

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL



## EXECUTIVE SERVICES

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### Chief Executive

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**NB - This agenda contains proposals, recommendations and options. These do not represent Council policy or decisions until they have received proper consideration through the full decision making process.**

Contact: Democratic Services  
[committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk)

7 November 2022

To: MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE, REGENERATION AND PROPERTY  
SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE  
(Copies to all Members of the Council)

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee to be held in the Council Chamber, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill on Tuesday, 15th November, 2022 commencing at 7.30 pm.

Members of the Committee are required to attend in person. Other Members may attend in person or participate online via MS Teams.

Information on how to observe the meeting will be published on the Council's website.

Yours faithfully

JULIE BEILBY

Chief Executive

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Members are reminded of their obligation under the Council's Code of Conduct to disclose any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests in any matter(s) to be considered or being considered at the meeting. These are explained in the Code of Conduct on the Council's website at [Code of conduct – Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council \(tmbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/code-of-conduct).

Members in any doubt about such declarations are advised to contact Legal or Democratic Services in advance of the meeting.

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8. Urgent items

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent due to special circumstances and of which notice has been given to the Chief Executive.

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The Chairman to move that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting during consideration of any items the publication of which would disclose exempt information.

**PART 2 - PRIVATE**

10. Urgent items

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Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent due to special circumstances and of which notice has been given to the Chief Executive.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Cllr R I B Cannon (Chair)  
Cllr F G Tombolis (Vice-Chair)

Cllr M C Base  
Cllr P Boxall  
Cllr T Bishop  
Cllr C Brown  
Cllr M O Davis  
Cllr Mrs T Dean  
Cllr D Harman

Cllr N J Heslop  
Cllr M A J Hood  
Cllr D Lettington  
Cllr B J Luker  
Cllr H S Rogers  
Cllr C J Williams

## **GUIDANCE ON HOW MEETINGS WILL BE CONDUCTED**

- (1) All meetings of the Borough Council will be livestreamed to YouTube here, unless there is exempt or confidential business be discussed:  
  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPp-IJISNgoF-ugSzxjAPfw/featured>
- (2) There are no fire drills planned during the time a meeting is being held. For the benefit of those in the meeting room, the fire alarm is a long continuous bell and the exits are via the doors used to enter the room. An officer on site will lead any evacuation.
- (3) Should you need this agenda or any of the reports in a different format, or have any other queries concerning the meeting, please contact Democratic Services on [committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk) in the first instance.

### **Attendance:**

- Members of the Committee/Advisory Board are required to attend in person and be present in the meeting room. Only these Members are able to move/ second or amend motions, and vote.
- Other Members of the Council can join via MS Teams and can take part in any discussion and ask questions, when invited to do so by the Chairman, but cannot move/ second or amend motions or vote on any matters. Members participating remotely are reminded that this does not count towards their formal committee attendance.
- Occasionally, Members of the Committee/Advisory Board are unable to attend in person and may join via MS Teams in the same way as other Members. However, they are unable to move/ second or amend motions or vote on any matters if they are not present in the meeting room. As with other Members joining via MS Teams, this does not count towards their formal committee attendance.
- Officers can participate in person or online.
- Members of the public addressing an Area Planning Committee can participate in person or online. Please contact [committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk) for further information.

Before formal proceedings start there will be a sound check of Members/Officers in the room. This is done as a roll call and confirms attendance of voting Members.

### **Ground Rules:**

The meeting will operate under the following ground rules:

- Members in the Chamber should indicate to speak in the usual way and use the fixed microphones in front of them. These need to be switched on when speaking or comments will not be heard by those participating online. Please switch off microphones when not speaking.
- If there any technical issues the meeting will be adjourned to try and rectify them. If this is not possible there are a number of options that can be taken to enable the meeting to continue. These will be explained if it becomes necessary.

For those Members participating online:

- please request to speak using the 'chat or hand raised function';
- please turn off cameras and microphones when not speaking;
- please do not use the 'chat function' for other matters as comments can be seen by all;
- Members may wish to blur the background on their camera using the facility on Microsoft teams.
- Please avoid distractions and general chat if not addressing the meeting
- Please remember to turn off or silence mobile phones

### **Voting:**

Voting may be undertaken by way of a roll call and each Member should verbally respond For, Against, Abstain. The vote will be noted and announced by the Democratic Services Officer.

Alternatively, votes may be taken by general affirmation if it seems that there is agreement amongst Members. The Chairman will announce the outcome of the vote for those participating and viewing online.

**Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee – Substitute Members (if required)**

|   | <b>Conservative</b> | <b>Liberal Democratic</b> | <b>Green</b>   | <b>Ind. Kent Alliance</b> | Note |
|---|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|------|
| 1 | Roger Dalton        | Frani Hoskins             | Anna Cope      |                           |      |
| 2 | Nick Foyle          | Anita Oakley              | April Clark    |                           |      |
| 3 | Denis King          | Roger Roud                | Nick Stapleton |                           |      |
| 4 | James Lark          | Michell Tatton            |                |                           |      |
| 5 | Georgina Thomas     | David Thornwell           |                |                           |      |

**Members of Cabinet cannot be appointed as a substitute to this Committee**

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Declarations of interest

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## TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### FINANCE, REGENERATION AND PROPERTY SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

#### MINUTES

Tuesday, 11th October, 2022

**Present:** Cllr R I B Cannon (Chair), Cllr F G Tombolis (Vice-Chair), Cllr P Boxall, Cllr T Bishop, Cllr M O Davis, Cllr Mrs T Dean, Cllr D Harman, Cllr N J Heslop, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr B J Luker, Cllr H S Rogers and Cllr C J Williams

Councillor M A Coffin was also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

**Virtual:** Councillors Betts, Branson, Keers, Oakley, Palmer, Rhodes and Tanners participated via MS Teams and joined the discussion when invited to do so by the Chair in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 15.21

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M A J Hood

#### PART 1 - PUBLIC

##### **FRP 22/9 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no substitute Members required for this meeting.

##### **FRP 22/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

However, for reasons of transparency Councillor Dean advised that she also served as a County Councillor and West Malling Parish Councillor in case either of these organisations were referenced in any matters debated. As this did not represent either a Disclosable Pecuniary or Other Significant Interest there was no requirement to leave the meeting.

##### **FRP 22/11 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the notes of the meeting of the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee held on 26 July 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET**

### **FRP 22/12 FINANCIAL PLANNING AND CONTROL**

The report of the Director of Finance and Transformation brought together information on salaries, major operational income streams and investment income. The performance of these key budget areas, together with approved variations to the revenue budget and areas identified through revenue budget monitoring were summarised to provide an indicative overall budget position for the year. Members were also updated on capital expenditure and variations that had been agreed in relation to the capital plan.

Members noted, amongst other things, that the salary budget was under pressure with spend above profile and overall income from the Borough Council's operational income stream below profile. However, this was negated, amongst other things, by increased investment income. When taking all of the issues identified as at the end of August into consideration it suggested that the year-end position would be on or around budget or better, albeit only five months into the financial year and a lot could happen between now and the end of the year.

Reference was made to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the growing funding gap as a result of the impact of the current global economic conditions. It was noted that if Government did not recognise the pressures faced by local authorities in future financial settlements and council tax referendum principles a number of councils finances would be under severe pressure, including Tonbridge and Malling.

There was in-depth discussion on the progress being made to address the savings target for 2022/23; the escalating levels of inflation and its negative impact on the funding gap and the MTFS; the value in reviewing fees and charges for the current year due to the increasing costs of providing services and the reduced income given the current economic climate; and the uncertainty around Government funding and potential reductions of 10% across all Government departments.

Members requested more detail in relation to the MTFS and the Savings and Transformation Strategy and were advised that this would be reported to the Cabinet and the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee in November 2022.

With the current high levels of inflation, the Committee felt it appropriate for an in-year review of the level of fees and charges to be undertaken. It was also felt that car parking charges and usage across the Borough should be reviewed as part of this exercise to see if there was any potential to generate income from lower charges by increasing daily use.

**RECOMMENDED:** That, due to the escalating levels of inflation, an in-year review of fees and charges, including a review of car parking charges across the Borough, be undertaken.

**\*Referred to Cabinet**

### **MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION**

#### **FRP 22/13 REVENUES AND BENEFITS PERFORMANCE**

Members reviewed and noted the performance information in respect of council tax, business rates, council tax reduction and housing benefits as detailed in the report.

Collection rates for council tax and business rates were currently above target. However, with the increased energy price cap coming into effect in October 2022 it was not expected that this trend would continue. As a result of residents having other financial priorities, it was anticipated that collection rates would fall.

Members were also advised that as a direct consequence of a cyber attack on Clarion, there had been a decline in performance in respect of housing benefit and council tax reduction applications. Delays in processing benefit claims could place claimants in difficult financial circumstances. However, the computer systems at Clarion had been reset and there were signs that the situation was improving.

Failure to collect council tax or business rates in a timely and efficient manner could put the Borough Council's finances under pressure. Members were reminded that as the Billing Authority, the borough Council had to pay preceptors (County Council, Parish Council etc) in accordance with an agreed schedule regardless of whether collection was on target. It was also reported that a reduction in collection rate for council tax which became sustained would have an impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Anyone facing difficulties with payment were encouraged to contact Finance Services for advice and assistance as soon as possible.

The Committee agreed that the performance information provided was a useful monitoring tool and felt that this should be presented at every meeting of the Scrutiny Select Committee.

#### **FRP 22/14 WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23**

The Work Programme setting out matters to be scrutinised during 2022/23 was attached for information. Members were invited to suggest future matters by liaising with the Chair of the Committee. It was

requested that the following matters be considered for inclusion in the Work Programme, subject to liaison with relevant Services:

- Future occupation of retail units on Station Approach, Tonbridge
- Future of Temporary Accommodation units, Pembury Road, Tonbridge

However, Members asked that these items be included as longer term potential items which would be reviewed to see if matters remained appropriate.

The Principal Democratic Services Officer advised that representatives of the Post Office were unable to attend the meeting of the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee to be held on 14 March 2023. However, they had offered to attend the meeting of the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee on 8 February 2023 if that was acceptable. Members were satisfied with this approach if the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee were in agreement.

Finally, it was indicated that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would review the operation of Scrutiny Select Committees and how to prioritise matters for scrutiny early in 2023.

### **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE**

#### **FRP 22/15 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm

## TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### FINANCE, REGENERATION AND PROPERTY SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

15 November 2022

#### Joint Report of the Director of Finance & Transformation and the Cabinet Member for Finance, Innovation & Property

#### Part 1- Public

#### Matters for Information

### 1 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

**A report updating Members of the Select Committee on the latest update to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.**

#### 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The Work Programme endorsed by this Scrutiny Select Committee included a request by Councillors Base and Heslop for a report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the associated Savings and Transformation Strategy (STS).

1.1.2 The work programme listed the following points to be covered:

- Consider shortfall; and
- Reflect on how savings targets will be met.

#### 1.2 Background to MTFS and STS

1.2.1 A version of the MTFS is approved and adopted each year in February by Full Council at the time Budget and level of Council Tax is set.

1.2.2 The MTFS covers a ten year period, comprising a number of objectives which have been set by the Council. There are two important objectives here which need to be met at the end of the ten year strategy period to ensure the Council has financial sustainability – one of those is to ensure there is a balanced budget, and the other is to retain a balance of £3.0m in the General Revenue Reserve.

1.2.3 For many years, the MTFS has demonstrated that there is a “gap” between the amount of money the Council is spending on service delivery, and the amount of income that is available to the Council. This gap we term the “funding gap”, and in order to have a sustainable financial position the Council must ensure that the “funding gap” is bridged by setting Savings Targets.

- 1.2.4 As Members are aware the MTFS is not ‘static’ and is updated throughout the year in response to a variety of influences – both external and internal. 2022 has been a year of significant economic turmoil for numerous reasons and therefore there has, inevitably, been a shift in the latest working versions of the MTFS.
- 1.2.5 The STS sits alongside the MTFS as a tool to address the “funding gap” and associated savings targets that have been identified. The STS itself has a number of objectives that were adopted by the Council – most notably to direct resources in line with the principles of the Corporate Strategy and to adopt a ‘mixed’ approach to addressing the funding gap through a series of ‘themes’.
- 1.2.6 Copies of the STS and MTFS as adopted by Council in February 2022 are included in the Council’s Revenue & Capital Budgets document which can be found [here](#) for reference.

### 1.3 Update of the MTFS

- 1.3.1 As mentioned, the MTFS is updated on a “working” basis throughout the year, and Cabinet is apprised of the general direction of travel.
- 1.3.2 When the Budget was set in February, the adopted MTFS identified a gap of circa £2.15m. In June, Cabinet were advised that the funding gap was anticipated to be between £2.5m and £3.0m.
- 1.3.3 The report to Cabinet on 8 November shows the gap having grown to between £2.6m at best case to £3.8m at worst case.
- 1.3.4 Rather than repeat the issues that have been set out very clearly in the report to Cabinet, this report is attached in full as **[Annex 1]**.
- 1.3.5 It is imperative that the Cabinet prepares plans to deliver any scenario (best, middle or worst). Dividing the funding gap into tranches as we have done for many years allows us to “flex” the approach as new information comes forward.
- 1.3.6 The officer assessment is that we need to escalate plans to deliver savings of £1.5m within the next 3 years, inclusive of the tranche of savings that is already in train. In outline that might mean:

Tranche 1 – underway £350,000 – by April 2023

Tranche 2 – £500,000 – by April 2024

Tranche 3 – £650,000 – by April 2025

There will, of course, be other Tranches to follow, with levels dependent upon whether we are at the “best” or “worst” case funding gap level.

## 1.4 Savings to address the Funding Gap

- 1.4.1 In the short term, work is already underway to deliver Tranche 1 of the required savings. The Cabinet report appended at Annex 1 sets out the detail of the savings achieved thus far, but for ease of reference they are as follows:

|                                  | £              |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Grants to Voluntary Groups       | 1,600          |
| Members Allowances (no increase) | 8,150          |
| Replacement of Uniform System    | 50,000         |
| Cleaner Borough Co-ordinator     | 18,800         |
| Housing Technical Officer        | 750            |
| Insurance                        | 60,000         |
| Out of hours service             | 15,000         |
| Events Income                    | 10,000         |
| <b>Total (to date)</b>           | <b>164,300</b> |

- 1.4.2 At its meeting on 8 November, Cabinet will be reviewing Fees and Charges in readiness for 2023/24. If the proposals in the joint report of the Management Team and Cabinet Member for Finance, Innovation & Property are approved, this would generate an additional £50,000 to contribute to Tranche 1. Members will be updated as to whether Cabinet has recommended approval of these proposals at the meeting.
- 1.4.3 Members will note that even if the £50,000 is added to the total set out in the table above, this still leaves over £100,000 to achieve before the start of the financial year 2023/24. Management Team continues to strive to identify savings options within the policy framework set by Cabinet and Council as a whole.
- 1.4.4 In terms of the savings beyond Tranche 1, Members will appreciate from the ‘scale’ that this will require more than just “nips and tucks”. Savings of this magnitude can only be found through a change in policy in relation to the delivery of services. In other words, the Council’s financial stability will be in jeopardy if there are no changes to the size, scale and delivery models for the various services. Put even more bluntly, the Council will not survive if it does not review how (and even whether) it delivers its services and makes some difficult choices as a result.

- 1.4.5 It is important that focus does not simply fall on ‘discretionary’ services alone. Of course, many of the discretionary services are among those that are most important to residents. Focus needs to be given to ‘discretionary’ services and ‘mandatory’ services alike – just because a service is mandatory does not mean the same outcomes cannot be achieved through a different, and more cost effective, delivery model.
- 1.4.6 Often, there are discretionary elements of a mandatory service which can be adapted to make them more cost effective, or even ceased. We cannot afford to overlook these matters given the scale of the financial challenges facing the Council.
- 1.4.7 Many different strands of work are underway within the Council, under the control of the Management Team, to try to test “cost efficiency” for existing services.
- 1.4.8 Cabinet’s role to consider the “bigger picture” and determine which services should be subject to review – either in terms of size and scale, or whether the service in question should continue at all (if it is not mandatory). An example of this is a report to Cabinet on 8 November where the Council’s continued involvement in Sports Development & Youth Engagement is being reviewed.
- 1.4.9 Cabinet would **welcome input from the wider membership** as to the priority order for reviewing services. Whilst it is recognised that all services are valued, the reality is that there is simply not even funding to continue supporting each and every one to the extent the Council currently affords.

## 1.5 Government Funding levels and council tax restrictions

- 1.5.1 The report to Cabinet attached at Annex 1 acknowledges that one of the key financial challenges is that of a likely shrinking proportion of government funding.
- 1.5.2 Coupled with this, Members also know there are restrictions for district councils with regard to the raising of council tax (currently restricted to an increase of 2%, or £5). Given that council tax is now the largest single source of income for the Council, if these restrictions persist in the current economic climate where inflation is over 10%, these pressures will only get worse.
- 1.5.3 The Director of Finance & Transformation has stated in her report to Cabinet that unless the government recognise the scale of the pressure in future finance settlements and council tax referendum principles, it will be no surprise if a number of councils finances are under severe strain.
- 1.5.4 Representations are regularly made to government regarding these matters through partner organisation representing local government such as the Local Government Association (LGA) and District Councils Network (DCN). These will continue.

- 1.5.5 In addition, following the re-appointment of the Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP as Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on 25 October, the Cabinet Member for Finance, Innovation & Property has written to Mr Gove setting out the uncertainties and challenges that are facing the council. A copy of the letter is attached at **[Annex 2]**. Members will be updated once a response is received.

## 1.6 Legal Implications

- 1.6.1 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires every local authority to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and requires one officer to be nominated to take responsibility for the administration of those affairs.
- 1.6.2 Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires a council's chief finance officer to issue a s114 Notice reporting to all elected members an actual or impending seriously unbalanced budget.

## 1.7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.7.1 The Council maintains a prudent level of reserves to provide a safety net for unforeseen or other circumstances. The Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves statement that the Council's Chief Financial Officer (i.e. myself as Director of Finance & Transformation) is required to produce under the local Government Finance Act 2003 to support Members in considering the Budget Setting report, lists examples of why the Council needs to retain a minimum level of reserves.
- 1.7.2 The Council has resolved to hold a minimum level of general revenue reserve of £3 million in order to provide for a host of potential financial and operational risks. At the start of 2022/23, the general revenue reserve balance was circa £7.7m and together with the budget stabilisation reserve giving some headroom to deal with issues arising without more immediate 'draconian' measures.
- 1.7.3 Significant savings are required by April 2028 in order to preserve the integrity of our financial plans. These are **extremely** challenging times, and it has never been more important than to now focus firmly on the delivery of the necessary savings.

## 1.8 Risk Assessment

- 1.8.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out the high level financial objectives the Council wishes to fulfil and underpins the budget setting process for the forthcoming year and over the Strategy period. As the Council's high level financial planning tool, the Strategy needs to be reviewed and updated at least annually and in the current climate regularly reviewed by Management Team. In addition, not identifying and implementing the requisite savings and transformation contributions will put at risk the integrity of the MTFS.

- 1.8.2 Through prudent husbandry of resources, Council has reserves, including a Budget Stabilisation reserve, to help to smooth the path in the delivery of savings. However, reserves are finite and it is imperative that actions are taken at the earliest opportunity in order to preserve the longer term financial sustainability of the Council.
- 1.8.3 The financial position is recorded as RED on the Strategic Risk Register, and Members' attention is drawn to this.

**1.9 Policy Considerations**

- 1.9.1 Budgetary and policy framework is relevant to all areas of the Council's business.

Background papers:

contact: Sharon Shelton

Nil

Sharon Shelton  
Director of Finance  
& Transformation

Martin Coffin  
Cabinet Member for Finance,  
Innovation & Property

## TONBRIDGE &amp; MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET

08 November 2022

## Report of the Director of Finance and Transformation

## Part 1- Public

## Executive Non Key Decisions

**1 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND SAVINGS UPDATE**

A report updating on the Medium Term Financial Strategy having regard to the latest financial issues. In addition, the report sets out the savings that have been identified and will assist in meeting 'tranche 1' of the latest savings target. Cabinet is requested to consider and implement a programme for investigating and identifying the balance of the savings that are needed to ensure the financial sustainability of the Council.

**Dashboard/ Key Points**

- Interim review of Funding Gap, representing new savings that need to be identified and most importantly delivered, now projected at between £2.6m at best case to £3.8m at worst case.
- Savings target "tranche 1" of £350k needs to be in place by April 2023. So far £164k achieved.
- To ensure future financial stability, Council needs to be able to respond to a worst case scenario, but in any event needs to prepare to deliver £1.5m within the next 3 years.
- Current turmoil in economic climate and financial markets, with inflation at highest level for many years, and Bank of England interest rate at highest level since 2008.
- Uncertainty regarding local government finance settlement, Fair Funding Review, Negative RSG, New Homes Bonus cessation and Business Rates baseline reset making it difficult to assess the true position.
- Budget position categorised as RED on the Strategic Risk Register.

## 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 I updated the Cabinet on 7 June 2022 under the report “Revenue and Capital Outturn 2021/22” on the changing position of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 1.1.2 In that report I advised that the conflict in Ukraine had sparked an escalation in inflation and energy prices far beyond any forecasts. It had, of course, been hoped that the national economy would start to recover after the devastating impacts of the global pandemic. As a result, I reported that whilst it was very difficult at that point to give an indication of what this means for our “funding gap” within the MTFS, the general sense was that it might sit somewhere between £2.5m and £3.0m, although it could be more. This compared to the £2.15m ‘gap’ that had been referenced when the Budget was set in February 2022.
- 1.1.3 By the time I reported to Cabinet in July with a report entitled “Financial Planning and Control”, the estimated gap had increased to the £3.0m level. As I said then, the impact of surging inflation is not unique to Tonbridge and Malling and, unless the government recognise the scale of the pressure in future finance settlements and council tax referendum principles, it will be no surprise if a number of councils finances are under severe strain – including this Council.
- 1.1.4 Given this backdrop it is **essential** that we identify and achieve this year’s savings target of £350,000 by the start of the 2023/24 year. To this end Cabinet at its meeting in June Cabinet resolved that *“in order to ensure that the target of £350,000 is achieved by the start of the financial year 2023/24, a comprehensive report detailing all strands of work being undertaken in respect of the Savings and Transformation Strategy, including progress being made on achieving targets and outcomes be presented to Cabinet in November 2022”*.
- 1.1.5 This report therefore has two purposes:
- 1) it provides another update to the MTFS as the budget cycle for 2023/24 gets underway;
  - 2) it reports on the savings that have been secured thus far which contribute to “tranche 1” of the savings target.

## 1.2 The Medium Term Financial Strategy

- 1.2.1 Cabinet is reminded that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) covers both revenue and capital budgets over a rolling ten-year period, and it is this Strategy that underpins the budget setting process each year and over the strategy period.
- 1.2.2 The Strategy also sets out, based on current financial information, not only the projected budgets for the period, but also the levels of council tax that are projected to be required to meet the Council’s spending plans. Underneath the Strategy for the budget setting year sits detailed estimates formulated in

conjunction with Services taking into account past outturn, current spending plans and likely future demand levels / pressures.

1.2.3 The MTFFS sets out the high level objectives the Council wishes to fulfil over the agreed time span. These are:

- To achieve a **balanced revenue budget** that delivers the Council's priorities by the end of the strategy period.
- To retain a **minimum of £3.0m** in the General Revenue Reserve by the end of the strategy period and **not to fall below £2.0m** at any time during the 10-year period.
- Seek to set future increases in council tax having regard to the **guidelines** issued by the Secretary of State.
- Continue to **identify efficiency savings** and **opportunities for new or additional income sources** and to **seek appropriate reductions in service costs** in delivery of the Savings and Transformation Strategy (STS) approved by Members.
- Subject to there being sufficient resources within the capital reserve, set a **maximum 'annual capital allowance'** each year as part of the budget setting process for all new capital schemes (currently set at £250,000 from the Council's own resources) and give priority to those schemes that generate income or reduce costs.

1.2.4 The MTFFS is supported by the Savings and Transformation Strategy (STS). The purpose of the STS is to formulate an overarching plan as to how the "funding gap" identified within the MTFFS can be addressed.

### 1.3 Economic Situation

1.3.1 The Audit Committee, under the regular Treasury Management report, receives detailed information about the economic background, and it is not the intention to repeat this here.

1.3.2 However, it is worth noting that at the time of writing this report, CPI inflation for the year to end of August was 9.9%. When the Budget for 2022/23 was set in February this year, the Bank of England's forecasts for inflation were based around a level of 2% - demonstrating what an impact the Ukraine conflict and energy crisis is having.

1.3.3 On 22 September, The Bank of England raised interest rates by half a percentage point to 2.25% - the highest level since November 2008. The Bank anticipates that inflation will reach a peak slightly below 11% in October.

1.3.4 Without going into the details, the (then) Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng set out a mini-budget on 23 September in which he announced how the government plans to deliver the tax cuts that the new Prime Minister promised during her leadership campaign to help people with the rising cost of living. As we know, many of the proposals made in that mini-budget have since been withdrawn as a result of the market reaction which followed. Nevertheless the market is still volatile.

## 1.4 Impact on Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's MTFS

1.4.1 The Council's financial plans are significantly affected by the turmoil in the economic markets. Whilst this will certainly not be the last update of the MTFS before the budget is set for 2023/24, it is nevertheless important that Members are updated with the "***direction of travel***" so that plans can be formulated and implemented wherever necessary.

1.4.2 The problem is, of course, that there is uncertainty about many things. These include:

- Speed and rate at which inflation returns to levels more akin to that assumed when the budget was set in February 2022
- Local government finance settlement
- Fair Funding Review and future of New Homes Bonus
- Timing of Business Rates Retention "reset"
- Confirmation as to the permitted increase in council tax (without undertaking a referendum) for 2023/24

1.4.3 Of course, the impact of surging inflation is not unique to Tonbridge and Malling and, unless the government recognise the scale of the pressure in future finance settlements and council tax referendum principles, it will be no surprise if a number of councils finances are under severe strain – including this Council.

1.4.4 Members are aware that the largest single aspect of the revenue budget is the cost of staff. The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is a statutory public service scheme (*for which the benefits and terms are set out in regulations passed through parliament*) and all employees are entitled to join the scheme. The LGPS is administered through regional pension funds, and locally the Kent Pension Fund is the regional fund with Kent County Council as the administering authority.

1.4.5 Every three years the actuary carries out a valuation of the Pension Fund, with an objective of monitoring the assets of the Fund against the liabilities of the pension benefits payable. As a result of this valuation, individual employers' contribution rates to be paid for the following three years are determined. As well as an ongoing contribution rate in respect of current employees, the Council also has

pension liabilities in respect of some former employees which it discharges through what we term the 'deficit back-funding lump sum'. That deficit lump sum is discharged (subject to valuation movements) over a period of time as advised by the actuary – and I am hopeful that the actuary will confirm that the term will end during the lifetime of this MTFS. If this is the case this is one less liability the Council will need to carry in its medium term financial plans.

- 1.4.6 The current valuation is taking place and we will hear in the next few weeks and months what the new contribution rates for employers' pension contributions will be from April 2023 onwards. Given the recent turbulence in the financial markets following the mini-budget on 23 September, the potential outcome of this valuation is especially difficult to predict at this time.
- 1.4.7 Nevertheless, a further update of the MTFS has been prepared which Members need to view as '**work in progress**' and clearly is sensitive to movement in any of the factors listed. As there becomes more certainty about some of the factors above, the MTFS will be updated again but **for NOW** our calculations suggest that (based on best information to date) **the funding gap could lie anywhere between £2.6m at best case to £3.8m at worst case.**
- 1.4.8 Members will of course wish to understand why there is such a divergence in these figures. Put simply, this is connected to the level of certainty (or in most cases, uncertainty) we have about key factors within our MTFS. The following gives Members a 'flavour' of this.

*Settlement Funding, Negative RSG and New Homes Bonus*

- 1.4.9 Recent change to national leadership has thrown into question whether there will be a Spending Review in the coming months for local authority funding, or whether the government will rely on previous years data. Previous year data did not allow for the effects of surging inflation that is currently affecting all aspects of the economy. The indications are that whatever happens we may only receive a settlement for one year, which does not aid financial planning.
- 1.4.10 The Fair Funding Review does seem to have been put back once more following the appointment of a new Secretary of State. It was our view that the issue hanging over TMBC (and similar councils) of "Negative RSG" would be resolved one way or another within a Fair Funding Review – and the outcome of such a review would be very unlikely to favour councils like TMBC. Therefore, deferring the Fair Funding Review in some respects is advantageous – but it will only be a matter of time before it does happen and whilst we can benefit from a short term "windfall", in the longer term we must prepare for a much harsher reality. Cabinet is reminded that the assumed value of "Negative RSG" is around £1m and we have for modelling purposes assumed it will be reflected in our settlements from 2024/25.

1.4.11 In terms of New Homes Bonus, the government consulted local authorities back in March 2021 regarding the future of the scheme (with the inference being that it would cease) but nothing further has been announced since. The scheme has in recent years been diluted, but if it continues in some form or another for a while longer, this provides a level of income (assumed as £600,000) that can be reflected in our financial plans.

*Business Rates Retention and Pooling*

1.4.12 The Council has been on or around its baseline for business rates retention over the last year or two, but with the imminent launch of the Panattoni site on the former Aylesford Newsprint premises, the opportunity to generate more business rates for our community is presented.

1.4.13 As Cabinet will know from my report to Council on 25 October, partners in the Kent Business Rates Pool have invited TMBC to re-join the pool from April 2023, subject to approval from the Secretary of State.

1.4.14 If the approval is given, this opens up the opportunity to retain a greater proportion of the business rates that are generated (at least for a yet to be defined period). Until we hear from the Secretary of State (likely to be December), it is not known whether we can (or can't) assume retention of a greater proportion of the business rates.

*Pension Fund Triennial Revaluation*

1.4.15 As mentioned earlier at paragraph 1.4.5, the triennial revaluation is awaited. Not only will this determine the ongoing contribution rates in respect of the current employee base, it should also shed light on whether (or not) we can formally "discharge" the liability in respect of the deficit lump-sum during the lifetime of this MTFs or whether the period of liability is extended.

1.4.16 At this point it is hard to predict whether contribution rates will go up or remain stable (especially given the current turmoil in the markets); and/or whether the deficit liability will be either discharged or extended.

*Council Tax Increases*

1.4.17 We will not know until closer to the time of budget setting in February, what 'parameters' the Secretary of State will impose in respect of council tax increases.

1.4.18 For now, our assumption is that council tax could be increased by £5 (at Band D). This represents only a 2.2% increase on the previous year, which is below inflation. Naturally we will need to update this as and when more information comes to light.

1.4.19 It is worth noting that **IF**, in light of current inflation, the Secretary of State were to relax the threshold for council tax increases for district councils to say £10

(mirroring the limit that has been afforded to Police authorities) for the year 2023/24 only, this could have the effect of reducing the funding gap, potentially by up to £0.5m if this can run in parallel with the effect of the cessation of the pension fund deficit. Members should note that this has not been modelled into any of our scenarios and there is no suggestion at this time that it might be an option that could be put forward by the Secretary of State. Nevertheless, it is worth reflecting on this point given the impact this could have.

*Inflation, Energy Prices and Investment returns*

- 1.4.20 In preparing estimates for the 2023/24 budget I have advised Services that they should assume 10.1% for CPI and 12.3% for RPI, and 15% in respect of the Waste contract.
- 1.4.21 As I said earlier, latest advice from the Bank of England is that inflation is expected to peak at 11% for CPI. The September figures recently published show CPI at 10.1%.
- 1.4.22 Our largest contract – the Waste contract – is annually uplifted based on an amalgam of RPI and diesel indices as at October. When preparing the MTFS back in February, we assumed a 4% increase in the Waste contract from April 2023 – but with surging inflation we are now modelling 15% which adds circa £450,000 to the funding gap. Each 1% gives a variation of around £40,000, and given the turmoil there has been in the economy, we will not have any certainty until the relevant indices are published.
- 1.4.23 Government have announced assistance in respect of energy costs to businesses and public sector bodies. However, the detail of that has not yet filtered through. The greatest energy cost the Council bears, under certain circumstances, is in relation to support for the leisure centres which are in the Council's ownership but are managed by the Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust. Irrespective of the government support the payment this year could be in the order of £650,000 with a further payment in future years dependent on where energy prices are at the time and the trading performance of the Trust.
- 1.4.24 The Council is of course benefiting from the increase in interest rates through its investment portfolio. However, the MTFS had already assumed a steady rise in rates towards the latter years, and therefore this 'earlier than expected' rise is simply acting as a "windfall".

*Reassignment of other reserves and balances*

- 1.4.25 Members will see that it has been exceptionally difficult at this time, given all the uncertainty, to formulate firm updates to our MTFS.
- 1.4.26 One further suggestion my team and I bring forward is to review the level of reserves and balances we hold for other specified purposes and add them back into the general revenue reserve if required or deemed appropriate.

- 1.4.27 Why does this help? As set out in paragraph 1.2.3, the MTFs is founded on a number of objectives. There are two important objectives here which need to be met at the end of the 10 year strategy period to ensure the Council has financial sustainability - one of those is to ensure there is a balanced budget, and the other is to retain a balance of £3.0m in the General Revenue Reserve (GRR). The Council's stance has always been to utilise reserves to assist in the smoothing of savings so as to protect service delivery for as long as possible. Naturally therefore, reserves will be depleted over the 10 year MTFs period, and the "funding gap" scenarios we have identified take into account the fact that we need to protect the GRR balance at the end of the 10 year period so it does not drop below £3.0m.
- 1.4.28 If the GRR could be supplemented, it is therefore possible for us to re-model and potentially reduce the "funding gap". Members should note that because of the way the MTFs works there is not a £ for £ relationship, and it depends on how and when all other 'factors' interact with each other. Nevertheless we estimate that if we could, for example, release £1.5m from other reserves and balances and add those funds to GRR, this could reduce the funding gap. This is worth exploring but it does mean that funds would need to be released that are set aside for other specified purposes. I would recommend that Cabinet request Management Team to undertake this work, and I have reflected the impact of doing so in the "best case" scenario that I set out at paragraph 1.4.7.

#### *Summary*

- 1.4.29 Members and senior officers have a duty to provide for the long term financial sustainability of the Council. Therefore whilst we hope the worst case scenario does not materialise we, at least, need to prepare ideas as to how to respond to it.
- 1.4.30 Notwithstanding that, it is imperative that we prepare plans to deliver any scenario (best, middle or worst). Dividing the funding gap into tranches as we have done for many years allows us to "flex" the approach as new information comes forward.
- 1.4.31 Our assessment is that we need to escalate plans to deliver savings of £1.5m within the next 3 years, inclusive of the tranche of savings (see 1.5 below) that is already in train. In outline that might mean:

Tranche 1 – underway £350,000 – by April 2023

Tranche 2 – £500,000 – by April 2024

Tranche 3 – £650,000 – by April 2025

Cabinet will of course appreciate that there would be other Tranches to follow, with levels dependent upon whether we are at the "best" or "worst" case funding gap level (see paragraph 1.4.7).

## 1.5 Savings Identified

- 1.5.1 As mentioned earlier at paragraph 1.1.4 at its meeting in June Cabinet resolved that *"in order to ensure that the target of £350,000 is achieved by the start of the financial year 2023/24, a comprehensive report detailing all strands of work being undertaken in respect of the Savings and Transformation Strategy, including progress being made on achieving targets and outcomes be presented to Cabinet in November 2022"*.
- 1.5.2 Savings that have been identified thus far have been reported by the 'Financial Planning & Control' report, initially to Cabinet and latterly to the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee.
- 1.5.3 The savings can be summarised as follows:

|                                  | £              |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Grants to Voluntary Groups       | 1,600          |
| Members Allowances (no increase) | 8,150          |
| Replacement of Uniform System    | 50,000         |
| Cleaner Borough Co-ordinator     | 18,800         |
| Housing Technical Officer        | 750            |
| Insurance                        | 60,000         |
| Out of hours service             | 15,000         |
| Events Income                    | 10,000         |
| <b>Total (to date)</b>           | <b>164,300</b> |

- 1.5.4 As Members will see from the table above, there is still some way to go in order to achieve the £350,000 tranche 1 target. Work continues to identify savings options ahead of 1 April 2023, including the examination of the levels of fees and charges levied for council services. Members are referred to the report of the Management Team elsewhere on this agenda in respect of "Fees and Charges".
- 1.5.5 It should also be remembered that this does not take into account costs that have taken the funding gap in the wrong direction, some of which could be outside of the Council's control.
- 1.5.6 Of course, this is only addressing the first tranche of a much bigger funding gap as outlined in section 1.4. **In terms of tranches 2 onwards, urgent and**

**concerted effort will need to be made by both Members and officers in identifying how these significant sums can be found.** This undoubtedly will be a combination of “big ticket items”, service rationalisation, cessation of services with least priority, and the continued search for efficiencies. **Only this will ensure the continued financial sustainability of the Council.**

## 1.6 Legal Implications

- 1.6.1 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires every local authority to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and requires one officer to be nominated to take responsibility for the administration of those affairs.
- 1.6.2 Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires a council’s chief finance officer to issue a s114 Notice reporting to all elected members an actual or impending seriously unbalanced budget.

## 1.7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.7.1 The Council maintains a prudent level of reserves to provide a safety net for unforeseen or other circumstances. The Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves statement that the Council’s Chief Financial Officer (i.e. myself as Director of Finance & Transformation) is required to produce under the local Government Finance Act 2003 to support Members in considering the Budget Setting report, lists examples of why the Council needs to retain a minimum level of reserves. Examples include Emergencies; Economic and world recession; Interest Rate volatility; Income volatility; and Government Legislation. Rather than one or even two of these examples occurring, we have the situation of all of these examples impacting at the same time.
- 1.7.2 The Council has resolved to hold a minimum level of general revenue reserve of £3 million in order to provide for a host of potential financial and operational risks. At the start of 2022/23, the general revenue reserve balance was circa £7.7m and together with the budget stabilisation reserve giving some headroom to deal with issues arising without more immediate ‘draconian’ measures.
- 1.7.3 Significant savings are required by April 2028 in order to preserve the integrity of our financial plans. These are **extremely** challenging times, and it has never been more important than to now focus firmly on the delivery of the necessary savings.

## 1.8 Risk Assessment

- 1.8.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out the high level financial objectives the Council wishes to fulfil and underpins the budget setting process for the forthcoming year and over the Strategy period. As the Council’s high level financial planning tool, the Strategy needs to be reviewed and updated at least annually and in the current climate regularly reviewed by Management Team. In

addition, not identifying and implementing the requisite savings and transformation contributions will put at risk the integrity of the MTFS.

- 1.8.2 Through prudent husbandry of resources, Council has reserves, including a Budget Stabilisation reserve, to help to smooth the path in the delivery of savings. However, reserves are finite and it is imperative that actions are taken at the earliest opportunity in order to preserve the longer term financial sustainability of the Council.
- 1.8.3 Much debate has been made of the potential and (perhaps necessity in some cases) for local authorities to issue s114 notices (under the s114 (3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988). For Members' information this says that the Chief Finance Officer of a relevant authority shall make a report under this section if it appears to him/her that the expenditure of the authority incurred (including expenditure it proposes to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources available to it to meet that expenditure. As Cabinet will have gathered, due to careful and prudent husbandry of resources in the past, I do not believe that TMBC is yet in this position. **However, it is imperative that we carefully monitor and contain expenditure and continuously update our forecasts to ensure that we remain on track.** This will of course include reflecting in our forecasting the outcome of the Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Reforms which is as yet an unknown quantity.
- 1.8.4 The financial position is recorded as RED on the Strategic Risk Register, and Cabinet's attention is drawn to this.

## 1.9 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.9.1 Where there is a perceived impact on end users an equality impact assessment has been carried out and as further savings and transformation options emerge, further equality impact assessments will need to be carried out as appropriate

## 1.10 Policy Considerations

- 1.10.1 Budgetary and policy framework is relevant to all areas of the Council's business.

## 1.11 Recommendations

- 1.11.1 Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- 1) Note the latest forecast of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the funding gap which is now estimated to be in the range £2.6m at best case to £3.8m at worst case (see paragraph 1.4.7).
- 2) Note the savings/transformation contributions for Tranche 1 totalling £164,300 as set out in paragraph 1.5.3 and consider how the balance of £185,700 savings can be found.

- 3) Consider how a programme for investigating and identifying the necessary savings for tranches 2 onwards can be implemented and actioned as soon as possible.
- 4) For the reasons set out in paragraphs 1.4.27 and 1.4.28, request that Management Team review the level of reserves and balances held for specified purposes in order to release any 'surplus' sums to the General Revenue Reserve.

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Sharon Shelton  
Neil Lawley

Sharon Shelton  
Director of Finance & Transformation



**TONBRIDGE & MALLING  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**ANNEX 2**

**Martin Coffin**

**Borough Councillor for  
Wrotham, Stansted and  
Ightham**

Deputy Leader of The Council

Portfolio holder for Finance,  
Innovation and Property

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP  
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities  
and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations  
***Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities***  
4th Floor, Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
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2 November 2022

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Dear Mr Gove,

Many congratulations on your recent re-appointment to the position of Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. I am sure you will have many things on your agenda over the coming months especially given the significant economic challenges we are all facing.

I am the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with the Portfolio for Finance, Innovation & Property at Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (TMBC), a district council in Kent. My purpose in writing, on behalf of the Cabinet of TMBC, is to make a plea that we receive some certainty about what is to happen regarding the Fair Funding Review, Negative Revenue Support Grant and New Homes Bonus in advance of us setting our budgets for 2023/24 and, crucially, updating our Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

I am sure you will appreciate that work is well underway within local authorities in preparing draft Estimates for 2023/24 and updating our MTFS. However, a crucial element in terms of our income is the level of government funding we are likely to receive during that medium term. I won't bore you with the details of the financial pressures we are facing because every organisation is facing them – but any certainty would help us enormously in forward financial planning, even an indication of intentions would be useful.

In terms of Negative Revenue Support Grant (or Tariff Adjustment), you will be aware that the methodology set out in the finance settlement for 2016/17 made arrangements for a "Tariff Adjustment" to be implemented in 2019/20 in order to redistribute funds between local authorities. For this Council, that adjustment on its own represented a loss in funding of approaching £1m.

However, as we approached 2019/20, the (then) Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government announced that the implementation of this arrangement would be deferred. We very much welcomed this announcement and are pleased that the implementation is still deferred; however, in preparing our MTFS the

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potential for this tariff adjustment to be implemented at any time must be reflected and the stark reality is that we would then need to find savings of £1m as a direct result of this alone and further put at risk financial sustainability. To put this into context this is almost half of this Council's business rates baseline funding level of £2.3m in 2022/23.

If the implementation of Negative Revenue Support Grant is to be declared 'null and void' this would be an enormous relief and will help us to manage the enormity of service savings, we still need to deliver. However, if it is not, we would at least like to know when this is likely to impact so we can plan accordingly. Can you please give us any advice?

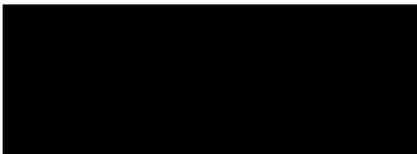
I suspect that the answer to my question may also be wrapped up within the "Fair Funding Review". The Fair Funding Review has been planned for some years but, understandably, has been delayed by the impact of the pandemic. Prior to the two leadership contests, local government had been notified by yourself (during your previous engagement as Secretary of State) that the Fair Funding Review would be launched during this calendar year. Can you please advise if this is still the case, and if not any likely timescales?

Finally, in early 2021 local authorities responded to a consultation about the future of New Homes Bonus. This is a source of income which helps to support the revenue budget in our borough (in other words, it helps to pay for day-to-day services). To date we have not heard the outcome of this consultation and government's proposed way forward. To help us to plan our finances over the medium term, can you please advise when we are likely to hear about New Homes Bonus?

We all want to make sure that we can deliver valued services to our residents and support them in these challenging times, whether at national or local level. However, I cannot stress enough how difficult it is for us to plan our finances, and thereby the services we can offer, in a meaningful way given the uncertainties we face.

Your assistance in updating me, and my colleagues, on the matters set out above would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Martin Coffin  
Borough Councillor, Wrotham, Stansted and Ightham Ward  
Deputy Leader, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council  
Cabinet Member for Finance, Innovation & Property

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## FINANCE, REGENERATION AND PROPERTY SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

### WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

**Standing items:**

- **Record of Executive (Cabinet and Cabinet Member) Decisions Taken;**
- **Record of Officer Decisions Taken (If any);**
- **Key Performance Indicators – revenue and benefits performance**
- **Work Programme (information item).**

| Meeting Date   | Matter for Discussion   | Requested by:        | Director/Officer |
|--|---|----------------------|------------------|
| 15 November 2022   | Medium Term Financial Strategy and Savings and Transformation Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider shortfall; and</li> <li>- Reflect on how savings targets will be met</li> </ul> | Cllr M Base/N Heslop | Sharon Shelton   |
| 14 March 2023  | Revenue and Benefits Performance  |                      |                  |
| 30 May 2023  |   |                      |                  |
| Potential items to be considered for inclusion: (subject to Committee review/approval)<br>Future of TA units, Pembury Road Tonbridge (requested by Cllr Heslop at FRPSCC of 11.10.22)<br>Future occupation of retail units on Station Approach, Tonbridge (requested by Cllr Heslop at FRPSCC of 11.10.22) |   |                      |                  |

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# Agenda Item 9

The Chairman to move that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting during consideration of any items the publication of which would disclose exempt information.

**ANY REPORTS APPEARING AFTER THIS PAGE CONTAIN EXEMPT  
INFORMATION**

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# Agenda Item 10

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent due to special circumstances and of which notice has been given to the Chief Executive.

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