0	0
Contribution to Specific Earmarked Reserves	695,000	695,000	695,000	695,000
<b>NET BOROUGH BUDGET</b>	<u>22,864,000</u>	<u>22,864,000</u>	<u>22,864,000</u>	<u>22,864,000</u>
Horley TC precept	604,096	0	604,096	0
Salfords & Sidlow PC precept	46,664	0	0	46,664
<b>NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT</b>	<u>23,514,760</u>	<u>22,864,000</u>	<u>23,468,096</u>	<u>22,910,664</u>
Business Rates Relief Grants				
Business Rates (NNDR)	(3,343,593)	(3,343,593)	(3,343,593)	(3,343,593)
Lower Tier Services Grant	0	0	0	0
Services Grant	(15,000)	(15,000)	(15,000)	(15,000)
Council Tax Surplus	(151,000)	(151,000)	(151,000)	(151,000)
Homelessness Prevention	(695,000)	(695,000)	(695,000)	(695,000)
New Homes Bonus	(806,000)	(806,000)	(806,000)	(806,000)
Minimum Funding Grant	(1,329,000)	(1,329,000)	(1,329,000)	(1,329,000)
<b>NNDR &amp; NON SPECIFIC GRANT</b>	<u>(6,339,593)</u>	<u>(6,339,593)</u>	<u>(6,339,593)</u>	<u>(6,339,593)</u>
<b>COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT</b>	<u>17,175,167</u>	<u>16,524,407</u>	<u>17,128,503</u>	<u>16,571,071</u>
<b>BAND D COUNCIL TAX</b>	<u>267.31</u>	<u>257.18</u>	<u>311.18</u>	<u>289.28</u>

## COUNCIL TAX 2024/25

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

AUTHORITY	AREA		
	Reigate & Banstead	Horley TC	Salfords & Sidlow PC
	£	£	£
Reigate & Banstead <sup>(1)</sup>	257.18	311.18	289.28
Surrey County Council <sup>(2)</sup>	1,741.92	1,741.92	1,741.92
Surrey Police <sup>(2)</sup>	323.57	323.57	323.57
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u>2,322.67</u>	<u>2,376.67</u>	<u>2,354.77</u>

(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 2024/25

## VALUATION BANDS

COUNCIL AREA	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
<b>1. AMOUNTS OF TAX FOR REIGATE AND BANSTEAD BOROUGH COUNCIL, HORLEY TOWN COUNCIL AND SALFORDS AND SIDLOW PARISH COUNCIL</b>								
Horley Town Council area	207.45	242.03	276.60	311.18	380.33	449.48	518.63	622.36
Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council area	192.85	225.00	257.14	289.28	353.56	417.85	482.13	578.56
Rest of Borough	171.45	200.03	228.60	257.18	314.33	371.48	428.63	514.36
<b>2. AMOUNTS OF TAX FOR SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL AND SURREY POLICE</b>								
Surrey County Council precept	1,161.28	1,354.83	1,548.37	1,741.92	2,129.01	2,516.11	2,903.20	3,483.84
Surrey Police precept	215.71	251.67	287.62	323.57	395.47	467.38	539.28	647.14
<b>3. TOTAL AMOUNTS OF COUNCIL TAX 2023/24</b>								
Horley Town Council area	1,584.44	1,848.53	2,112.59	2,376.67	2,904.81	3,432.97	3,961.11	4,753.34
Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council area	1,569.84	1,831.50	2,093.13	2,354.77	2,878.04	3,401.34	3,924.61	4,709.54
Rest of Borough	1,548.44	1,806.53	2,064.59	2,322.67	2,838.81	3,354.97	3,871.11	4,645.34

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# Agenda Item 8



<b>Signed off by</b>	Head of Legal and Governance
<b>Author</b>	Annette Wiles, Deputy Democratic Services Manager
<b>Telephone</b>	Tel: 01737 276607
<b>Email</b>	annette.wiles@reigate-banstead.gov.uk
<b>To</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Executive Council
<b>Date</b>	Thursday, 25 January 2024 Thursday, 1 February 2024 Thursday, 20 February 2024
<b>Executive Member</b>	Leader of the Council

<b>Key Decision Required</b>	N
<b>Wards Affected</b>	

<b>Subject</b>	Calendar of Meetings 2023/24
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<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the draft Calendar of Meetings for the 2024/25 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 2024/25 Municipal Year (Annex 1).</p> <p>Council is asked to approve the Calendar of Meetings for the 2024/25 Municipal Year (Annex 1).</p>
<b>Reasons for Recommendations</b>
To establish a timetable to ensure the efficient and effective conduct of Council business for the forthcoming Municipal Year.
<b>Executive Summary</b>

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The Calendar of Meetings for 2024/25 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 2024/25 has been subject to a full consultation process having been considered by Group Leaders' and Leader's meetings both held on 15 January 2024.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the Calendar of Meetings at its meeting on 25 January 2024.

It will be reported to the meeting of the Executive on 1 February 2024. The proposed Calendar of Meetings will be subject to approval by Council at its meeting on 20 February 2024.

**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 2025 (February) and preceding Executive meeting will again take place as late in the meeting cycle as possible. 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 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).

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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 2024 and 2025.
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 27 November 2024.
10. There are four Audit Committee meetings during the 2024/25 municipal year. The meetings will take place on Wednesday 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. 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 28 May 2024 will be combined with a training session.
12. 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 4 June 2024.
13. The Employment Committee meets quarterly.
14. As was achieved last year, 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.
15. It is being suggested that the Executive meeting in October 2024 is confirmed rather than remaining provisions. However, this meeting will only proceed if there is sufficient business to warrant it being held.
16. The proposed Calendar includes indicative dates for meetings at the start of the 2025/26 Municipal Year to assist with planning for future business. These dates will be confirmed as part of the Calendar of Meetings for 2025/26, subject to any revisions.
17. 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.

# Agenda Item 8

<b>Legal Implications</b>
18. There are no legal implications
<b>Financial Implications</b>
19. There are no financial implications.
<b>Equalities Implications</b>
20. Consideration has been given to avoiding meeting dates in Surrey school holidays, where possible.
<b>Communication Implications</b>
21. Automatic notification of meetings to Members using the ModGov system has been ceased after this caused multiple notifications and confusion. All scheduled meetings will be sent via Outlook Calendars to officers and Members and be listed in the Centralised diary.
22. Scheduled meetings will be available to view on the Council's website. Any changes will be publicly notified as and when they occur.
23. A public notice of meetings is provided on the noticeboard outside the Town Hall as is legally required.
24. The request by Group Leaders that notification be provided to candidates of mandatory training dates for Planning and Licensing will be addressed. How this is best fulfilled will be carefully considered.
<b>Consultation</b>
25. All members of the Management Team have reviewed the draft schedule. 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.
26. The Corporate Governance Group (officer group) was consulted at its meetings on 13 December 2023.
27. The Group Leaders' and Leader's meetings were consulted at their meetings both held on 15 January 2024.
28. Any comments by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 25 January 2024 will be reported to the Executive on 1 February 2024.
29. The final Calendar of Meetings 2023/24 is subject to the approval of Council at its meeting on 20 February 2024.



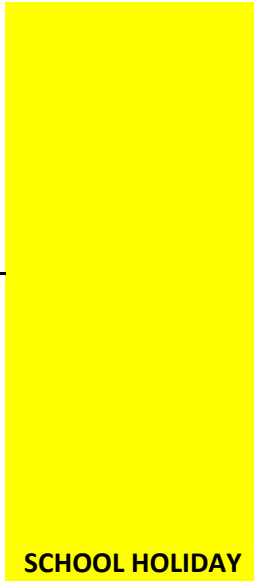
<b>Annex 1</b>
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| 1. Annex 1 – Draft Calendar of Meetings 2023/24 dates. |
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MONTH	DATE	DAY	COMMITTEE	START TIME	SCHOOL HOLIDAYS	NOTES	
2024	1	Monday				BANK HOLIDAY (Easter Monday)	
	2	Tuesday					
	3	Wednesday	PLANNING COMMITTEE	7:30pm			
	4	Thursday					
	5	Friday					
	8	Monday				SCHOOL HOLIDAY	
	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	7:30pm			
	25	Thursday					
	26	Friday					
	29	Monday					
	30	Tuesday					
	April	1	Wednesday				
		2	Thursday				POLLING DAY - MAY 2024 ELECTIONS (PCC/ BOROUGH)
		3	Friday				
		6	Monday				BANK HOLIDAY (May Day)
		7	Tuesday				
		8	Wednesday				
		9	Thursday				
		10	Friday				
13		Monday					
14		Tuesday					
15		Wednesday					
16		Thursday					
17		Friday					
20		Monday					
21		Tuesday					
22		Wednesday					
23		Thursday	COUNCIL (ANNUAL) ( 1)	7:30pm			
24	Friday						
27	Monday				BANK HOLIDAY (Spring)		
28	Tuesday	LICENSING & REGULATORY COMMITTEE (1)	7:30pm				
29	Wednesday				SCHOOL HOLIDAY		
30	Thursday						
31	Friday						
May	3	Monday					
	4	Tuesday	STANDARDS COMMITTEE (1)	7:30pm			
	5	Wednesday	PLANNING COMMITTEE (1)	7:30pm			

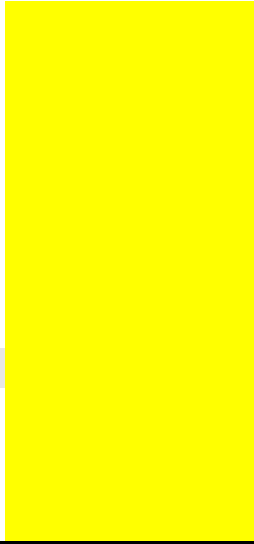
June	6	Thursday		
	7	Friday		
	10	Monday		
	11	Tuesday		
	12	Wednesday		
	13	Thursday	<b>OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (1)</b>	7:30pm
	14	Friday		
	17	Monday		
	18	Tuesday		
	19	Wednesday		
	20	Thursday	<b>PSTESC (1)</b> <b>EXECUTIVE (1)</b>	6:30pm 7:30PM
	21	Friday		
	24	Monday		
	25	Tuesday	<b>EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE (1)</b>	7:30pm
26	Wednesday	<b>PLANNING COMMITTEE (2)</b>		
27	Thursday			
28	Friday			
July	1	Monday		
	2	Tuesday		
	3	Wednesday	<b>AUDIT COMMITTEE (1)</b>	7:30pm
	4	Thursday	<b>OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (2)</b>	
	5	Friday		
	8	Monday		
	9	Tuesday		
	10	Wednesday		
	11	Thursday	<b>PSTESC (2)</b> <b>EXECUTIVE (2)</b>	7:30pm
	12	Friday		
	15	Monday		
	16	Tuesday		
	17	Wednesday		
	18	Thursday	<b>COUNCIL (2)</b>	7:30pm
	19	Friday		
	22	Monday		
	23	Tuesday		
	24	Wednesday	<b>PLANNING COMMITTEE (3)</b>	
25	Thursday			
26	Friday			
29	Monday			
30	Tuesday			
31	Wednesday			
	1	Thursday		
	2	Friday		
	5	Monday		
	6	Tuesday		
	7	Wednesday		
	8	Thursday		
	9	Friday		
	12	Monday		



SCHOOL HOLIDAY

**August**

13 Tuesday  
 14 Wednesday  
 15 Thursday  
 16 Friday  
 19 Monday  
 20 Tuesday  
 21 Wednesday  
 22 Thursday  
 23 Friday  
 26 Monday  
 27 Tuesday  
 28 Wednesday  
 29 Thursday  
 30 Friday



**BANK HOLIDAY (August)**

**September**

2 Monday  
 3 Tuesday  
 4 Wednesday **PLANNING COMMITTEE (4)** 7:30pm  
 5 Thursday  
 6 Friday  
 9 Monday  
 10 Tuesday **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE (2)** 7:30pm  
 11 Wednesday  
**AUDIT COMMITTEE (2)** 7:30pm  
 12 Thursday **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (3)** 7:30pm  
 13 Friday  
 16 Monday  
 17 Tuesday  
 18 Wednesday  
 19 Thursday **PSTESC (3)** 6:30pm  
**EXECUTIVE (3)** 7:30pm  
 20 Friday  
 23 Monday  
 24 Tuesday  
 25 Wednesday **PLANNING COMMITTEE (5)** 7:30pm  
 26 Thursday **COUNCIL (3)** 7:30pm  
 27 Friday  
 30 Monday

**October**

1 Tuesday  
 2 Wednesday  
 3 Thursday  
 4 Friday  
 7 Monday  
 8 Tuesday  
 9 Wednesday  
 10 Thursday **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (4)** 7:30pm  
 11 Friday  
 14 Monday  
 15 Tuesday  
 16 Wednesday  
 17 Thursday

18 Friday  
 19 Monday  
 20 Tuesday  
 23 Wednesday **PLANNING COMMITTEE (6)** 7:30pm  
 24 Thursday **PSTESC (4)** 6:30pm  
**EXECUTIVE (4)** 7:30pm  
 25 Friday  
 28 Monday  
 29 Tuesday  
 30 Wednesday  
 31 Thursday

**SCHOOL HOLIDAY**

**November**

1 Friday  
 4 Monday  
 5 Tuesday **STANDARDS COMMITTEE (2)** 7:30pm  
 6 Wednesday  
 7 Thursday  
 8 Friday  
 11 Monday  
 12 Tuesday  
 13 Wednesday  
 14 Thursday **PSTESC (5)** 6:30pm  
**EXECUTIVE (5)** 7:30pm  
 15 Friday  
 18 Monday  
 19 Tuesday  
 20 Wednesday **PLANNING COMMITTEE (7)** 7:30pm  
 21 Thursday  
 22 Friday  
 25 Monday  
 26 Tuesday  
 27 Wednesday **BUDGET SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL (1)** 7:30pm  
 28 Thursday **COUNCIL (4)** 7:30pm  
 29 Friday

2 Monday  
 3 Tuesday  
 4 Wednesday **AUDIT COMMITTEE (3)** 7:30pm  
 5 Thursday **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (5)** 7:30pm  
 6 Friday  
 9 Monday  
 10 Tuesday  
 11 Wednesday **PLANNING COMMITTEE (8)** 7:30pm  
 12 Thursday **PSTESC (6)** 6:30pm  
**EXECUTIVE (6)** 7:30pm

**December**

13 Friday  
 16 Monday **LEADER'S MEETING** 6:30pm  
 17 Tuesday  
 18 Wednesday  
 19 Thursday  
 20 Friday  
 23 Monday

2025	24	Tuesday			
	25	Wednesday		BANK HOLIDAY (Christmas Day)	
	26	Thursday		BANK HOLIDAY (Boxing Day)	
	27	Friday		SCHOOL HOLIDAY	
	30	Monday			
	31	Tuesday			
	January	1	Wednesday		BANK HOLIDAY (New Years Day)
		2	Thursday		
		3	Friday		
		6	Monday		
		7	Tuesday		
		8	Wednesday		
		9	Thursday		
		10	Friday		
		13	Monday		
		14	Tuesday		
15		Wednesday	PLANNING COMMITTEE (9)	7:30pm	
16		Thursday			
17		Friday			
20		Monday			
21		Tuesday	EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE (3)		
22		Wednesday			
23		Thursday	OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (6)	7:30pm	
24		Friday			
27		Monday			
28	Tuesday		7:30pm		
29	Wednesday				
30	Thursday	PSTESC (7) EXECUTIVE (7)			
31	Friday				
February	3	Monday			
	4	Tuesday			
	5	Wednesday	PLANNING COMMITTEE (10)	7:30pm	
	6	Thursday			
	7	Friday			
	10	Monday			
	11	Tuesday			
	12	Wednesday			
	13	Thursday	COUNCIL (BUDGET) (5)	7:30pm	
	14	Friday			
	17	Monday			
	18	Tuesday			
	19	Wednesday			SCHOOL HOLIDAY
	20	Thursday			
21	Friday				
24	Monday				
25	Tuesday				
26	Wednesday				
27	Thursday	OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (7)	7:30pm		

March

28 Friday

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3 Monday

4 Tuesday **STANDARDS COMMITTEE (3)** 7:30pm

5 Wednesday **PLANNING COMMITTEE (11)** 7:30pm

6 Thursday

7 Friday

10 Monday

11 Tuesday

12 Wednesday **AUDIT COMMITTEE (4)** 7:30pm

13 Thursday **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (8)** 7:30pm

14 Friday

17 Monday

18 Tuesday

19 Wednesday

20 Thursday **PSTESC (8)** 6:30pm  
**EXECUTIVE (8)** 7:30pm

21 Friday

24 Monday

25 Tuesday **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE (4)** 7:30pm

26 Wednesday **PLANNING COMMITTEE (12)** 7:30pm

27 Thursday **COUNCIL (6)** 7:30pm

28 Friday

31 Monday

April

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1 Tuesday

2 Wednesday

3 Thursday

4 Friday **SCHOOL HOLIDAY**

7 Monday

8 Tuesday

9 Wednesday

10 Thursday

11 Friday

14 Monday

15 Tuesday

16 Wednesday

17 Thursday

18 Friday **BANK HOLIDAY (Good Friday)**

21 Monday **BANK HOLIDAY (Easter Monday)**

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22 Tuesday

23 Wednesday **PLANNING COMMITTEE (13)** 7:30pm

24 Thursday

25 Friday

28 Monday

29 Tuesday

30 Wednesday

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1 Thursday **POLLING DAY - MAY 2025 ELECTIONS (PCC/BOROUGH)**

2 Friday

5 Monday **BANK HOLIDAY (May Day)**

6 Tuesday

7 Wednesday



	8 Thursday				
	9 Friday				
	12 Monday				
	13 Tuesday				
	14 Wednesday				
<b>May</b>	15 Thursday				
	16 Friday				
	19 Monday				
	20 Tuesday				
	21 Wednesday				
	22 Thursday	<i>COUNCIL (ANNUAL) (1) PROVISIONAL</i>	7:30pm		
	23 Friday				
	26 Monday				<b>BANK HOLIDAY (Spring)</b>
	27 Tuesday	<i>LICENSING REGULATORY COMMITTEE (1) PROVISIONAL</i>	7:30pm		
	28 Wednesday			<b>SCHOOL HOLIDAY</b>	
29 Thursday					
30 Friday					
	2 Monday				
	3 Tuesday	<i>STANDARDS COMMITTEE (1) PROVISIONAL</i>	7:30pm		
	4 Wednesday	<i>PLANNING COMMITTEE (1) PROVISIONAL</i>	7:30pm		
	5 Thursday				
	6 Friday				
	9 Monday				
	10 Tuesday				
	11 Wednesday		7:30pm		
	12 Thursday	<i>OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (1) PROVISIONAL</i>	7:30pm		
	13 Friday				
<b>June</b>	16 Monday				
	17 Tuesday				
	18 Wednesday				
	19 Thursday	<i>PSTESC (1) PROVISIONAL</i>	6:30pm		
		<i>EXECUTIVE (1) PROVISIONAL</i>	7:30pm		
	20 Friday				
	23 Monday				
	24 Tuesday	<i>EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE (1) PROVISIONAL</i>	7:30pm		
	25 Wednesday				
	26 Thursday				
27 Friday					
30 Monday					

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