



UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices, Civic Centre
Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 1AE

Tel: (01825) 762774 Fax: (01825) 765757

e-mail: townclerk@uckfieldtc.gov.uk

www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk

Town Clerk – Holly Goring

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO A MEETING OF UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

on

**Monday 17 January 2022 at 7.00pm
in the Weald Hall, Civic Centre, Uckfield**

AGENDA

Under The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, members of the public are able to film or record during a committee meeting.

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers are reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on this Agenda. Should any Member consider that they require a dispensation in relation to any prejudicial interest that they may have, they are asked to make a written application to the Clerk well in advance of the meeting.

Notice should be given at this part of the meeting of any intended declaration. The nature of the interest should then be declared later at the commencement of the item or when the interest becomes apparent.

2.0 STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA AT THE MAYOR'S DISCRETION

3.0. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

5.0 MINUTES

5.1 To **RESOLVE** that the minutes of the Full Council on 6th December 2021 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

5.2 Action list – For information only
(Attached)

6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

- 6.1 To note the acts and proceedings of the following committee meetings:-
- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (a) | Plans Committees | 13 December 2021 and 4 January 2022 |
| (b) | Environment and Leisure Committee | 10 January 2022 |
| (c) | General Purposes Committee | None held. |

7.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

- (i) The Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee
(nothing to report at this time)
- (ii) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
(nothing to report at this time)
- (iii) Gatwick Airport Consultation Group
(nothing to report at this time)

8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

- (i) Civic Centre Working Group
(nothing to report at this time)
- (ii) Uckfield – Events Working Group
(nothing to report at this time)
- (iii) Uckfield Dementia Forum
(nothing to report at this time)

9.0 TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT BUDGET (2022/23) AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022-27 FOR WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL
(Attached)

10.0 TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL AND THE UCKFIELD VOLUNTEER CENTRE AND WEALDEN CITIZEN'S ADVICE BUREAU FOR 2022-23
(Attached)

11.0 TO FORMALLY ADOPT THE TOWN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2022/27
(Attached)

12.0 TO FORMALLY ADOPT THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23
(Attached)

13.0 TO FORMALLY SET THE ANNUAL BUDGET (PRECEPT) FOR 2022/23
(Attached)

14.0 TO FORMALLY ADOPT THE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR 2022/23
(Attached)

15.0 TO REVIEW THE TOWN COUNCIL'S STANDING ORDERS IN LINE WITH THE NEW MODEL STANDING ORDERS FROM NALC (Attached)

- 16.0 QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES FOR 2021/22 (Q3)**
(Attached)
- 17.0 TO CONSIDER PROVIDING SUPPORT TO THE 20S PLENTY CAMPAIGN**
(Attached)
- 18.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**
(Attached)
- 19.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEEDS OF GRANT**
- 20.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED**
- 21.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- 22.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**



Town Clerk
11 January 2022

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held
on Monday 6 December 2021 at 7.00 pm
in the Weald Hall, Civic Centre, Uckfield

PRESENT:

Cllr. J. Beesley	Cllr. J. Love (Town Mayor)
Cllr. D. Bennett	Cllr. C. Macve
Cllr. B. Cox	Cllr. S. Mayhew
Cllr. J. Edwards	Cllr. A. Smith
Cllr. H. Firth	Cllr. P. Sparks
Cllr. D. French (Deputy Mayor)	Cllr. D. Ward
Cllr. G. Johnson	Emily McHale (Youth Member)
	Becky Ikeson (Youth Member)

IN ATTENDANCE:

1 x member of the press (recorded)
5 x members of the public
County Councillor Chris Dowling
County & District Councillor Claire Dowling

Mark Francis Estates & Facilities Manager
Sarah D'Alessio Assistant Town Clerk & RFO
Holly Goring Town Clerk
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda. They were advised that notice should be given at this part of the meeting of any intended declaration and that the nature of the interest should then be declared later at the commencement of the item or when the interest became apparent.

Only one declaration was put forward – Town Mayor, Councillor J. Love wished to note that her employer Sussex Support Services was referenced within the budget papers as a leaseholder of the Town Council.

2.0 STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA AT THE MAYOR'S DISCRETION

None received.

3.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

FC.58.12.21 It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to enable members of the public to speak.

Councillor Chris Dowling discussed one main item which related to the utility company UK Power Networks. With works nearly a week overdue in November, it was a relief that contractors had been able to leave site to enable traffic flows to return to normal in the lead up to Christmas and in time for Late Night Shopping. They were not due to return until the New Year, and at that point the temporary tarmac infills near to the bridge would ensure that the York stone pavement is reinstated.

Councillor Claire Dowling reminded members that East Sussex County Council was waiting on the local government settlement figures to inform their budget setting process for 2022/23. This was anticipated next week. They were hoping for a three-year local government settlement, so the county council could plan longer term, but more information would be known in the following few days.

Councillor P. Sparks provided a district update, having attended a public health briefing the previous week. The requirement for members of the public to wear face masks was not just compulsory now in retail businesses but also within Estate Agents, Banks and Building societies as just some examples. There were high rates of Covid, with Willingdon and Uckfield which were particular hotspots in Wealden District. It was found that mainly those aged 40-49 years and secondary school age children had been most affected. This meeting also reflected on Freedom Leisure services which were all now back open but only at 65% of pre-pandemic levels in terms of service users. It was advised that East Sussex County Council would hold a briefing on the Uckfield and Heathfield Leisure Centres before financial year end.

Councillor H. Firth did not have much more to add, but wished to reference the letter that had been sent to the Secretary of State (Rt Hon Michael Gove) by a consortium of parish councils from Hellingly up to East Hoathly and Heathfield, regarding the housing numbers being imposed by the UK Government on rural areas such as Wealden District.

Councillor G. Johnson reminded members of the timescales for the draft Local Plan, with the draft expected to be published for consultation Spring 2022. Wealden DC too had been engaging government representatives including local MPs to discuss the issues facing Wealden District. It was hoped that the numbers could be reduced, and if applications that had gone through could be included in those numbers, before the Draft Local Plan has to be finalised.

FC.59.12.21 With no questions, Councillors were thanked for their input and updates, and members subsequently **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors K. Bedwell and C. Snelgrove. Councillor J. Love advised members that Councillor C. Snelgrove was currently in hospital and very poorly. She hoped Town Councillors would join her in wishing him a speedy recovery.

5.0 MINUTES

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council on 25 October 2021 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

FC.60.12.21 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of full Council on 25 October 2021 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

5.2 Action List

Members requested that the following actions be removed as they had now been completed:

FC46.09.21 – West Park Pavilion

Members subsequently noted the action list.

6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

6.1 To note the acts and proceedings of the following committee meetings:-

(a) Plans Committee of the 1 and 22 November 2021

FC.61.12.21 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee of the 1 and 22 November 2021.

(b) Environment & Leisure Committee of the 15 November 2021

FC.62.12.21 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment & Leisure Committees of the 15 November 2021.

(c) General Purposes Committee of the 8 November 2021

FC.63.12.21 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committees of the 8 November 2021.

7.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

(i) The Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee

Nothing to report at present.

(ii) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Nothing to report at present.

(iii) Gatwick Airport Consultation Panel

Nothing to report at present.

8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

(i) Civic Centre Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

(ii) Uckfield Dementia Forum

Councillor P. Sparks wished to raise awareness of the Dementia friendly Christmas event planned for the afternoon of Wednesday 15 December 2021, at the Luxford Centre, which would include a screening of an Andre Rieu festive performance, festive treats and refreshments and raffle prizes. He asked members to spread the word. Members noted the report.

(iii) Uckfield – Events Working Group

Councillor D. French confirmed that Weald on the Field 2022 would take place on Saturday 6 August, and the Uckfield Revival would be moving to a weekend in May, with a date still to be confirmed, whilst the group checked that the event did not clash with any other local classic vehicle events. Members noted the report.

9.0 TO CONSIDER WORKS TO AN OAK TREE IN THE OLD SECTION OF SNATTS ROAD CEMETERY

Members had been presented with a report which explained the background work that had been undertaken by officers to assess the extent of decay within an oak tree in the old section of the Snatts Road Cemetery. Unfortunately surveys had highlighted that the tree was in poor health, and in its very sensitive setting within the cemetery and in close proximity to a sub-station, a telephone line, a residential property and road (Snatts Road), some or all of the tree needed to be removed to reduce the risk of impacting the resting place of loved ones' interments within the cemetery.

The Town Clerk explained the current situation and the level of contact that had been made with relatives who had loved ones laid to rest around the base of the tree. Understandably when contact was first made with relatives early summer it was a shock and the method of communication could have been improved, but working relationships had been strengthened since then, and recent correspondence with the majority of the relatives that had been traced, had helped to identify a way forward.

Members agreed that option 2 to reduce the tree to a specific and safe height, preferably 3.5metres would be the most appropriate option, to ensure that a memorial can be retained but reduce the risk. They were also keen to encourage wildlife to utilise the trunk of the tree and what remained, with the potential for new wildlife habitats to flourish.

One member recalled a tree that had come down in a storm in Holy Cross Churchyard in 1984, which had caused great upset, so it was prudent to avoid this scenario. It was suggested that any wood left over be put to a satisfactory use. The wood from the tree in Holy Cross Churchyard had been used to make the pigeon coop.

A suggestion was put forward for use of any surplus wood, in addition to the stacks of wood for wildlife habits, offer of pieces of wood to the relatives for their home or garden, and for the creation of benches. The suggestion was that of bird boxes, which could perhaps be supported by the Men's Shed, who were very good at woodwork.

FC64.12.21

Members **RESOLVED** to agree for the Town Council to remove the branches and height of the oak tree in the old section of Snatts Road Cemetery to a height of 3.5metres and retain as a wildlife monolith, with part of the wood being retained for relatives' personal use, ecological wildlife areas, seating and birdboxes.

10.0 TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WEALDEN PARISH REMUNERATION PANEL ON TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES FOR 2022/23

Members discussed this matter at length. They understood the current difficulties that the pandemic had placed on many households and businesses but also recognised that having not taken an increase in the previous year and only a marginal increase the year before that they were now some way behind recommended figures.

A first vote was taken on a proposal for Town Councillors to take an increase of 2.5% on their allowances in 2022-23, however this vote could not be carried with only four votes in favour and eight members abstaining.

Discussions continued with a second proposal put on the table for a 2% increase. This was also not carried due to lack of interest from members.

Members challenged each other on the benefits of member allowances, and how if the process was inclusive the allowances did help provide an incentive for people to become Town Councillors, but they also recognised that the financial situation was difficult for residents, businesses and the Town Council.

A proposal returned to freeze member allowances at the current rate which was seconded, and taken to a vote.

FC65.12.21 With ten votes in favour, and one member voting to abstain it was **RESOLVED** to freeze member allowances for 2022/23, and retain member allowances at the 2020-21 rate previously agreed by Uckfield Town Council (£1284.00 basic member allowance and £1773.00 for Chairman's Allowance per annum respectively before tax).

11.0 TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE SANITISATION OF PLAY AREAS IS REQUIRED DURING THE 2021/22 WINTER SEASON

Members were presented with the findings of a swab test on all of the play areas which had been undertaken at the end of November 2021. Members had previously agreed to halt spraying of the play areas during the summer months and for a review to be undertaken in the winter, when covid rates were likely to be higher. There had been no changes to the UK Government guidance on play areas in 2021, and it was therefore at the Town Council's discretion as to how it wished to move forward.

FC66.12.21 Members **RESOLVED** to continue to review the situation during the winter months based on current UK Government guidance but not to instruct any further spraying at this time.

12.0 TO REVIEW THE 2022/23 PROPOSAL FROM EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL ON THEIR GRASS VERGE CUTTING CONTRACT

Members were presented with a brief report which provided three options for parish/town councils to choose from for the next financial year. East Sussex County Council took a decision back in 2018 to reduce urban grass verge cutting along the public highway to twice a year. This meant the verges would be cut less, if no further contribution was made, the Town Council could pay a contribution to retain five to six cuts per annum or take over the contract entirely for a very small fee. The latter option however would require a great deal of extra work, to plan, obtain machinery, consider staffing levels and take on liability alongside the public highway.

FC.67.12.21 With 11 votes in favour, members **RESOLVED** to advise East Sussex County ~ Council that Uckfield Town Council would be selecting Option 2 for 2022/23: *Option 2 – Extra cuts: Parish/Town Councils may fund an additional four cuts to be carried out by ESCC, totalling six cuts (two standard and four extra) over the course of the year.*

This would cost the Parish/Town Council a total of £4,356 for the year.

13.0 TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT ARRANGEMENTS FOR SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS WITH UCKFIELD VOLUNTEER CENTRE AND WEALDEN CITIZEN'S ADVICE FOR 2022/23

This item was deferred to the next meeting of full Council on 17 January 2022.

14.0 TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-27

The report was felt to incorporate the many issues and initiatives that Town Councillors and local residents had discussed in the previous 12 months. Staff were thanked for the work they put into this every year.

Councillor C. Macve thought that mention needed to be included on the considerations required on future cemetery expansion. The Town Clerk felt this had already been referenced within the draft document but would strengthen this further.

Councillor A. Smith wished for the work on the Green Partnership and work with the town's organisations on the green agenda to be reflected.

It was clarified that the blue plaque project had not been removed but would be placed on hold until a later date.

Councillor D. French suggested that the statement on page 3 under environmental and regulatory services regarding the climate change action plan needed rewording.

Members were satisfied with the draft Strategic Plan 2022/27 at this stage and wished to note the report, for consultation.

15.0 TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23

Members felt that the Draft Annual Plan 2022/23 was very comprehensive and were satisfied with the current draft at this stage. Councillor P. Sparks wished for reference to be made to the importance of insulation when looking at climate change and energy efficiency in our buildings. Subject to this addition, members noted the report, for consultation.

16.0 TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT ANNUAL BUDGET 2022/23

Members reviewed the first draft of the Annual Budget for 2022/23. The Assistant Town Clerk & RFO advised that staff had looked closely at all codes and budget lines, to consider where increases may arise (utility costs etc), where savings could be made and also reminded members that the council tax base had not yet been agreed, so this was only a guide. The Assistant Town Clerk & RFO welcomed ideas and feedback from members, before the final draft papers would be presented to Full Council on 17 January 2022 for adoption.

Members noted that despite the challenges, that the Town Council was still able to deliver a great amount of services which was remarkable.

Members noted the contents of the draft budget and wished to await the revised council tax base and impact this would have on the overall budget.

17.0 TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR 2022-27
Members were satisfied with the draft report at this stage and subsequently noted the contents.

18.0 TO NOTE THE REPORT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR (NOV 2021)}
Members were presented with the report of the Internal Auditor who had carried out a two-day visit in person in November 2021. Subject to the three points being addressed at future Full Council meetings, members were content with the outcomes of the report, and wished to thank office staff for all their hard work on retaining good sound governance and financial procedures.

19.0 TO UNDERTAKE A REVIEW OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S STANDING ORDERS
This item was deferred to the next meeting of full Council on 17 January 2022.

20.0 TO CONSIDER THE ADOPTION OF A NEW CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL
The Estates & Facilities Manager had prepared a climate change policy for the Town Council with input from the Climate Change Steering Group. It was important for the Town Council to set the scene and explain to its residents and local businesses, the intentions of the Council and plans to tackle climate change.

Councillor P. Sparks advised that he was very pleased with this report, and wished to thank the officer for their work. There was still a great deal to do, but this was a great start towards delivery.

Councillor D. French echoed these points and wished to thank the officer involved and wished to thank Councillor P. Sparks for moving the motion in the first instance. With more frequent storms and bad weather, this was an important issue both locally, regionally and nationally.

Councillor D. Bennett referenced the previous Agenda 21 which used the phrase of "act local, think global" – i.e. if everyone did something and demonstrated their commitment we still had a chance.

FC.68.12.21 Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Town Council's Climate Change Policy.

21.0 TO CONSIDER A RESPONSE TO THE WASTE & MINERALS LOCAL PLAN – REVISED POLICIES WINTER 2021/22
Members were advised that East Sussex County Council, the South Downs National Park Authority and Brighton & Hove City Council had reviewed their Waste & Minerals Local Plan, and were now asking key stakeholders and members of the public to review the contents of these documents.

Councillor C. Macve thought it was very pleasing to note on page 2 of the information sheet on the consultation that they referenced marine dredged aggregate, and use of existing railheads. He felt anything that could be done to support the rail network and protect the railways was of benefit.

There were no further comments, so members noted the report, and the Town Clerk advised that she would feed the above comment back within the consultation process.

County and County/District Councillor Dowling, left the meeting at this stage (8.01pm).

22.0 TO CONSIDER THE REMOVAL OF A SIGN USED FOR FLOOD NOTIFICATIONS BY THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

The Town Council had been asked by the Environment Agency if they wished to take on the Flood Warning sign which was installed within the pavement outside Best Health food shop/Peacocks, or if they would support the removal of the sign, as a result of it being out of action for a number of years.

Members felt in the main, that most residents were now signed up to the flood warnings and alerts direct with the Environment Agency via their home telephone or smart phones/tablets. They also felt that as the sign had not worked for a number of years that it would not be missed. A couple of members questioned whether the sign could be used for another form of advertising but knowing it needed repair, no one was certain of the costs involved.

FC.69.12.21 With 12 votes in favour, members **RESOLVED** to support the Environment Agency's request to remove the sign from Uckfield High Street.

23.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Town Mayor advised that two further engagements had been attended – on Remembrance Sunday (Sunday 14 November), the Mayor had attended the Eugene Memorial and had attended the Community Leaders Lunch on 1 December with Father John Wall. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor French had also attended the Community Leader's lunch.

24.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEEDS OF GRANT

One deed of grant had been received:
Damian Thompson

FC.70.12.21 It was **RESOLVED** for three councillors to sign the above deed of grant.

25.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED

None received.

26.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

27.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor, Councillor J. Love wished to congratulate everyone who came and everyone who organised the Late Night Shopping event on Friday 3 December. People were very considerate of each other, and it was great to see so many streetholders busy, with some sold out of produce on the night. It was a great festive event which saw the town come together.

28.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

FC71.12.21 It was **RESOLVED** that pursuant to Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it was advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw.

28.1 To consider an update on legal advice received for the renewal of the lease agreement for the signal box

FC72.12.21 Members **RESOLVED** to proceed with the legal advice provided and for the Town Clerk to take forward the next steps.

28.2 To consider the implementation of the WPA Programme (NHS Top-up)

FC73.12.21 Members **RESOLVED** to implement the WPA Programme (NHS Top-Up) for Town Council staff and for the financial support required to be reflected in the 2022-23 budget. They were also keen for this benefit to form part of the induction training for new staff.

The meeting closed at 20:17hours.

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

ACTION LIST – FOR INFORMATION ONLY

FULL COUNCIL

Resolution No.	Details	Date Raised	Action By	Date Complete
<p><u>FC.105.02.17</u></p> <p><u>FC.95.01.20</u></p>	<p><u>14.0 To sign and seal the byelaws for Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve and West Park Local Nature Reserve</u> Members RESOLVED to sign and seal the byelaws for Hempstead Meadows and West Park Local Nature Reserves.</p> <p><u>18.0 To sign and seal the Town Council’s byelaws for Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve and West Park Local Nature Reserve</u> Members RESOLVED to: (i) authorise the affixing of the common seal to the byelaws for both Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve and West Park Local Nature Reserve and signing by two named councilors, and; (ii) authorise the Town Clerk for Uckfield Town Council to carry out the necessary procedures and apply to the Secretary of State for confirmation.</p>	<p>20.02.17</p> <p>20.01.20</p>	<p>HG</p>	<p>The Council will be advertising its intention to apply for confirmation once covid restrictions have eased. The byelaws must then be held for at least one month at the offices for inspection by the public, before any representations are reported back as part of the package of information, to DEFRA.</p>
<p><u>FC115.04.19</u></p>	<p><u>9.0 To consider a motion submitted by Councillor Donna French</u> It was RESOLVED to support the motion put forward, and; “reinvestigate the possibility of part funding a traffic warden; entering into a discussion with Hailsham, Crowborough and Polegate, with a view to joint funding a shared traffic warden, employed via Sussex Police.”</p>	<p>08.04.19</p>	<p>HG</p>	<p>This matter has been raised with the Wealden Inspector of Sussex Police. It is understood that Sussex Police and Wealden DC were due to hold discussions once again. UTC will await the outcome of these.</p>

<u>Resolution No.</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Date Raised</u>	<u>Action By</u>	<u>Date Complete</u>
<u>FC32.06.19</u> <u>FC46.08.19</u>	<u>13.0 To consider a motion from Councillor Spike Mayhew</u> Members unanimously RESOLVED to (i) ask the Town Clerk to look into civil orders such as Public Space Protection Orders, and; (ii) for the Town Council to reconsider the role of a Community Warden <u>13.0 To report back to Full Council on Public Space Protection Orders</u> Members RESOLVED to ask the Town Clerk to arrange a meeting with Sussex Police and Wealden District Council.	24.06.19/ 05.08.19	HG	Members considered research into Public Space Protection Orders at the meeting on 9 th December 2019. It was agreed to defer this item until further work had been undertaken on reporting and the new PCSO's had started.
<u>FC57.09.19</u>	<u>10.0 To consider a motion from Councillor Ben Cox</u> With eleven members voting in favour, and one abstaining, it was RESOLVED to accept the report from Councillor Ben Cox in relation to youth food poverty, and take up the recommendations outlined in the above motion, with a caveat that the investigations undertaken at this stage would be at no cost to the Town Council.	16.09.19	HG/ BC	Since this motion was put forward, the Community Fridge initiative has set itself up as a CIC. Further research is however required into food poverty.
<u>FC.30.09.20</u>	<u>12.0 To review a report by Councillor A. Smith on the need for affordable homes in Uckfield</u> After a detailed discussion, it was RESOLVED to request that the Town Clerk write to the Housing Minister Rt Hon Robert Jenrick with a copy of this report and advise Wealden DC's planning department of these discussions along with neighbouring parish councils.	14.09.20	HG	A letter is being drafted and will be circulated to members for approval before sending.
<u>FC.47.09.21</u>	<u>11.0 To consider the proposed way forward and preparation of the dedication agreements for the new footway links to the "land off mallard drive" development</u> Members RESOLVED to: (i) note the proposed legal process being taken with regards to the footway link across Uckfield TC land at Harlands Playing Fields, and; (ii) confirmed that the footway link between Framfield Road and	13.09.21	HG	Correspondence is ongoing with Persimmon in relation to the footway links, access points onto the land and current concerns with regard to construction vehicles and timings of works. Wealden DC Planning Enforcement are aware

	Hospital approach should also be placed up for adoption by ESCC at the same time; (iii) request that Persimmon Homes cover the costs of any legal fees incurred			and jointly liaising with contractors.
<u>Resolution No.</u>	<u>Details</u>	Date Raised	Action By	Date Complete
<u>FC.55.10.21</u>	Members RESOLVED to approve the motion put forward by Councillor D. French and for staff to make contact with the County Council: <i>“Uckfield Town Council supports the increase in the provision of Changing Place Toilets across the country, and will approach East Sussex County Council to understand if they: (i) have submitted an expression of interest to central government to draw down funding to the county of East Sussex, and: (ii) if ESCC have expressed an interest, that Uckfield Town Council lobby for such facilities to be introduced in Uckfield.”</i>	25.10.21	HG	In progress.
<u>FC64.12.21</u>	<u>9.0 To consider works to an Oak Tree in the old section of Snatts Road Cemetery</u> Members RESOLVED to agree for the Town Council to remove the branches and height of the oak tree in the old section of Snatts Road Cemetery to a height of 3.5metres and retain as wildlife monolith, with part of the wood being retained for relatives’ personal use, ecological wildlife areas, seating and birdboxes.	06.12.21	MF/HG	Works are scheduled for January 2022. An update will be provided for members at the next Full Council meeting.
<u>FC65.12.21</u>	<u>10.0 To consider the recommendations of the Wealden Parish Remuneration Panel on Town and Parish Councillor allowances for 2022/23</u> With ten votes in favour, and one member voting to abstain it was RESOLVED to freeze member allowances for 2022/23, and retain member allowances at the 2020-21 rate previously agreed by Uckfield Town Council (£1284.00 basic member allowance and £1773.00 for Chairman’s Allowance per annum respectively before tax).	06.12.21	SD/HG	This has been reflected in the 2022/23 budget. NFA.

<u>Resolution No.</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Date Raised</u>	<u>Action By</u>	<u>Date Complete</u>
<u>FC.67.12.21</u>	<p><u>12.0 To review the 2022/23 Proposal from East Sussex County Council on their Grass Verge Cutting Contract</u> With 11 votes in favour, members RESOLVED to advise East Sussex County Council that Uckfield Town Council would be selecting Option 2 for 2022/23: <i>Option 2 – Extra cuts: Parish/Town Councils may fund an additional four cuts to be carried out by ESCC, totalling six cuts (two standard and four extra) over the course of the year. This would cost the Parish/Town Council a total of £4,356 for the year.</i></p>	06.12.21	HG/MF	This has been reported to ES Highways. NFA.
<u>FC.69.12.21</u>	<p><u>22.0 To consider the removal of a sign used for flood notifications by the Environment Agency</u> With 12 votes in favour, members RESOLVED to support the Environment Agency's request to remove the sign from Uckfield High Street.</p>	06.12.21	HG	The Environment Agency have been notified of the resolution. NFA.

Meeting of the Full Council

Monday 17 January 2022

Agenda item 9.0

TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT BUDGET (2022/23) AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (2022/27) FOR WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 On 8 December 2021, Wealden District Council's Cabinet approved their draft budget for 2022/23 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2022/27 for public consultation. The deadline for providing a response falls on Thursday 20 January 2022.
- 1.2 This report provides members with a copy of the documents and consultation questions for consideration.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the content of the attached reports from Wealden District Council (in appendix B and C) and advise the Town Clerk of how they wish to respond.

Please note at the meeting itself members of Wealden District Council's Cabinet took the following decisions:

Decision:

- a) *To agree to consult that the Council increases its share of Council Tax by £5 (2.53%) for the year 2022/23;*
 - b) *To agree General Fund Revenue 2022-23 budget proposals, estimates for 2023-2027 and the General Fund Capital Programme for consultation with stakeholders;*
 - c) *Agree that the Council follow the Governments guidance on public sector pay to increase Officer salaries by 2.5% and increase the hourly rate for staff earning the national living wage to £9.50 per hour rate (effective from 1 April 2022);*
 - d) *To increase Members allowances by 2.5% for 2022-23;*
 - e) *To note the long- term risk across the MTFS 2022-27, particularly Business Rates and to lobby Government to deliver fairer funding;*
 - f) *To agree HRA Revenue 2022-23 budget proposals, estimates for 2023-2027 and the HRA Capital Programme for consultation with stakeholders; and*
 - g) *To approve the 2022-23 HRA rent increase of CPI + 1% in line with the Government's policy on rents for social housing.*
- 2.2 This consultation sets out Cabinet's consultation proposals for the 2022-23 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy ("MTFS") for 2022 to 2027 for the General Fund ("GF") and the Housing Revenue Account ("HRA"). The proposals are for consultation and Cabinet will consider the results of the consultation at its meeting in early February 2022 before making a budget recommendation to Full Council on 23 February 2022.

APPENDIX A

DRAFT WEALDEN DC BUDGET 2022/23 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022/27

2022/23 Budget

Q1 Do you support the Council setting a budget for 2022/23 with a £5 (2.53%) increase in Council Tax for Wealden's part of the Council Tax?

Yes

No

Not sure

Q2 Are there any areas where you think that the Council should spend **more** money in its 2022/23 budget?

Yes

No

Not sure

Q3 Are there any areas where you think that the Council should spend **less** money in its 2022/23 budget?

Yes

No

Not sure

Q4 Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the Council's 2022/23 budget proposal?

Yes

No

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-2027

Q5 Do you support the Council's proposed Medium Term Financial Strategy for the years to 2027 (based upon a balanced budget)?

Yes

No

Not sure

Q6 Over the medium term (up to 2027) are there any areas where you think that the Council should spend **more** money?

Yes

No

Not sure

Q7 Over the medium term (up to 2027) are there any areas where you think that the Council should spend less money?

Yes

No

Not sure

Title of Report: **2022-23 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-23 to 2026-27 – General Fund and Housing Revenue Account for consultation**

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date: **8 December 2021**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Bob Standley, Leader of the Council**
Cllr Ray Cade, Housing & Benefits

Purpose of Report

This report sets out Cabinet's consultation proposals for the 2022-23 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy ("MTFS") for 2022 to 2027 for the General Fund ("GF") and the Housing Revenue Account ("HRA"). The proposals are for consultation and Cabinet will consider the results of the consultation at its meeting in early February 2022 before making a budget recommendation to Full Council on 23 February 2022.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended:

- a) To agree to consult that the Council increases its share of Council Tax by £5 (2.53%) for the year 2022/23;
- b) To agree General Fund Revenue 2022-23 budget proposals, estimates for 2023-2027 and the General Fund Capital Programme for consultation with stakeholders;
- c) Agree that the Council follow the Governments guidance on public sector pay to increase Officer salaries by 2.5% and increase the hourly rate for staff earning the national living wage to £9.50 per hour rate (effective from 1 April 2022);
- d) To increase Members allowances by 2.5% for 2022-23;
- e) To note the long- term risk across the MTFS 2022-27, particularly Business Rates and to lobby Government to deliver fairer funding;
- f) To agree HRA Revenue 2022-23 budget proposals, estimates for 2023-2027 and the HRA Capital Programme for consultation with stakeholders; and
- g) To approve the 2022-23 HRA rent increase of CPI + 1% in line with the Government's policy on rents for social housing.

Reasons

The Council is required to set a balanced budget each year. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires the Council to estimate GF revenue expenditure and income for the forthcoming year from all sources, together with contributions from reserves, in order to determine a net budget requirement to be met by government grant, Business Rates and Council Tax.

For the HRA Council is required to set a balanced budget meaning that the Council must show in its financial planning that HRA income meets expenditure and that the HRA is consequently viable.

The GF and HRA estimates as detailed in the MTFFS 2022-23 to 2026-27 will form the basis for consultation with stakeholders.

Introduction

1. The Government's three-year spending review for 2022-23 to 2024-25 ("Spending Review 2021") announced by the Chancellor on 27 October 2021, is welcomed and represents the first return to multi-year statement since 2015. This multi-year review provides some longer-term financial certainty as to the headline level of funding the Government Departments will receive; however, uncertainty still exists with regard to:
 - Whether the three year settlement from the Treasury to Government Departments in the Spending Review, will translate into providing local authorities with a three-year settlement; and
 - The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, Government's fair funding review, business rates reform and the levelling up agenda.
2. No announcement was made in the Spending Review 2021 about the government's plans for funding reform or a reset of the Business Rates Retention (BRR) system, both of which were originally expected to be implemented in 2019/20, but which have been delayed a number of times.
3. The Council is required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to maintain a separate ring-fenced account for its Council housing landlord functions, this is called the HRA.
4. The purpose of the HRA is to provide the funding to enable Wealden to provide a housing service to those people in the District that need it. The HRA Business plan is a key contributor to the Council's overall aims and the Council's Housing Strategy. This Business Plan was updated during the summer of 2021 and the HRA budget/estimates included in the MTFFS broadly reflect this Business Plan. The Council has also fully embraced the Government priority of "fixing our broken housing market" by delivering new build Council Housing to contribute to diversification of the local housing market.

Budget setting 2022-23 and Estimates for 2023-24 to 2026-27

5. For 2022-23 to 2026-27 the Council has developed a MTFFS which covers both the GF and the HRA revenue budget and capital programmes (**Appendix A** to this report).
6. The Council's successful financial management to date has enabled the protection of core services for the people of Wealden while at the same time allowing the redirection of resources to the priority areas in the Corporate Plan, and the MTFFS 2022-23 to 2026-27 builds on this approach.

General Fund

7. The proposed GF revenue 2022-23 budget proposal and the estimates 2023-2027 is shown at Appendix 1 of the MTFFS, which includes:
 - An Officer salary pay increase of 2.5% and an increase in the hourly rate for staff earning the national living wage to £9.50 per hour rate (effective from 1 April 2022);

- Members allowances are increased by 2.5% for 2022-23; and
 - The Council's share of Council Tax for the year 2022-23 is increased by £5 (2.53%)*, followed by a £5 increase per annum from 2023-24.
- * The Secretary of State for DLUHC in a letter dated 28 October 2021 to all Council Leaders stated ".....for the purpose of the Spending Review 2021 settlement we are assuming the referendum threshold will be set at 2% per annum for Council Tax, with additional flexibility for social care authorities to be able to increase the Adult Social Care Precept by 1% per annum." It can therefore be interpreted that the referendum threshold for 2022-23 will remain unchanged i.e. set at the higher of 2% or £5.
8. Last year's GF revenue MTFs included a savings/additional income target of £0.5 million from 2022-23. It is pleasing to report that the work carried out by Officers in the current financial year have fully identified where these savings/income will be made (and hence no savings/additional target has been included in this year's MTFs – see Appendix 1). The Council's approach to achieving this target has centred on planning ahead, securing savings in advance, re-investing in more efficient ways of working and digital services, and adopting a more commercial approach whilst making careful use of reserves to meet funding gaps, and has sought to protect its core services that matter most.
 9. The proposed GF revenue 2022-23 budget proposal and the estimates 2023-2027 shown at Appendix 1 of the MTFs, are set within a context of uncertainty with regard to the Government's proposals and timescales for implementing the fair funding review and business rates retentions scheme. Indications coming out of Government is that there will be further delays in these reforms. Most notably on 8 November 2021, the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, appeared before the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee.
 10. Amongst the questions asked, the Minister was questioned on the timelines for the Fair Funding Review and the move to 75% Business Rates Retention. The Minister responded only on the subject of the move to 75% BRR, but his response could be considered possibly relevant to the Fair Funding Review also. He said that they were to proceed with caution regarding the move to 75% BRR, outlining that this is due to the areas with the "*most resilient council tax base also [having] the highest proportion of business rates*" this puts them "*relatively speaking in a stronger position*" and could mean an advantage "*relatively speaking in the South East*", *it is felt that this is "against the principle of levelling up"*.
 11. He then went on to say that the Department is looking to see what headroom it has for a redistribution to better reflect the additional needs of local government in those areas that don't have the same resilient council tax base or same level of business rates to draw upon, saying that "*It is not as crude as seeking to help local authorities in the North more than we are helping other local authorities, but if it had to be boiled down to a single sentence, then that is very much something that is in my mind*". Although he did immediately go on to reference the pressure faced by county councils.
 12. Therefore, whilst the response began with referencing 75% BRR, it would appear unlikely that a fair funding review would be implemented during a period where they are trying to move resources through headroom funding, with the term "not moving precipitously" used several times by the Minister.

13. An assessment has been undertaken as to the optimum level of General Fund Balances needed to meet the requirements of a working balance and contingency. This assessment has been informed by the financial risks set out in the MTFS and the Council's estimated exposure, likelihood and possible mitigation of these risks in the context of the Council's overall approach to risk management and internal financial controls. The Council's s151 Officer's conclusion of this risk assessment is that it is deemed prudent that General Fund reserves are maintained at around £2 million - £3 million. The GF revenue 2022-23 budget proposal and the estimates 2023-2027 shown at Appendix 1 of the MTFS, maintain General Fund Balances at this prudent level.
14. The proposed General Fund Capital Programme is shown at Appendix 2 of the MTFS. The programme includes a number of the Council's major projects totalling £24.7 million over the period of the MTFS. However, the full costings have not been reflected in the programme 2022-23 to 2026-27, because some of these projects are still being developed i.e. Hailsham Aspires, Knights Farm - Sports Park and Knights Farm - Employment Park.

Housing Revenue Account

15. The proposed HRA Revenue 2022-23 budget proposal and the estimates 2023-2027 are shown at Appendix 3, with the HRA Capital Programme at Appendix 4. Appendix 3 includes:
- An Officer salary pay increase of 2.5% and an increase in the hourly rate for staff earning the national living wage to £9.50 per hour rate (effective from 1 April 2022); and
 - HRA rent increase of CPI + 1% in line with the Government's policy on rents for social housing up to 2024-25 and thereafter increases are assumed at CPI.
16. The same assessment to set a prudent level of HRA Balances has been undertaken as described in paragraph 14 above. The Council's s151 Officer's conclusion of this risk assessment is that it is deemed prudent that HRA reserves are maintained at around £0.9 million - £1 million, over the period of the MTFS. The HRA revenue 2022-23 budget proposal and the estimates 2023-2027 shown at Appendix 3 of the MTFS, maintain HRA Balances around this prudent level.

Consultation

17. The Budget consultation will be undertaken with stakeholder groups including, but not limited to, the following:
- a) Business associations as required by Section 34 Local Government Finance Act 1988;
 - b) The public via the Council's website;
 - c) Parish and Town Councils;
 - d) Wealden Local Strategic Partnership;
 - e) Council staff through the Employee Consultative Group; and
 - f) HRA stakeholders.

Corporate Management Team Advice

18. Cabinet are recommended to :

- a) To agree to consult that the Council increases its share of Council Tax by £5, for the year 2022-23;
- b) To agree General Fund Revenue 2022-23 budget proposals. Estimates for 2023-2027 and the General Fund Capital Programme for consultation with stakeholders;
- c) Agree that the Council follow the Governments guidance on public sector pay to increase Officer salaries by 2.5% and increase the hourly rate for staff earning the national living wage to £9.50 per hour rate (effective from 1 April 2022);
- d) To increase Members allowances by 2.5% for 2022-23;
- e) To note the long-term risk across the MTFS 2022-2027, particularly Business Rates and to lobby Government to deliver fairer funding;
- f) To agree HRA Revenue 2022-23 budget proposals. Estimates for 2023-2027 and the HRA Capital Programme for consultation with stakeholders; and
- g. To approve the 2022-23 HRA rent increase of CPI + 1% in line with the Government's policy on rents for social housing.

Implications

Financial:

These are summarised within this report and detailed in the MTFS (GF and HRA) 2022-23 to 2026-2027 (**Appendix A** to this report)

Legal:

The Council is required to set a balanced budget each year. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires the Council to estimate GF revenue expenditure and income for the forthcoming year from all sources, together with contributions from reserves, in order to determine a net budget requirement to be met by government grant and Council Tax.

Under Section 76 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Council is required, in advance of the financial year, to formulate proposals which satisfy the requirement that, on certain stated assumptions the HRA Balance for that year does not show a debit balance. The Council is obliged to implement those proposals and from time to time to determine whether the proposals satisfy the 'break even' requirement. If not, then the Council shall make such provisions as are reasonably practicable towards securing that the proposals, as revised, shall satisfy the requirement.

Under Section 24 of the Housing Act 1985, the Council can make such reasonable charges as it determines for the tenancy or occupation of its houses. The council is obliged, from time to time, to review rents charged and make such changes, as circumstances may require. The Council may increase the rent for its tenants by giving no less than four weeks' notice, pursuant to section 103(4) of the Housing Act 1985.

Climate Change:

As the Council has declared a Climate Emergency, there will be costs associated with addressing this, where these are known they are built into the MTFS, for example £5 million in the HRA Capital Programme for decarbonisation works. In addition to these costs, it is anticipated that there will be further impact on the MTFS and therefore the Council has set aside earmarked reserves to finance climate change initiatives totalling £5 million (General Fund £1.1 million, and HRA £3.9 million), which demonstrates the Council's commitment to reducing the impact of climate change.

Human Resources:

The proposals on a provision for a staff pay award is included within the MTFS (**Appendix A** to this report), and increase Officer salaries by 2.5% and increase the hourly rate for staff earning the national living wage to £9.50 per hour rate (effective from 1 April 2022).

Other:

The budget underpins delivery of the Council's policies and priorities including in relation to:

- crime and disorder;
- environmental and sustainability areas, and
- Equality and diversity.

Consultation arrangements are identified in paragraph 17 of this report.

Contacts/ References:

Director	Trevor Scott
Head of Service	Laurence Woolven, Head of Finance
Report Author	Dave Baldam, Financial Services Manager (interim) Susie Allen, Principal Accountant
Contact Details	Dave.Baldam@wealden.gov.uk Susie.allen@wealden.gov.uk
Appendices	Appendix A - Medium Term Financial Strategy (General Fund and Housing Revenue Account) 2022-23 to 2026-27
Background Papers	None.
Published Reference documents	None
Key Decision	No
Exempt / Not for Publication	No

Appendix A

Medium Term Financial Strategy (General Fund and Housing Revenue Account)

2022-23 to 2026-27

Consultation Document

November 2020

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Forward

Welcome to this latest version of Wealden's General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy covering the period 2022-2027.

Wealden District Council ("The Council", "Wealden", "we", "our") is continuing to operate in an environment of uncertainty due to the on-going Covid-19 crisis. As a result financial planning is becoming increasingly complex, requiring multiple variables to be balanced in an environment of increasing uncertainty. Having a thorough understanding of the financial outlook and the associated impact on the organisation's ability to achieve its strategic objectives is an essential starting position for future planning and ensuring sustainability. Resources are becoming scarcer, which coupled with increasing pressures and demands on services, makes it more challenging to ensure that resources are effectively targeted.

This Medium Term Financial Strategy ("MTFS") sets out how the Council will use its financial resources to underpin the strategic priorities within the Corporate Plan, and builds on its track record of:

- Managing growth to meet future needs;
- Protecting and enhancing Wealden's unique rural character and environment;
- Supporting our local economy and local businesses;
- Generating sustainable sources of income to invest in local priorities; and
- Helping to improve connectivity and access to services for all our communities.

It is the Council's commitment to use the financial resources it employs over the coming years to make a positive difference to the area and its residents, and achieve value for money.

Since 2010 the Council, alongside the majority of other local authorities, has experienced unprecedented financial challenges in various forms and has had to adapt to:

- The impact of Central Government funding reductions;
- The Coronavirus ("Covid-19") pandemic which has reshaped the Council's services and changed the way Wealden's residents live, work and socialise;
- The local impacts of the economic crisis and Covid-19 pandemic affecting jobs, housing and business growth, which has in turn created pressure on the generation of local income streams and incurring additional costs;
- The national impacts of the economic crisis and Covid-19 pandemic on the financial markets and subsequent low returns on investments;
- The local impacts of the economic crisis and Covid-19 pandemic creating a rising demand, and increased cost pressures, for council services from customers who rely on the safety net provided by local government; and
- The impact of the vote to leave the EU and the consequent impact on the economic and political landscapes.

During this same period, the basis on which local government is funded has undergone radical reform, heralding a new era where local government is funded from local taxes with limited reliance on Central Government. This new methodology for funding local government is inextricably linked to the performance of the local economy via business rates, new homes bonus funding arrangements, council tax and local council tax reduction schemes, and Housing Revenue Account Self-Financing.

Each change to the funding brings new elements of uncertainty and volatility. However, it does present opportunities for local authorities with the freedom from and removal of reliance on Central Government and a key stake in the financial prosperity of its local economy. The Government's three-year spending review for 2022-23 to 2024-25 ("Spending Review 2021") announced by the Chancellor on 27 October 2021, is welcomed and represents the first return to multi-year statements since 2015. This multi-year review provides some longer-term financial certainty as to the headline level of funding Government Departments will receive; however, uncertainty still exists with regard to whether this will translate into providing local authorities with a three-year settlement, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, Government's fair funding review, business rates reform and the levelling up agenda.

In response to this environment the Council has delivered a track record of strong financial discipline. Planning ahead, undertaking a transformation programme which secures savings in advance, re-investing in more efficient ways of working, adopting a more commercial approach, whilst making careful use of reserves to meet funding gaps and mitigate risks, is an approach that has served the Council well.

The Council's successful financial management to date has enabled the protection of core services for the people of Wealden while at the same time allowing the redirection of resources to the priority areas in the Corporate Plan, and the MTFS 2022-23 to 2026-27 builds on this approach. This MTFS will be kept under constant review and will need to adapt in response to new risks and opportunities during this unprecedented period of uncertainty and change.

Laurence Woolven
Head of Financial Services (S151 Officer)

Section 1. Introduction

Background

The purpose of this MTFS is to set out the overall framework on which the Council draws together the strategic planning priorities, demand and resource forecasts and impact of the wider service delivery environment to produce a costed plan for the impact of proposed policies and plans on the longer-term financial sustainability of the Council. The MTFS pulls together in one place all known factors affecting the Council's financial position and financial sustainability over the medium term (i.e. over a five-year period).

In order to achieve its priorities the Council has a clear and robust financial strategy, which focuses on its long-term financial sustainability. The MTFS does this by balancing the financial implications of objectives and policies against constraints in resources and provides the basis for decisions to be made about its finances.

The MTFS integrates revenue allocations, savings targets, reserves and capital investment, and provides a budget for 2022-23 upon which the 2022-23 Council Tax level (General Fund) and rent levels (Housing Revenue Account("HRA")) are determined, and sets out the forecasts for the period 2023-24 to 2026-27.

Whilst the purpose of this MTFS is to provide a costed plan over the period 2022-23 to 2026-27, it must be recognised that this plan becomes more uncertain the further out in time the forecast moves. However, uncertainty is more of a reason to produce a MTFS as the identification of potential longer-term revenues and expenses and the key risks associated with those forecasts and income and expense streams provide valuable insight for the Council and aids decision-making.

The MTFS is a living document that forms the basis of the Council's fiscal strategy. Inevitably the Council's plans will need to evolve and develop in response to new financial opportunities and risks and new policy directions during the period of the Strategy and the dynamic nature of local government funding. Therefore, the Strategy will be reviewed on a regular basis and at least annually.

The MTFS is underpinned by a sound finance system, coupled with a solid internal control framework, sufficiently flexible to allow the Council to respond to changing demands over time and opportunities that arise.

Objectives

This MTFS seeks to achieve a number of specific objectives:

- Ensure the Council's limited resources are directed to achieving the vision and strategic priorities within the Council's Corporate Plan and HRA Business Plan;
- Ensure the Council maintains a sound and sustainable financial base, delivering a balanced budget over the life of the MTFS;
- Provide a range of good quality services that people expect, and offer excellent value for money;
- Deliver key projects that enhance quality of life and wellbeing across Wealden, thoughtfully generating reasonable income streams in line with our Commercial Strategy to achieve a financially stable and self-sufficient council;
- Maintain our measured, professional approach to managing the Council's finance and investments, and continue to develop our enterprise culture for the benefit of the District as a whole;
- Deliver more by working with partners, continue to extend our use of technology, minimise transaction costs and sustain customer satisfaction;

- Growing the Council Tax and Business Rates tax base, whilst ensuring that Council Tax rate increases are kept at an acceptable level;
- Ensure the Council maintains robust, but not excessive, levels of reserve and balances to address any future risks and unforeseen events without jeopardising key services and the delivery of outcomes; and
- Continue to manage down the Council's recurrent cost base, in line with reductions in overall resources by ensuring the provision of efficient, effective and economic services which demonstrate value for money.

Section 2. Context

In order to set the framework for the Council's approach to policy and financial planning it is important to understand the potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, economic conditions and overall national policy context, as well as the policy and delivery priorities for the Council over the MTFS period.

Local Priorities

This MTFS is central to identifying the Council's capacity to deliver its local priority outcomes and it reflects:

- The Council's current financial position and outlook.
- The Council's overall financial strategy, including use of reserves.
- Internal and external pressures which may influence the council's financial position.

The following sub-sections set out the local context and priorities, that we have had regard to in producing a costed plan over the period 2022-23 to 2026-27.

Wealden as a Place

Wealden is the largest local government district in East Sussex covering 323 square miles and has a population of 160,175¹. Half the population live in five main towns: Crowborough, Hailsham, Heathfield, Polegate and Uckfield. The rest live in villages and hamlets in some of the most attractive countryside in the South of England.

With two-thirds of the district covered by the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the South Downs National Park, as well as 41 conservation areas (33 of which are administered by the Council) and 2,241 listed buildings, Wealden has to place a high value on protecting the environment.

Wealden has 8,495 businesses, with small and micro businesses forming a fundamental part of the Wealden economy. 91.3% of Wealden's businesses employ fewer than 10 people².

The largest proportion of business enterprise in the District is in the Professional, Scientific & Technical category at 16.5% followed by construction at 14.5%³.

The most common age group within Wealden is those aged 50-64 years old (22%). Just under a quarter (23%) of the population is traditional retirement age or above (65+).

Three quarters (78%) of Wealden residents own their home; more (44%) own it outright than do through a mortgage (34%).

90% of Wealden residents are happy with where they live, and 76% happy with the way the Council is run – nationally the figures are 79% and 61% respectively.

Financially Stable and Self-sufficient Council

To avoid cuts to services, the Council continues to explore alternative options of service delivery to ensure that services remain fit for purpose in the context of smaller budgets. This may mean revisiting the expectations of residents in order to protect services for the most vulnerable. It is also an opportunity to work with partners and neighbouring authorities to maintain and improve outcomes against a backdrop of reducing public spending.

¹ ONS 2018 mid-year estimate

² ONS/Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) 2019

³ ONS/Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) 2019

A key component of the Council being financially stable and self-sufficient, is the Council's Commercial Strategy, which provides a framework for activities that:

- Form an essential part of the solution to the funding gap, which has arisen due to public sector budget cuts, a restructuring of how local authorities are funded and increasing demographic pressures;
- Potentially lead to the generation of disposable income, to provide additional resource to meet the Council's ambitions and statutory duties for Wealden as set out in other strategies and plans; and
- Deliver functions, services and outputs that bring benefits to local people and in doing so helps meet Corporate Plan objectives.

Partners and the Community

In line with the values from the Corporate Plan to “deliver more by working with partners”, the Council continues to work with those partners, as well as service users and our communities, to protect and deliver services in new ways:

- *Parish and Town Councils* - have been proactive in identifying services important to their local communities and working with the District Council and other bodies on local priorities. For example, Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish Council has agreed to commit funding towards a proposed community facility in conjunction with a new doctors' surgery to be built with funding by Wealden District Council;
- *The voluntary sector* - has also been keen to deliver services with 16 organisations operating service level agreements with the Council in 2020-21 with £0.257 million of Council funding;
- *Wealden Strategic Partnership* - is a non-statutory, multi-agency body, which matches Wealden District Council boundaries, and brings together the different parts of the public, private, community & voluntary, and special interest sectors to work to help improve the life of the residents of Wealden;
- *Safer Wealden Partnership* - brings together a number of agencies from the public, private, education and voluntary sector to improve people's lives in the area by working together to reduce the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour and to manage the fear of crime;
- *East Sussex Strategic Partnership* - brings together different parts of our local community – public services, local businesses, community groups, voluntary sector organisations and local people. The Partnership helps organisations and individuals work together in a co-ordinated way to plan local services, tackle the issues that matter to local people and improve quality of life in East Sussex; and
- *Sussex Weald Homes Limited* - An initiative to contribute towards the self-financing objective was the Council setting up Sussex Weald Homes Limited in December 2017, a 100% owned subsidiary to build properties that will be rented or sold to the Council and privately, and acquisition of commercial properties.

Corporate Plan 2019-23

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out our direction and priorities for the next four years, building on our previous Plan 2015-19.

The Council's vision for the future is:

“Shaping Wealden as a District which offers a fulfilling and worthwhile quality of life for our residents, a thriving and prosperous place for businesses where local people and visitors can enjoy the outstanding beauty and heritage of our landscape and environment. We will continue to chart a course for the District founded on lean, efficient principles, based on sound business management with a considered approach to investment and income generation. In a post- EU Exit, the Council will play its part in achieving strong, self-reliant and vibrant conditions for the wellbeing of our residents, our businesses and our environment.”

We will continue to work with our partners to support Wealden's communities, environment and economy with:

- Engaged, resilient, active communities;
- Access to suitable housing, local jobs, services, facilities, leisure and recreational opportunities;
- Sustainable economic growth; and
- Sound business management.

We aim to:

- Protect and enhance Wealden's high quality natural environment and heritage;
- Promote a better quality of life for Wealden people through activities that improve health, resilience and well-being;
- Improve access to essential services for all our communities;
- Ensure development meets future needs, with associated investment in infrastructure;
- Take advantage of opportunities to promote new, cleaner technologies;
- Work with partners to regenerate our diverse market towns, creating jobs and attracting investment;
- Support our local businesses and entrepreneurs to achieve a locally sustainable economy; and
- Generate ongoing sources of income to reinvest in local priorities and optimise funding from external sources.

Our strategic priorities for Wealden over 2019-23 cover four themes:

1. Communities

We want people in Wealden's communities to have the opportunity to enjoy an excellent quality of life through:

- Active, healthy and fulfilling lifestyles;
- Access to good health care;
- Safe environments for all ages;
- Positive democratic engagement;
- Strong community leadership;
- Skills that match local opportunities and worthwhile jobs;
- Thriving community clubs, sport, recreation and leisure; and
- Good housing local people can afford, in places they want to live.

2. Environment

We are steadfast in our duty and desire to protect Wealden's beautiful landscape. We want people in Wealden to be able to access and enjoy the outstanding natural beauty and heritage of our landscape and environment, including conservation areas. Also, for residents to live in good quality housing that integrates harmoniously.

Key strands:

- Planned growth that respects our environment;
- Ongoing improvements to infrastructure;

- Working with partners for more renewable energy use;
- Securing sustainable growth in our towns and villages;
- Accessible open spaces close to homes and workplaces;
- Increased action within communities to improve the environment;
- Harnessing our natural resources for sustainable rural enterprise;
- Valuing our green spaces and biodiversity assets;
- Conserving and enhancing the character of our rural areas; and
- Managing the street scene.

3. Local economy

We want Wealden businesses, communities and residents to thrive and prosper in the District. We are committed to planning and promoting opportunities for sustainable growth through:

- Vibrant town centres and villages;
- Business innovation in a green environment;
- Promoting Wealden as a tourist destination;
- Stimulating high quality tourism experiences;
- Better broadband, 4G and 5G connectivity;
- Appropriate employment spaces;
- Leveraging funding into the District;
- Working with the South East Local Enterprise Partnership;
- Supporting local businesses, the Chambers of Commerce & the Federation of Small Businesses; and
- Re-balancing the housing market to reflect local needs.

4. Sound business management

Wealden will continue to be a well-run Council, well thought of and respected by our residents, peers and partners.

We will:

- Provide the range of good quality services that people expect, and offer excellent value for money;
- Deliver key projects that enhance quality of life and wellbeing across Wealden, thoughtfully generating reasonable income streams in line with our Commercial Strategy to achieve a financially stable and self-sufficient council;
- Maintain our measured, professional approach to managing the Council's finance and investments, and continue to develop our enterprise culture for the benefit of the District as a whole; and
- Deliver more by working with partners continue to extend our use of technology, minimise transaction costs and sustain customer satisfaction.

National Priorities

The following sub-sections set out the national priorities, that we have had regard to in producing a costed plan over the period 2022-23 to 2026-27.

Covid-19

The continuing priority for Central Government is providing businesses and individuals with financial support during the Covid-19 pandemic (and administered by Council's), and protecting vulnerable people.

The significant levels of public sector debt as a result of Central Government spending to support the economy during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as lower tax receipts, will need to be repaid and could lead to significant reductions in grant funding over the medium term. However, the successful vaccine rollout has allowed the economy to reopen largely on schedule despite continuing high numbers of coronavirus cases, and the stronger economic recovery has also helped to reduce the fiscal cost of pandemic-related support.

Housing, Infrastructure and Other Services

The Government's ambition is to increase the numbers of new homes built to 300,000 per annum by the middle of the 2020s.

In March 2020 the Government announced a wide breadth of measures in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ("MHCLG") briefing paper 'Planning for the Future', to provide local authorities with greater funding for infrastructure, ensuring that those who strive to build enough homes for their communities and make the most of brownfield land and urban areas are able to access sufficient resources. These measures included:

- Investing another £1.1 billion in local infrastructure to unlock almost 70,000 new homes;
- A new £10 billion Single Housing Infrastructure Fund; and
- Reforming the New Homes Bonus ("NHB") to reward delivery

Following the briefing paper, MHCLG (now known as DLUHC) issued a consultation white paper in August 2020, which covered a package of proposals for reform of the planning system in England, covering plan-making, development management, development contributions, and other related policy proposals. The consultation has proposed to replace the Community Infrastructure Levy ("CIL") and Section 106 planning obligations with a new consolidated Infrastructure Levy, which is charged as a fixed proportion of development value above a set threshold. The Secretary of State for DLUHC in a letter dated 28 October 2021 to all Council Leaders stated; *"I am reviewing planning reforms and an announcement on next steps will be made in due course. The Government is committed to improving the planning system, which we are delivering through a new digital system that provides more certainty and better outcomes for the environment, growth and quality of design. The additional £65m announced is critical to achieving this vision."*

The Spending Review 2021, on 27 October 2021 included announcements on the following policies and programmes that are relevant to local authorities:

- Investing in growth - through a range of changes to the taxation system and by increasing capital DEL expenditure on research and development from £14.8bn in 2021-22 to £20.0bn in 2024-25; through further investment in infrastructure across road, rail, digital and locally; and by a package of additional measures aimed at boosting skills.
- Supporting people and businesses - through a range of measures, including reducing the taper on Universal Credit from 63% to 55% and a 6.6% increase to the National Living Wage (NLW), to £9.50 an hour, starting on 1 April 2022. There will be adjustments to business rates, including a temporary relief of £1.7bn across 400,000 retail, hospitality and leisure properties in 2022/23, a freeze on the business rates multiplier for 2022-23 and a new business rates relief for investment in property improvements from 2023.

- Building back greener - through measures aimed at reducing transport as an emitter of greenhouse gases; extending efforts to reduce greenhouse contributions from buildings; supporting decarbonisation of energy and industry through new technologies and protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
- Levelling up - with the government publishing a Levelling Up White Paper by the end of the year, setting out in more detail the framework and next steps towards levelling up opportunities and boosting livelihoods across the country. The Spending Review 2021 has also announced the first £1.7 billion of allocations through the Levelling Up Fund.

HRA: On 29 October 2018, the government confirmed that the HRA borrowing cap was abolished with immediate effect. As a result, local authorities with an HRA are no longer constrained by government controls over borrowing for housebuilding and are able to borrow against their expected rental income, in line with the Prudential Code.

Local Government Funding

The Government's aim through funding reforms (i.e. localised business rates) is to significantly reduce reliance on central grants (i.e. Revenue Support Grant) and move councils to be self-financing. This has required council's to focus on more local self-sufficiency through other forms of local income generation, such as:

- Council Tax rate increases, within prescribed referendum limits;
- Increases to fees and charges;
- Widening the scope of fees and charges by introducing charges for services not previously charged for;
- Increasing trading activities to generate surpluses for reinvestment, including the establishment of trading companies; and
- Look at ways of commercialising existing services and seeking opportunities to 'sell' goods and services externally.

The Spending Review 2021 included the following announcement for local government headline funding:

- An average real-terms increase of 3% a year in core spending power.

Technology

- COVID-19 has reaffirmed how crucial modern technology can be to enabling the delivery of local public services. The Government will therefore be making an additional £37.8 million available to help improve and maintain cyber resilience in local authorities.

Housing

- Investment was announced in affordable housing, with £1.8bn added, with a view to delivering £10bn of investment during the Parliament, and 1m new homes in the SR21 period. Of this, £300m will be distributed to local authorities (and mayoral combined authorities) to support the development of smaller brownfield sites.
- Adjustments were announced to the regime for Right to Buy receipts. Authorities will now be allowed to spend these over a longer timeframe (increasing to five years from three years), to pay up to 40% of the cost of a new home (up from 30%), and to allow them to be used for shared ownership and First Homes.
- By 2024/25, an additional £639m will have been committed to rough sleeping. The Rough Sleeping Initiative and Homelessness Prevention Grant will be continued.

Planning

- £65m to 'digitise' the planning system.

Other Funding

- Funding of £38m was also made available to support authorities with cyber security and £35m to “strengthen local delivery and transparency”, though some of this will be required to set up the new Audit Reporting and Governance Authority (ARGA) as a new system leader for local audit.
- £560m was announced for youth services, and £850m over the SR period for “cultural and heritage infrastructure”.
- No statements are made about the Better Care Fund.

Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Retention Scheme

The fair funding review aims to provide updated formulas for assessing councils’ spending needs, and it will change how central grants are distributed between councils. The original intention of Government was for the outcomes of the fair funding review to be implemented alongside the introduction of 75% business rate retention. However, it is still uncertain if and when the funding review and the introduction of 75% business rate retention will happen, especially in the context of the levelling the up agenda, whereby the impact of any reforms need to be seen to be taking account of the principle of levelling up across the different regions of local government.

Fundamental Review of Business Rates

In the Budget 2020 (11 March 2020), Central Government published the terms of reference for a fundamental review of the business rates system to be carried out by HM Treasury. This review is wide-ranging: it will consider all elements of the current system, as well as exploring the potential strengths and weaknesses of alternative property and online taxes put forward as possible replacements for rates, as recommended by the Treasury Select Committee in its report of 31 October 2019. The review’s final conclusions were published in a report dated October 2021, and were included in the Spending Review 2021 announcements. The report main conclusions were:

- The government does not intend to abolish business rates, though the review states that the government will launch a consultation on an Online Sales Tax.
- There will be a further freeze of the business rates multiplier for 2022/23 (following a freeze for 2021-22).
- An extension of the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure relief through 2022/23 (this time at 50% lower than the 66% currently applicable, with a cash cap of £110,000 – up from the £105,000 cap applicable in 2021-22). The government anticipates that the relief will cost £1.7bn nationally in 2022-23.
- After the next revaluation in 2023, revaluations will take place every three years. The delay to 2023 of the next revaluation means that there is currently a gap in the Transitional Relief and Supporting Small Business schemes, and so these have been extended for 2022-23. A consultation on the Transitional Relief scheme for the 2023 revaluation will be carried out in 2022.
- There will also be a new relief introduced from 2023, which will allow businesses to benefit from 100% relief for 12-months from when they make improvements to a hereditament. There will be a consultation on this prior to implementation, and then it will be reviewed after five years. A relief will also be introduced for plant and machinery used in onsite renewable energy generation and storage.

The above could lead to big changes in the design and yield of the tax, which would matter greatly for local government given that it currently contributes around 30% of non-schools revenues. However, all of these measures (additional reliefs, multiplier freeze, and revaluations) have historically been implemented with a view to ensuring a neutral impact on local government finance, with s31 grants provided (or top up/tariff adjustments, in the case of revaluation) to cover the costs involved. There is no reason to believe that this would change for these announcements, but this is risk to the Council’s level of resources.

Covid-19 Pandemic

The impact of Coronavirus (“Covid-19”) pandemic on the Council was first felt towards the end of March 2020, and continues to have an effect in the 2021-22 financial year but to a lesser degree. In 2021-22, the Council’s substantial losses that occurred in 2020-21 across many of its largest streams of income building control fees, commercial rents and licensing fees, have abated. This is mainly due to successful rollout of the vaccine programme and easing of restrictions. However, the Council is still experiencing lower collection rates for council tax and business rates, and although the position has improved since the rollout of the vaccine and ending of lockdown restrictions, the impact could still lead to an increase in the write off arrears or increased debt provision.

On the expenditure front, some of the key areas of additional pressure that continue include accommodation and support for rough sleepers – some of whom may not have required our support previously and support our vulnerable residents. Whilst Central Government has provided funding for these areas it does not cover all the financial pressures.

It is uncertain if these losses will continue over the period of the MTFS (i.e. 2022-23 to 2026-27), in addition to the potential adverse impact on the growth of the council and business rate tax base.

At the end of 2020/21, the Government announced that the sales, fees and charges scheme (which refunds 75% of eligible income loss beyond a 5% threshold) would be extended on a pro-rata basis into the first three months of 2021-22. In addition, Wealden received £0.671 million of unringfenced Covid grant funding. It is currently unclear if this funding the Council will continue into 2022-23.

The Council has sought in recent years to build up the General Fund reserve balance to ensure the Council is financially resilient.

Economic and Fiscal Climate

It is important to note up front that the next few years are particularly uncertain economically and fiscally. There are a number of questions where definitive answers cannot be provided. How high will unemployment rise, how quickly and fully will the economy recover, and what will this mean for councils’ revenues? To what extent will changes in service provision made in an effort to control the Covid-19 pandemic continue, and what will this imply for service delivery costs?

The Public sector finances are increasingly coming under pressure, due to the significant increase in government spending to support the economy during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as lower tax receipts. The Office for Budget Responsibility’s (“OBR’s”) Economic and fiscal outlook, published on 27 October 2021 (alongside the Spending Review 2021) paints a better picture than was original forecast, however challenges do lie ahead with the following forecasts/expectations:

- The economy is now expected to grow by 6.5% in 2021 (2.4% faster than OBR predicted in March);
- Unemployment to rise only modestly to 5¼% this winter (1¼% lower than March), which helps the budget deficit to almost halve to £183 billion in 2021-22 (£51 billion lower than March);
- Inflation peaking at close to 5% next year, and it could hit the highest rate seen in the UK for three decades;
- Revised up nominal GDP⁴⁵ - the key driver of tax revenues - by 4.1% in 2025-26 relative to March;
- While higher inflation also boosts public spending, overall the pre-measures forecast for borrowing is lower by £38 billion a year on average relative to OBR March forecast;
- Borrowing reached a peacetime record of £320 billion (15.2% of GDP) in 2020-21, but was £35 billion (1.7% of GDP) lower than we estimated in March; and

⁴ GDP measures the total value of all of the goods made, and services provided, during a specific period of time

- Borrowing falls back below £100 billion next year, declining more slowly thereafter to stabilise at around £44 billion (1.5% of GDP) in the medium term.

The economic and interest forecast⁶ by the Council's Treasury Management Advisors, Arlingclose, highlights the follows:

- The global economy continues to recover from the pandemic but has entered a more challenging phase. The resurgence of demand has led to the expected rise in inflationary pressure, but disrupted factors of supply are amplifying the effects, increasing the likelihood of lower growth rates ahead. This is particularly apparent in the UK due to the impact of the exit from the EU.
- Inflation rose to 3.2% in August. A combination of factors will drive this to over 4% in the near term. While the transitory factors affecting inflation, including the low base effect of 2020 are expected to unwind over time, the MPC has recently communicated fears that these transitory factors will feed longer-term inflation expectations that require tighter monetary policy to control. This has driven interest rate expectations substantially higher.
- Arlingclose expects Bank Rate to rise in Quarter 2 of 2022.

⁶ Source: Economic and Interest Rate Forecast, October 2020, Arlingclose

Section 3. General Fund Revenue

Spending Plans

This MTFS is central to identifying the Council's financial capacity to deliver its vision and strategic priorities within the Corporate Plan 2019-23, and requires a balance to be struck between the need to support the delivery of the vision with the need to maintain a sustainable financial position. Striking the correct balance between these two requirements becomes ever more difficult in the challenging financial context in which the Council operates. This is compounded by Government funding reductions, the continuing impact of Covid-19, and the localised business rates funding which is subject to uncertainty and volatility.

The Council's Corporate Plan is supported by a programme of work containing a range of projects that will meet each of the four strategic themes. In the absence of any new Government funding and in the context of the continuing impact of Covid-19, general cost pressures, and savings underpinning the MTFS, the resources to finance these projects have been made possible by allowing the redirection of resources to the priority areas as well as seeking external financial support in the form of grants and contributions.

It should be noted that the full financial implications of a number of major projects i.e. Hailsham Aspires, Crowborough Leisure Centre - Teaching Pool, Knights Farm - Sports Park and Knights Farm - Employment Park, have not been reflected in the costed General Fund Revenue Summary and Capital Programme 2022-23 to 2026-27, because these projects are still being developed. At the point when a full business case has been assessed and finalised to demonstrate that the capital investment is affordable and sustainable, the full revenue and capital implications will be built into future iterations of the MTFS.

Climate Change

As the Council has declared a Climate Emergency, there will be costs associated with addressing this, where these are known they are built into the MTFS, for example £5 million in the HRA Capital Programme for decarbonisation works. In addition to these costs, it is anticipated that there will be further impact on the MTFS and therefore the Council has set aside earmarked reserves to finance climate change initiatives totalling £5 million (General Fund £1.1 million, and HRA £3.9 million), which demonstrates the Council's commitment to reducing the impact of climate change.

The UK Environment Bill 2021 received royal assent on 9 November 2021. This Bill covers a wide range of changes including expanding the responsibility for recyclable waste. This could have a significant impact on the Council's General Fund Revenue and Capital Programme. However, the detail of the Bill and how this affects local authorities is not known at this time to say what this impact would be. Once the detail is known the financial implications will need to be assessed and appropriate funding identified.

Spending Pressures

A review of the financial pressures facing the Council over the period of the MTFS has been undertaken. This information has been drawn from a Star Chamber budget challenge process involving members of the Council's corporate management team, heads of service and budget holders. This challenge process had regard to the experience of previous years, the current economic climate and local and national issues that are likely to influence the financial outcomes.

Inflation – Pay and Prices

The General Fund MTFS follows the Spending Review 2021 announcement on public sector pay to increase Officer salaries by 2.5% and increase the hourly rate for staff earning the national living wage to £9.50 per hour rate.

Thereafter an allowance has been included for a 2% pay award for staff in 2023-24 to 2026-27, plus an estimate of staff increments. The pay award 2022-23 is subject to being agreed and the General Fund MTFS will be updated following the decision if required.

Automatic inflationary increases of budgets are not provided for all goods and services, instead individual inflation rates have been applied for specific items of expenditure (i.e. contracts), all remaining areas of expenditure are maintained at the previous year's levels, which is in effect a real terms reduction in spending power.

Revenue implications of the General Fund Capital Programme

In section 4. 'General Fund Capital Programme', the expenditure for major projects (where known) such as Hailsham Aspires – phase 1, Crowborough Leisure Centre Teaching Pool and the development phase of Knight's Farm – Sports Park and Employment Park, and the loan to Sussex Weald Homes Ltd, has been built into general fund capital programme. This has the following implications for the General Fund – revenue.

- *Interest Payable on External Loans*
Capital expenditure totalling £10.985 million is anticipated to be funded from borrowing and the interest payable associated with this additional borrowing has been built into the MTFS.
- *Minimum Revenue Provision ("MRP")*
As detailed in the Council's Capital Strategy, which will be considered for approval in February 2022, the method of charging MRP⁷ will reflect the repayment profile of how the benefits of assets financed by borrowing are consumed over their useful life. MRP however, is only charged once an asset becomes operational, and for the Council's major projects this is expected to be towards the end of the MTFS period or beyond.
- *Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue*
Increases in the amount of revenue being used to fund the capital programme are partly negated on the General Fund through the contribution from S106, CIL and earmarked reserves i.e. Capital Investment Fund.

Resources

Business Rates

The MTFS has assumed that Wealden will continue being part of the existing East Sussex Business Rates Pool based on a 50% rate retention, over the period 2022-23 to 2026-27, the agreement to pool is one that is reviewed on an annual basis.

At budget setting 2021-22, business rates for 2022-23 were estimated to be £3.1 million, this has improved significantly since then to an estimated £5.3 million. This increase is due to the anticipated reset of business rates from 2023-24 as opposed to in 2022-23 (delayed from 2020-21). This delay is consistent with recent announcements by DLUHC. However this delay is not certain and is not expected to be confirmed until early December 2021. As part of the reset, the Council will lose any growth it has built up since the last baseline reset in 2013-14. In effect, the Council has benefitted from keeping its growth since 2013, and this reset redistributes the growth. This is a result of how the current redistribution system was designed and implemented in 2013.

The MTFS currently reflects our predicted worst case scenario, as there a number of unknowns that may occur between now and 2023-24 including the reset being delayed further (post 2023-24), the government giving some form of transitional relief to those who lose out and also the impact of the fair funding review and any impact this may have on the reform of the business rates system. The estimates will be reviewed throughout the remainder of this year and through next year ahead of setting the budget for 2023-24.

As part of the measures put in place to help councils during the Covid-19 pandemic the Government announced additional legislation in early November, the Local Authorities (Collection Fund: Surplus and Deficit) (Coronavirus) (England) Regulations 2020, which allows councils to spread the

⁷ MRP is statutory requirement for a Council to make a charge to its General Fund to make provision for the repayment of the Council's capital borrowing

estimated 2021-22 collection fund surplus/deficit equally across the next three years. The business rates estimate within the MTFS takes this into account.

Council Tax

The Council's main income stream is from Council Tax. The Localism Act 2011 introduced a power for residents to approve or veto excessive council tax increases. This means that any local authority setting an excessive increase as set by the Secretary of State would trigger a referendum of all registered electors in their area. The 2% referendum threshold for 2022-23 was highlighted in the Spending Review 2021. DLUHC will set out full details of the council tax referendum principles as part of the consultation on the detailed methodology for the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022-23, which is anticipated in December 2021.

In light of the financial position of the Council and mindful of the potential referendum thresholds the MTFS assumes the following indicative council tax increases and subsequent overall yields:

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-26
Band D Council Tax	£202.44	£207.44	£212.44	£217.44	£222.44
Band D Increase (£)	£5.00	£5.00	£5.00	£5.00	£5.00
Band D Increase (%)	2.53%	2.47%	2.41%	2.35%	2.30%
Council Tax Base (Number of Properties) for Tax Setting Purposes	66,729.20	67,129.20	67,629.20	68,129.20	68,629.20
Council Tax Income Estimate - Demand on the Collection Fund	£13.508m	£13.925m	£14.367m	£14.814m	£15.265m

The tax base estimate has been produced based on the Council Tax Base ("CTB1") return completed in September 2021 and adjusted for loss of collection and estimated new builds coming on board in 2022-23. This will be calculated in accordance with legislation in December 2021 and the MTFS will be updated if required.

Actual council tax increases will be decided on an annual basis taking into account financial circumstances of the Council at the time and the level of resources available. Annual increases remain subject to the decision of both Cabinet and Council.

Revenue Support Grant ("RSG")

The core grant funding from Government is known as RSG. This MTFS assumes zero RSG in line with government announcements of the intention to remove all core grant.

Central and Specific Grants

Currently, the number of grants received by the Council from Government is very limited. Within the revenue budget we receive a small amount of Rural Services Delivery Grant, and a decreasing amount of New Homes Bonus ("NHB") which is used to fund the General Fund Capital Programme.

As set out in the National Priorities section above, there are a number of Government reviews that will change how central grants are distributed between councils i.e. reforming the NHB to reward delivery and the fair funding review which aims to provide updated formulas for assessing councils' spending needs. When the outcome of these reviews are known the implications for Wealden and the MTFS will be determined.

Within some services there are specific grants such as the Homelessness Grant and Housing Benefit & Council Tax Benefit Administration, which are ring-fenced grants and can only be used for clearly defined purposes.

Fees and Charges

The fees and charges levied by the Council are an important source of income. The fees and charges levied include planning fees, garden waste collection and building control.

It is normal practice for the Council to review fees and charges annually and propose revised and new charges from 1 April each year. This will include the development of any policies in respect of discounts and concessions. As part of the annual review, all fees and charges are considered.

The fees and charges are approved separately from this MTFS as part of the February round of budget setting for the forth-coming year. Any impact on income budgets arising from these fees and charges are reflected in the income budgets included in this MTFS.

Bridging the gap

Last year's General Fund MTFS included a savings/additional income target of £0.5 million from 2022-23, which has been fully met (and hence no savings/additional target has been included in this year's MTFS – see **Appendix 1**). The Council's approach to achieving this target has centred on planning ahead, securing savings in advance, re-investing in more efficient ways of working and digital services, and adopting a more commercial approach whilst making careful use of reserves to meet funding gaps, and has sought to protect its core services that matter most.

General Fund Revenue Budget and Forecast

Based on the preceding financial objectives, underlying principles, national and local priorities, savings targets, spending pressures and resources assumptions, **Appendix 1** provides a five-year (2022-23 to 2026-27) General Fund revenue estimate for the Council.

As highlighted earlier the full costings (i.e. capital financing implications, and operating costs and income) of the Council's major projects have not been reflected in the General Fund Revenue Budget and Forecast 2022-23 to 2026-27, because some projects are still being developed i.e. Hailsham Aspires, Crowborough Leisure Centre - Teaching Pool, Knights Farm - Sports Park and Knights Farm - Employment Park.

Risks to the General Fund Revenue Budget and Forecast

The Council has adopted a corporate approach to risk management, and financial risk management is integrated into the Council's overall management and decision-making processes.

A number of key high-level risks have been identified which could have a positive impact that could yield additional resources, but conversely some risks may have a negative impact and result in a reduction of resources. These key risks are action planned and continually reviewed as the MTFS develops.

The main areas the key risks cover are:

- Future impact of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- Fluctuations in the Business Rates tax base;
- Future changes to the retained Business Rates system;
- Future levels of Central Government funding;
- Impact of current economic climate on both demand for services and income streams;
- Changes to other key external funding sources;
- Changes to other key assumptions within the MTFS; and
- Financial and budget management issues.

These risks form part of our financial risk assessment, Officers will continually monitor and appraise these risks as part of the on-going financial management.

Section 4. General Fund Capital Programme

The Council's approach to determining and funding its investment programmes is set out in the Council's Capital Strategy, which explains the Council's financial framework for capital investment in support of its strategic priorities. The General Fund Capital Programme covers all aspects of capital expenditure within the Council, with the exception of the Council's housing stock, and includes external capital investment that assists in achievement of the Council's Strategic Priorities.

General Fund Capital Priorities

The Capital Programme is made up of a number of rolling programmes which include repairs, maintenance and improvement programmes to car parks, leisure centres and open spaces, as well as continuing investment in IT and Digital services, and waste containers.

In addition to this, the programme includes a number of major projects that the Council is embarking on:

- Hailsham Aspires - phase 1;
- Mayfield Community and Health Centre;
- Crowborough Leisure Centre - Teaching Pool;
- Knights Farm - Sports Park; and
- Knights Farm - Employment Park.

The total of these major projects total £24.7 million over the period of the MTFS. However, as highlighted earlier the full costings have not been reflected in the Capital Programme 2022-23 to 2026-27, because some of these projects are still being developed i.e. Hailsham Aspires, Knights Farm - Sports Park and Knights Farm - Employment Park.

Indicative allowances have been included within the capital programme to support an additional £2.185 million of borrowing in excess of the allocations within the existing approved programme over the period bringing the total borrowing up to £10.985 million, and this position will be reviewed as the capital programme is developed.

Any capital investment decision will have implications for the revenue budget. The revenue costs over the lifetime of each proposed capital project are considered when the project is being developed to ensure that the impact can be incorporated within the Council's financial plans and to demonstrate that the capital investment is affordable. Revenue implications may include the costs associated with supporting additional borrowing as well as any changes to the running costs associated with the asset or wider benefits to the Council such as the delivery of on-going revenue budget savings or additional income through the generation of business rates, lease income and council tax.

Resources

The resources necessary to fund the Council's General Fund Capital Programme are fully identified in **Appendix 2**, and are summarised below.

Capital receipts

The Council holds a balance of capital receipts from the disposal of land and buildings. These can only be used to fund capital expenditure unless permission is sought from the Secretary of State to use them for a set of specific revenue purposes such as transformation purposes.

The generation of capital receipts can help to provide resources to support additional capital investment or can help to reduce the borrowing requirement and therefore the cost to the revenue budget. Capital receipts totalling £4.794 million have been included within the MTFS projections. The assumes that the Council will generate £1 million capital receipts from asset sales over the period of the MTFS, or identify other sources of capital funding. The achievement of this target will be closely monitored by the Council's Asset Management Group, and the Council's Corporate

Management Team. If additional capital receipts are generated over and above this target, this would provide the Council with the flexibility to consider the introduction of additional projects to the capital programme or the ability to reduce the borrowing requirement.

Grants and Contributions

The Council continues to explore external funding possibilities when developing capital projects to minimise the borrowing requirement as far as possible. Within the MTFS, assumptions have been made around the level of external funding in the future but detailed work programmes will not be committed to until the allocations have been confirmed. Projects and investment plans may therefore be re-prioritised depending on the availability of external funding.

In the capital programme we are anticipating (or have already) to secure external contributions to support a number of project, details of which can be seen in **Appendix 2**.

Grants incorporated in the capital programme are the NHB (£0.370 million) and the Disabled Facilities Grant (“DFG”) (£5 million). The continuation of the DFG and the amount has not yet been confirmed, and there is a risk that this funding will reduce, however, even without this grant we have a legal obligation to deliver a number of adaptations to some of our residents and would therefore have to look at other sources of funding to support this.

A number of capital schemes are being funded by CIL (£9 million in total) i.e. Knights Farm – Employment Park and Crowborough Leisure Centre – Teaching Pool.

Council Resources

The Council uses revenue (referred to as ‘Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue’) to fund some projects in the capital programme. However, the impact of this is partly negated on the General Fund through a contribution from earmarked reserves i.e. Capital Investment Fund, and income i.e. CIL and S106.

Borrowing

The basic principle of the Prudential System is that local authorities are free to borrow so long as their capital spending plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. The Council will need to meet the whole of the capital financing costs associated with any level of extra borrowing through its revenue account. These financing costs cover MRP and interest. The use of prudential borrowing will be as a funding mechanism for some key projects i.e. Hailsham Aspires (following a full financial assessment), and may be used as a short-term measure to fund capital expenditure prior to a capital receipt being received i.e. for the loan to Sussex Weald Homes. The MTFS includes a prudential borrowing requirement of £10.985 million over the period 2022-23 to 2026-27.

In March, Central Government launched a consultation on reforms to the Public Works Loan Board (“PWLB”) intended to prevent the trend, in a minority of local authorities, of taking on debt to buy assets primarily for income. In the Spending Review 2020 the Government announced the outcome of the consultation⁸, which set out that the PWLB will not lend to a local authority that plans to buy investment assets primarily for yield anywhere in their capital plans, regardless of whether the transaction would notionally be financed from a source other than the PWLB.

In addition CIPFA is consulting on amendments to the Prudential Code which amongst a number of potential changes, strengthens the premise that where authorities who are expected to borrow, and who have commercial type investments, to review those commercial investments before they go ahead and borrow.

The Council’s General Fund Capital Programme does not include capital expenditure to buy or construct capital assets primarily for income, nor does the Council have commercial investments which it would need to use instead of borrowing.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/public-works-loan-board-future-lending-terms-consultation>

Further details about the Council's borrowing requirements (and impact of the changes to the Prudential Code) and the Prudential Indicators can be found in the Council's Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy.

General Fund Capital Programme

The capital spending plans for the next five years include the delivery of key capital schemes identified to support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan. **Appendix 2** provides a five-year (2022-23 to 2026-27) General Fund Capital Programme for the Council.

Risks to the General Fund Capital Programme

The Council has adopted a corporate approach to risk management and financial risk management is integrated into the Council's overall management and decision-making processes.

A number of key high-level risks have been identified which could have a positive impact but conversely some risks may have a negative impact and result in a reduction of resources. These key risks are action planned and continually reviewed as the MTFS develops. The main areas they cover are:

- Achievement of capital receipts/other capital funding target of £1 million of the period of the MTFS;
- Loss of anticipated external resources;
- Increased project costs; and
- Unplanned emergency maintenance to Council's corporate properties.

Section 5. Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account (“HRA”) shows all expenditure and income relating to the Council’s responsibilities as landlord of dwellings and associated property. It is a ‘ring-fenced’ account within the Council’s General Fund.

Housing Revenue Account Business Planning

HRA Self-financing was implemented from 1 April 2012 following a one-off settlement to the Treasury, in order to ‘buy out’ of the old subsidy system. The new system incentivised landlords to manage their assets well and yield efficiency savings. It was anticipated that there would be greater certainty about future income as councils were no longer subject to annual funding decisions by Central Government, enabling them to develop long-term plans, and to retain income for reinvestment. Council landlords were to have greater flexibility to manage their stock in the way that best suits local need with more opportunity for tenants to have a real say in setting priorities looking to the longer term.

Self-financing, however, also significantly increased risks from Central Government to local authorities, meaning that the Council:

- Now bears the responsibility for the long term security and viability of council housing in Wealden;
- Has to fund all activity related to council housing, from the income generated from rents, through to long term business planning;
- Is more exposed to changes in interest rates, high inflation and the financial impact of falling stock numbers;
- Needs to factor in the impact of changes in government policy e.g. the impacts of the welfare reform on income recovery, and rent setting; and

This places a greater emphasis on the need for long-term planning for the management, maintenance and investment in the housing service and housing stock.

The HRA Business Plan

A key element of the self-financing regime is for the Council to construct a 30-year Business Plan for the HRA. The HRA Business plan is a key contributor to the Council’s overall aims and the Council’s Housing Strategy. The Council has also fully embraced the Government priority of “fixing our broken housing market” by delivering new build Council Housing to contribute to diversification of the local housing market.

The Council’s Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2021-2051, approved by Cabinet in October 2021, had been updated to reflect national and housing policy, legislation and best practice. Major changes to the Business Plan since the previous plan, included the need for further improvements to the energy efficiency of our homes to reduce carbon emissions, additional fire safety measures in anticipation of changes to the Building Regulations and ongoing investment in building new homes. The Business Plan reflects the impact of Government policy changes and financial assumptions at the time. The Business plan sets out:

- The long term plans for the Council’s housing stock, including the decarbonisation of our homes;
- The finances to deliver plans;
- How the Council will manage the income from its stock, demand for housing and stock condition; and
- Identifies resources for building new council dwellings.

The current Business Plan is reflected in this MTFS for the period 2022-23 to 2026-27, and been framed in the light of:

- Government Policy on rents for Social Housing increasing rents from 2022-23 by CPI plus 1% for three years thereafter CPI only;
- One for one replacement of Right to Buy sales and continuation of the Council's New Build programme;
- Appropriate capital investment in maintaining the quality of the housing stock through planned maintenance and replacement works; and
- Servicing and repaying debt so that new borrowing is available for future maintenance works or investment in further new build schemes.

The Business Plan is a living document which sets out our short, medium and long-term strategies for the management, maintenance, improvement and addition to the Council's housing stock. It is continually reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the priorities reflect local need and political aspirations, to ensure the investment proposals remain fundable and the assumptions on which the plan are based remain correct and that the HRA remains a sustainable and viable entity over the 30-year period. The 30 year Business Plan will next be updated in three years' time.

Spending Plans

Spending plans included within the HRA support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities within the Corporate Plan and Housing Strategy. The revenue expenditure has been forecast to manage and maintain the Council's housing stock.

Spending Pressures

A high level review of the financial pressures facing the Council over the period of the MTFS has been undertaken. This information has been drawn from experience in previous years, the advice of Corporate Directors, Heads of Service and Budget holders. This process had regard to the experience of previous years, the current economic climate and local and national issues that are likely to influence the financial outcomes.

Inflation – Pay and Prices

The General Fund MTFS follows the Spending Review 2021 announcement on public sector pay to increase Officer salaries by 2.5% and increase the hourly rate for staff earning the national living wage to £9.50 per hour rate.

Thereafter an allowance has been included for a 2% pay award for staff in 2023-24 to 2026-27, plus an estimate of staff increments. The pay award 2022-23 is subject to being agreed and the HRA MTFS will be updated following the decision if required.

Automatic inflationary increases of budgets are not provided for all goods and services, instead individual inflation rates have been applied for specific items of expenditure (i.e. contracts), all remaining areas of expenditure are maintained at the previous year's levels, which is in effect a real terms reduction in spending power

Repairs and Maintenance

The level of expenditure for revenue repairs proposed for 2022/23 is £3.124 million. This covers costs such as responsive repairs, cyclical works, void repairs and redecoration.

Revenue implications of the HRA Capital Programme

- *Depreciation* - must be charged to the HRA in accordance with proper accounting practices, it reflects the decline in the value of the HRA council's stock over time due to wear and tear. The calculation is based on the social housing valuation of the councils stock. The Councils stock is revalued each year and the depreciation value will fluctuate depending on the annual valuations of the Council's housing stock. Depreciation is transferred to a major repairs reserve to fund the HRA capital programme. This amounts to £4.110 million for 2022-23 and increases in future years to reflect the increases in housing stock from new builds and inflation.
- *Interest Payable* - is associated with additional borrowing for capital expenditure on the Housing investment programme, including interest payable on the balance of £44.3 million for the self-financing transaction from 2011-12.
- *Provision for Loan Repayments* - planned loan repayments have been updated in the MTFS which is key to self-financing and creating opportunities for new borrowing for investment in new builds and major repairs.
- *Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue* - the amount of revenue that is being used to fund the capital programme between 2022-23 to 2024-25 includes £4.36 million funding for the development of the former Streatfield House site into 20 new homes, which is mainly being funded out of general HRA revenue reserves. Revenue funding is also used to support the planned maintenance programme over the MTFS period.

Debt write off and impairment

Income collection became more challenging due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and although the position has improved since the rollout of the vaccine and ending of lockdown restrictions, the impact could still lead to an increase in the write off arrears or increased debt provision.

Similarly, the transition to universal credit means that some rents that would have been received automatically are now recoverable from the tenant. Where tenants suffer a financial impact from the current economic climate arrears are likely to increase, with a potential for further write offs/debt provision, which represents a cost to the council. Therefore the budget provision for debt write offs and impairment has been increased to £0.180 million.

Resources

Rents and Service Charges

This is the third year since 1 April 2016 that the Council has been permitted to increase rents. For four years the Government imposed mandatory rent cuts of 1% per annum as part of welfare reform reducing income over that period. The Government introduced the new social rent policy that was effective from 2020-21 for a five year period, enabling councils to increase rents by CPI + 1% per annum, which restores some medium term certainty about income levels.

In line with Government Policy on rents for social housing, rents will be increasing by 4.1% (CPI at September 2021 = 3.1% + 1%) in 2022-23. The average rents are shown in the table below:

	Rent per week (52 week basis)	
	2021-22	2022-23
General Needs - Social Rent	£89.10	£92.75
Retirement Living - Social Rent	£76.35	£79.48
General Needs - Affordable Rent	£146.12	£152.11
Retirement Living - Affordable Rent	£104.78	£109.08

When properties become vacant, they will continue to be re-let at Formula Rent, in line with the social rent policy.

The additional income generated by the rent increase of 4.1%, if agreed, will be utilised on a number of HRA items including; maintenance of the stock, supervision and management resources, paying for the cost of investment and running costs where appropriate for the stock.

The MTFS assumes rent increases in line with social rent policy of CPI + 1% per annum up to 2024-25 and thereafter increases are assumed at CPI. The dwellings rent budget also allows for increased rental income from new build properties and reductions in rental income from RTB sales and voids.

Service Charges

- *Tenants* - in addition to the rent some tenants may also pay service charges. Rents are generally taken to include all charges associated with the occupation of the property, such as maintenance and general housing management services. Service charges reflect additional services which may not be provided to every tenant, or which may be connected with communal facilities. These service charges are reviewed annually and calculated on a per property basis to recover the actual cost of the service. Tenants will be notified in writing of any changes in their rent and service charges for the coming year April to March. The rent notification letter will set out a schedule of services that will be provided and how much we will charge for them. We will only increase service charges within the legal requirement that they will not exceed the cost of the services and will always be reasonable
- *Leaseholders (Retirement Living, Shared Ownership and Right-to-Buy)* - service charges to leaseholder are charged in accordance with their lease. Service charges are calculated to recover the costs of providing communal services, such as cleaning, repairs, grounds maintenance and electricity. Not all leaseholders receive additional services and the amount that is charged will depend on the type of property a leaseholder lives in, and what services are provided.

Shared ownership Retirement Living leaseholders will be notified in writing how much service charges they will have to pay for the year, April to March. The notification will also tell them of any changes in their rent, where payable, for the coming year.

Right-to-Buy leaseholders are usually notified in April with an annual estimated charge and again within six months of the year end with the Final account figures.

Interest Receivable

Interest is received on HRA cash balances during the year. This is reducing partly due to lower interest rates forecast and reducing general reserve balances.

Other Income

Other Income includes income received from feed in tariffs on solar panels on council dwellings of approximately £0.075 million per annum.

Housing Revenue Account Budget and Forecast

Appendix 3 provides a summary HRA revenue budget and forecast for the period 2022-23 to 2026-27.

Risks to the HRA Budget and Forecast

The Council has adopted a corporate approach to risk management, and financial risk management is integrated into the Council's overall management and decision-making processes.

A number of key high-level risks have been identified which could have a positive impact that could yield additional resources, but conversely some risks may have a negative impact and result in a reduction of resources. These key risks are action planned and continually reviewed as the MTFS develops. The main areas they cover are:

- Future impact of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- Risk of government announcements limiting the flexibilities and freedoms offered by the HRA Self -Financing regime;
- Government changes to legislations such as the Decent Homes review, Building Safety regulations and uncertainty of rent policy after four-years (i.e. from 2025-26);
- Economic shocks such as shortage of labour, building costs;
- Changes to key assumptions within the MTFS e.g.inflation, interest rates etc;
- Efficient delivery of housing repairs;
- Impact on the rental income estimates included in the MTFS from any delays in the delivery of the New Build Programme;
- Ability to release further revenue resources for investment and improvements;
- The impacts of the Welfare Reform Act; and
- Financial and budget management issues.

Section 6. Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme

HRA Capital Priorities

The Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme covers all aspects of capital expenditure relating to the Council's landlord function. The Council's approach to determining and funding its investment programmes is set out in the Council's Capital Strategy, which explains the Council's financial framework for capital investment in support of its strategic priorities. The Capital Strategy for the Housing Revenue Account capital programme reflects the self-financing housing regime.

The five-year Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme has been drawn up to ensure that the Council meets its legal obligations as a landlord. The Council has already invested significant resources over recent years to achieve the Decent Homes Standard.

The five-year housing programme comprises the following main areas of work:

- Maintenance of the Decent Homes;
- Health & Safety Requirements – covers the work to meet statutory requirements, and includes fire safety, communal lighting and asbestos removal;
- Decarbonisation works;
- New Build and acquisition programme to deliver approximately 166 new council dwellings within the HRA.
- ICT investment for a new Housing Management system to be procured over the next few years and for the installation of Wi-Fi in retirement living communal areas.

Investment in our existing stock has been increased to reflect the stock condition survey requirements and deliverability of these requirements through our contractors. The cost implications of the government's Decent Homes Standard review are not yet known and are therefore not included in the current HRA investment plan. A review of the programmed works will be required once the new standard is announced.

Wealden has the ambition to become carbon neutral by 2050. This will require changes in the way that we manage our existing stock, cost and policy implications and our plans for investing in new council homes. The investment programme now includes £1 million per annum from 2022/23 for decarbonisation works. This is based on an approximate benchmark cost of £20,000 per property. This will only go half way to meeting the 2050 target. The level of external funding potentially available is currently unknown and the cost of new technology may also reduce as new solutions become mainstream. An amount of £3.9 million is included in HRA earmarked reserves balances for future use towards the decarbonisation programme. This area of the capital programme will need to be reviewed and updated once we have a clear development plan.

Resources

The resources necessary to fund the Council's HRA Capital Programme are fully identified in **Appendix 4**.

Major Repairs Reserve

The Major Repairs Reserve ("MRR") is the main source of capital funding and the mechanism by which timing differences between resources becoming available and being applied are managed. The MRR may be used to fund capital expenditure and to repay existing debt. Depreciation is a real charge on the HRA and is paid into the MRR from the Housing Revenue Account (see **Appendix 3**) to fund capital expenditure. The total support to the capital programme over the five-year MTFS period 2022-23 to 2026-27 through depreciation is £24.88 million.

Capital Receipts

Housing capital receipts fall within the Governments pooling regime. Under these arrangements capital receipts from Right-to-Buy (“RTB”) sales are pooled until a pre-set limit for government share of the income generated has been achieved. Non-RTB sales primarily are excluded from the pooling arrangement and are now retained in full by the Council for use as the Council sees fit. Once the target for the government share of the RTB receipts has been reached, the Council may retain 100% of the receipts from any additional RTB sales. These are subject to a formal retention agreement between the Council and the DLUHC. Following the announcement in the Spending Review 2021, the Council will now be allowed to spend these over a longer timeframe (increasing to five years from three years), to pay up to 40% of the cost of a new home (up from 30%), and to allow them to be used for shared ownership and First Homes

New Build Shared ownership sales receipts are used towards funding the New Build shared ownership housing.

The New Build programme is primarily funded by retained RTB receipts, shared ownership receipts and borrowing.

The proceeds of dwelling sales under the RTB scheme provide a regular source of capital receipts with the number of sales increasing in recent years. The MTFS assumes 12 sales per year from 2022-23 to 2026-27. However, this is a difficult area to predict accurately as it is affected by external factors, such as interest rates, property prices and Government initiatives aimed at further stimulating RTB sales.

Council Resources

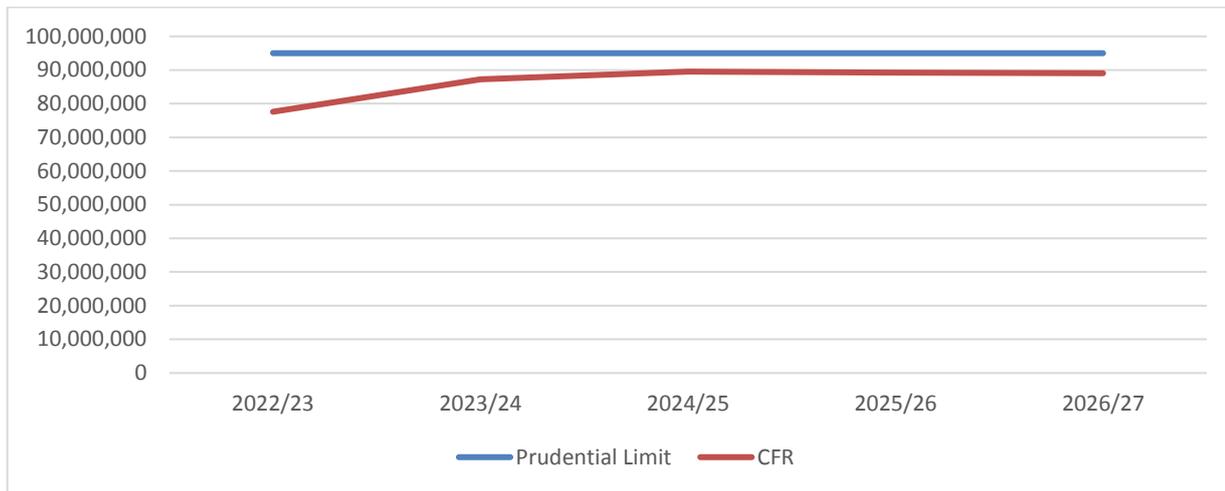
The MTFS 2022-23 to 2026-27 includes £7.520 million of direct revenue contributions over the five year period. This includes funding of £4.4 million for the development of the former Streatfield House site into 20 new homes, which is being funded out of general HRA revenue reserves and borrowing. Revenue funding is also used to support the planned maintenance programme over the MTFS period.

Borrowing

The Prudential Code allows the Council to take borrowing if it can demonstrate that such borrowing is affordable, sustainable and prudent in its Prudential Indicators (detailed in the Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy). In October 2018, the government announced the removal of the HRA borrowing cap and issued local authorities determinations to confirm that the removal of the cap was to take immediate effect. Prior to the lifting of the debt cap, Wealden had reached its maximum borrowing it could undertake without eating into the margins of safety (the debt limit imposed was £71.679 million). The Council has now set its own prudential limit for the HRA of £95 million. As with all borrowing decisions, the council will still need to take into account the affordability of borrowing against available revenue streams.

The removal of the debt cap and high value council housing levy gives local housing authorities more certainty for future HRA Business Planning. In light of this, the Council previously agreed the use of HRA balances to fund the HRA Capital New build investment programme. The HRA balances minimum recommended level is 5% of the budget, which is in the region of £0.9 million. The use of the HRA general balances over the MTFS period reduces the balances to £1.4 million, which is still above the recommended level.

The graph below shows the position of the budget proposals for borrowing for the HRA Capital Programme against the prudential borrowing limit of £95 million.



CFR = HRA Capital Financing Requirement, measures the HRA underlying need to borrow to finance the capital programme

Following the implementation of HRA self-financing on 1 April 2012 the Council has £44.3 million¹ of external debt relating to housing stock, which is being repaid over 30-years. In addition to this, the Council has undertaken further internal borrowing of £27.9 million as at 2021-22. The provision to repay debt over the MTFS period is £10.6 million with further borrowing of £27.4 million to fund the HRA Capital Programme. This leaves borrowing headroom of £5.9 million.

HRA Capital Programme

Based on the spending requirements and resource assumptions, **Appendix 4** provides a summary HRA capital programme, 2022-23 to 2026-27.

The revenue implications of all capital schemes, have been taken account of and included within the HRA budget (see **Appendix 3**).

Risks to the HRA Capital Programme

The Council has adopted a corporate approach to risk management and financial risk management is integrated into the Council's overall management and decision-making processes.

A number of key high-level risks have been identified which could have a positive impact but conversely some risks may have a negative impact and result in a reduction of resources. These key risks are action planned and continually reviewed as the MTFS develops. The main areas they cover are:

- Generation of sufficient revenue surpluses to resource required investment;
- Achievement of capital receipts (including Right to Buy sales) targets;
- Future building costs; and
- Interest rate increases impacting on future borrowing costs.

¹ External debt of £44.3 million is net of a repayment of £2.282 million due 28 March 2022.

Section 7. Reserves and Balances

The minimum prudent levels of reserves and balances that the Council should maintain are a matter of judgement. It is the Council's safety net for unforeseen circumstances and must last the lifetime of the Council unless contributions are made from future years' revenue budgets. CIPFA guidance does not set a statutory minimum level but it is up to local authorities themselves, taking into account all the relevant local circumstances, to make a professional judgement on what the appropriate level of reserves and balances should be.

Some reserves and balances are essential for the prudent management of the Council's financial affairs. These will provide a working balance to cushion the impact of uneven cash flow, a contingency for the impact of unexpected events or emergencies and allow the creation of earmarked reserves to meet known liabilities. The consequences of not keeping a minimum level of reserves can be serious and is therefore one of the considerations taken into account when setting the MTFS.

The Council has a very proactive approach to managing risk and there are effective arrangements for financial control already in place. However, as a result of the changes to the core system of local government funding introduced in April 2013, which saw a move from an absolute funding level to one which is very sensitive to changes in the level of local business rates, the level of volatility and risk to the Council significantly increased. Given this uncertainty of funding that this poses to the Council's financial position, the prudent minimum level of general reserves is now held at a level greater than previously.

The financial risks identified throughout this document, and an assessment of the estimated exposure, likelihood and possible mitigation of these has been made in the context of the Council's overall approach to risk management and internal financial controls. This information has been used to determine the optimum level of reserve holdings needed to meet the requirements of a working balance and contingency. The conclusion of this risk assessment is that it is deemed prudent that General Fund reserves are maintained at around £2 million - £3 million, and that Housing Revenue Account reserves are maintained at around £0.9 million - £1 million, over the period of the MTFS.

Having regard to these prudent levels, General Fund reserves were at a level the end of 2020-21 whereby £3 million was transferred to an earmarked reserve to support the Council's capital projects.

The general reserves at the end of each year for 2022-23 to 2026-27 are summarised in the table below:

	2022-23 £(000)	2023-24 £(000)	2024-25 £000	2025-26 £(000)	2026-27 £(000)
General Fund (see Appendix 1)	4,547	4,451	4,258	3,941	3,097
HRA (see Appendix 3)	2,856	1,352	1,235	1,224	1,377

The overall levels of General Fund and Housing Revenue Account balances are in line with the prudently assessed minimum level of balances, and are believed to be sufficient to meet all of the Council's obligations over the duration of the MTFS and have been based on a detailed risk assessment.

Appendix 1 General Fund Revenue Summary

General Fund Summary	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
	Estimate £(000)	Estimate £(000)	Estimate £(000)	Estimate £(000)	Estimate £(000)
Members	380	386	393	399	406
Chief Executive's Directorate	5,531	5,535	5,554	5,574	5,591
District Council Elections	0	300	0	0	0
Customer & Community Services	9,034	9,669	9,818	9,995	10,187
Planning, Policy & Environmental Services	3,947	3,897	3,911	3,917	3,951
Central Costs	496	496	496	496	496
Total Cost of Services	19,388	20,283	20,172	20,381	20,631
Provision for future pay awards & increments	0	455	866	1,233	1,607
Drainage Levies	87	90	92	95	98
Interest from Investments/ Dividend from SWH	(1,240)	(1,190)	(980)	(950)	(910)
Interest payable on external loans	220	200	180	160	150
Charges to the Housing Revenue Account:		0	0	0	0
Support Services	(1,147)	(1,170)	(1,205)	(1,239)	(1,274)
Minimum Revenue Provision	305	199	206	233	353
Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue	4,163	13,200	1,025	25	25
Net Cost of Services	21,776	32,067	20,356	19,938	20,680
Business Rates/Revenue Support Grant					
East Sussex Business Rates Pool	(5,300)	(3,100)	(3,300)	(3,300)	(3,300)
General Grants					
Rural Services Delivery Grant/ New Homes Bonus Grant/ Lower Tier Services Grant/CIL	(1,052)	(8,682)	(1,682)	(682)	(682)
Other Financing					
Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	0	0	0	0	0
Contributions to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	(2,112)	(6,264)	(814)	(825)	(589)
Contributions to/(from) General Fund Balance	196	(96)	(193)	(317)	(844)
Council Tax Requirement	13,508	13,925	14,367	14,814	15,265
Funded By:					
Council Tax Demand on the Collection Fund	(13,508)	(13,925)	(14,367)	(14,814)	(15,265)
Council Tax Base					
Tax Base for Tax Setting Purposes	66,729.20	67,129.20	67,629.20	68,129.20	68,629.20

Note: The figures in the 'cost of services' section above are net figures, these therefore include income we receive from planning fees, crematorium, vicarage field etc.

Appendix 1 General Fund Revenue Summary (cont'd)

Council Tax	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Band D Council Tax - previous year	£197.44	£202.44	£207.44	£212.44	£217.44
Increase in Band D	£5.00	£5.00	£5.00	£5.00	£5.00
% increase	2.53%	2.47%	2.41%	2.35%	2.30%
Band D Council Tax	£202.44	£207.44	£212.44	£217.44	£222.44
Council Tax Income Estimate	£13,508,659	£13,925,281	£14,367,147	£14,814,013	£15,265,879

General Fund Balance	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
	Estimate £(000)	Estimate £(000)	Estimate £(000)	Estimate £(000)	Estimate £(000)
Opening Balance	4,351	4,547	4,451	4,258	3,941
Movement in Year	196	(96)	(193)	(317)	(844)
Closing Balance	4,547	4,451	4,258	3,941	3,097

Earmarked Reserves Balance	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
	Estimate £(000)	Estimate £(000)	Estimate £(000)	Estimate £(000)	Estimate £(000)
Opening Balance	26,098	23,986	17,722	16,908	16,083
Movement in Year	(2,112)	(6,264)	(814)	(825)	(589)
Closing Balance	23,986	17,722	16,908	16,083	15,494

Appendix 2 General Fund Capital Programme

General Fund Capital Programme	2022/23 Forecast £(000)	2023/24 Forecast £(000)	2024/25 Forecast £(000)	2025/26 Forecast £(000)	2026/27 Forecast £(000)
Housing					
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Housing Renewal Grants	10	10	10	10	10
Total Housing	1,010	1,010	1,010	1,010	1,010
Land and Buildings					
Hailsham Aspires	4,640	54	55	56	57
Mayfield Community and Health Centre	1,093	3,038	0	0	0
Knights Farm - Sports Park	0	6,057	2,058	0	0
Knights Farm - Employment Park	0	5,057	58	59	61
Leisure Centres - Crowborough Teaching Pool	48	2,319	0	0	0
Leisure Centres	25	25	25	25	25
Vicarage Lane Office & Civic Community Hall	10	10	10	10	10
Jack Cade memorial	0	15	0	0	0
Birling Gap Steps	0	0	150	0	0
Car Parks & unadopted roads	155	65	60	50	50
SANGS Crowborough	11	10	10	10	10
SANGS Uckfield	25	15	15	15	15
Cuckoo Trail	25	25	25	25	25
Public Conveniences	95	35	0	0	0
Investment Property	10	0	0	0	0
Total Land and Buildings	6,137	16,725	2,466	250	253
Vehicles and Equipment					
ICT Investment Programme	100	550	100	100	100
IT Visualisation Environment	150	0	0	0	0
Refuse & Recycling Containers	200	200	200	200	200
Total Vehicles and Equipment	450	750	300	300	300
Other Capital Expenditure					
Investment in Sussex Weald Homes Ltd	6,535	0	2,150	0	0
Total Other Capital Expenditure	6,535	0	2,150	0	0
Total General Fund Capital Programme	14,132	18,485	5,926	1,560	1,563
FUNDED BY:					
Borrowing	(7,835)	0	(3,150)	0	0
Capital Receipts	(544)	(2,531)	(666)	(525)	(528)
Government Grants - Better Care Fund DFG	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)
Home Improvement Loans Repayments	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue	(4,163)	(13,200)	(1,025)	(25)	(25)
Contribution from Mayfield Parish Council	(580)	(1,744)	0	0	0
Contribution from National Trust	0	0	(75)	0	0
Total GF Capital Programme Funding	(14,132)	(18,485)	(5,926)	(1,560)	(1,563)

Appendix 3 Housing Revenue Account

Housing Revenue Account - Revenue Budget	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)
Dwelling Rents	(14,555)	(15,354)	(16,311)	(17,223)	(17,282)
Non-Dwelling Rents	(167)	(170)	(174)	(177)	(181)
Charges for Services & Facilities	(1,278)	(1,304)	(1,330)	(1,356)	(1,383)
Interest Income	(60)	(50)	(50)	(50)	(50)
Contribution to amenities shared by the community	(70)	(70)	(70)	(70)	(70)
Other Income	(95)	(95)	(95)	(95)	(95)
Total Income	(16,225)	(17,043)	(18,030)	(18,972)	(19,061)
Supervision & Management	2,526	2,531	2,541	2,550	2,558
Repairs & Maintenance	3,124	3,177	3,231	3,287	3,343
Retirement Living Courts	1,172	1,169	1,184	1,195	1,209
Rents, Rates, Taxes & Other Charges	156	156	156	156	157
Depreciation	4,110	4,650	5,000	5,360	5,760
Debt Management Expenses	57	52	52	52	52
Loan Interest	1,901	2,168	2,368	2,438	2,471
Provision for loan repayments	2,282	1,800	2,100	2,100	2,282
Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue	2,360	2,360	1,000	1,300	500
Write Offs and Debt Impairment Charges	180	180	180	180	180
Sub Total	17,869	18,243	17,812	18,619	18,512
Provision for future pay awards		28	57	87	117
HRA Contribution to Corporate Costs	253	251	252	252	254
Contributions to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	25	25	25	25	25
Total Expenditure	18,147	18,547	18,146	18,983	18,908
(Surplus)/Deficit for the year	1,922	1,504	116	12	(153)
Housing Revenue Account Balance	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)
Opening Balance	4,778	2,856	1,352	1,235	1,224
Movement in Year	(1,922)	(1,504)	(116)	(12)	153
Closing Balance	2,856	1,352	1,235	1,224	1,377
Earmarked Reserves Balance	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)
Opening Balance	4,379	4,404	4,429	4,454	4,479
Movement in Year	25	25	25	25	25
Closing Balance	4,404	4,429	4,454	4,479	4,504

Appendix 4 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme

Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)
New Build Programme	11,005	17,831	4,863	3,300	3,300
Planned Maintenance	5,430	5,380	5,380	5,380	5,380
Decarbonisation Programme	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
IT Investment	35	235	0	0	0
Shared Ownership Repurchases	500	500	500	500	500
Total HRA Capital Programme	17,970	24,946	11,743	10,180	10,180
FUNDED BY:					
Loan	(7,660)	(11,395)	(4,437)	(1,760)	(2,160)
1-4-1 Right to Buy Receipts	(3,130)	(4,257)	(716)	(1,320)	(1,320)
Other Capital Receipts	(710)	(2,284)	(590)	(440)	(440)
Major Repairs Reserve	(4,110)	(4,650)	(5,000)	(5,360)	(5,760)
Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue	(2,360)	(2,360)	(1,000)	(1,300)	(500)
Total HRA Capital Programme Funding	(17,970)	(24,946)	(11,743)	(10,180)	(10,180)

Meeting of the Full Council

Monday 17 January 2022

Agenda item 11.0

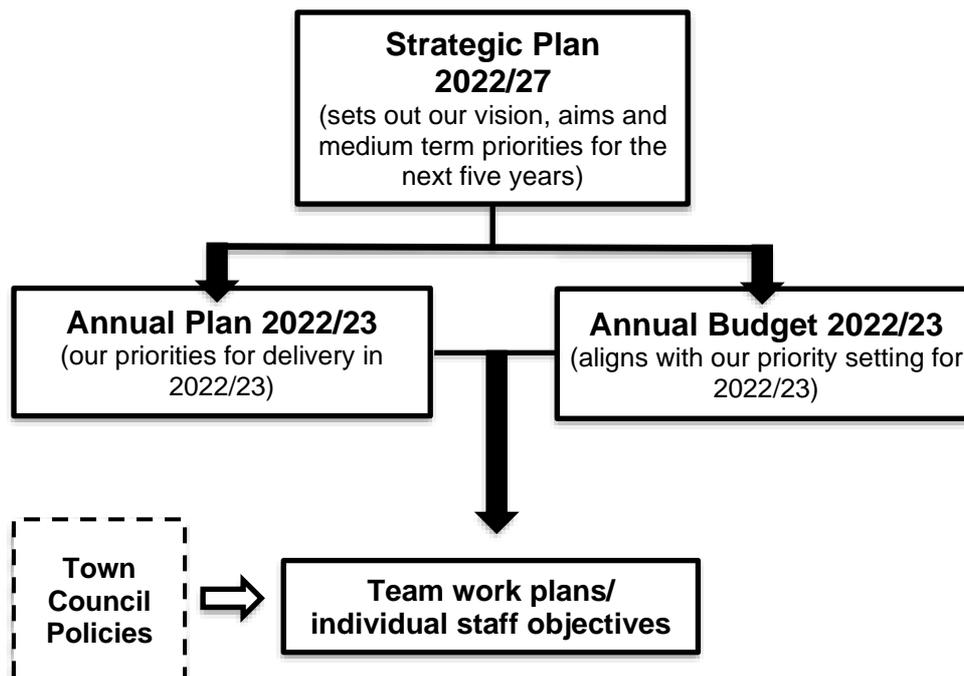
TO FORMALLY ADOPT THE TOWN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2022/27

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The Town Council is required to refresh its priorities on an annual basis as part of the budget setting process.
- 1.2 The Town Council's planning consists of a strategic plan which sets out the priorities of the Town Council over the next five years and an annual plan which lists the priorities of the Town Council specifically for the forthcoming year (2022/23).

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Strategic Plan for 2022/27 sets out the vision, aims and medium-term priorities of the Town Council over the next five years and, forms the overarching strategy of the Town Council.



- 2.2 The draft Strategic Plan 2022/27 identifies the challenges and opportunities for the Town Council and town of Uckfield, and provides information on the key areas that the Town Council wishes to focus on over the next five years.

3.0 Consultation feedback

- 3.1 After receiving approval from Full Council on 6 December 2021, the draft Strategic Plan 2022/27 was placed out for public consultation, alongside the draft Annual Plan 2022/23 and draft Budget 2022/23.

- 3.2 The documents were placed on the Town Council website and information was shared with members of the public via the Town Council's social media account(s) and an article in the Voice, Uckfield Matters. Contact was also made with partner agencies, local community groups and organisations that work closely with the Town Council.
- 3.3 The deadline for comments was set as Sunday 9 January 2022. Details of these comments are attached in appendix A. A copy of the report with suggested amendments is provided in appendix B of this report.
- 3.4 Members are asked to consider the content of the report. Once adopted, the report will be placed onto the Town Council website and in hard copy format at the Town Council offices.

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 Subject to any amendments that may be required in response to the feedback received, it is recommended that Full Council adopt the Strategic Plan 2022/27.

Contact Officer: Holly Goring

Appendices:

Appendix A: Consultation feedback received by 9 January 2022

Appendix B: Updated Draft Strategic Plan 2022/27

AGENDA ITEM 12.0

Appendix A – Consultation feedback received on Draft Strategic Plan by 9 January 2022

1.	<p>Response from Resident in relation to the draft Annual Plan 2022-23</p> <p>I am submitting my responses to the draft annual plan.</p> <p>1. Work on a ten year woodland management plan: West Park Since work was completed to replace the boardwalks with gravel paths the heavy rain has made the areas in between each path very boggy as the water is not draining away. Could the intervening unmade paths be covered in the same gravel to enable families and dog walkers access to the park and surrounding woodland?</p> <p>2. Investigating ways to reduce the council's impact on climate change. One way that this could be achieved is to make Uckfield High Street a one-way system by using the by-pass to connect drivers to the town centre. This would not only benefit residents and visitors alike in reducing emissions into the atmosphere affecting health but also improve road safety in the town. The infrastructure would also benefit by not becoming dirty.</p> <p>I hope you will give the above suggestions some consideration as with all the new development planned for Uckfield some drastic measures are needed.</p>
2.	<p>Response from Resident</p> <p>I saw the opportunity to comment on the Town Council's strategic/annual plan and financial plans. I would just like to say how impressed I am with the work that has obviously gone into these plans. As a retired company secretary, I know that you will have been largely responsible for putting all these together for Council sign-off, and I know how much detailed work has to be done and the coordination between departments that is required. They look like well thought through and nicely presented documents, and easily digestible (which is a welcome change from many that I have seen elsewhere!)</p> <p>May I just make one comment, about grass cutting. I had not previously realised that the Town Council pays East Sussex County Council an extra sum in order to have the grass verges cut six times per year. The grass verges in Heron Close (on the Harlands Farm estate in Ridgewood) have been a bugbear of mine ever since we came to live here 16 years ago, in that ESCC only seem to cut the verges twice a year. In order to keep them looking nice, I slave away at least every fortnight during the growing season and cut the (extensive) verge outside my house myself. When I have raised the issue with ESCC previously, the response I got was that it is a rural area, which is a nonsense, as Heron Close clearly is within a 30mph speed limit zone (it should be 20mph IMHO). I'm going to raise the grass cutting issue again with ESCC and if I don't get a satisfactory reply I will let you know, as I am determined that residents should receive the services that we pay for via our Council Taxes. (I did think of sending ESCC an invoice for the time I have spent cutting their grass over the years; at a modest £30 an hour for the "missing" four cuts a year it would come to £960).</p> <p><i>As a result of the above comment, contact was made with ES Highways who advised that the above mentioned verge(s) should be on an urban cut, and they would contact the resident to advise them of this and ensure that their contractors did not miss this section.</i></p>
3.	<p>Response from Resident</p> <p>As a resident of Uckfield since January 1970 I would like to make a few observations about the proposed budget:</p>

In my opinion the council is planning to spend, and always has spent, far too much money on the provision of football facilities. Why should 'football' be almost the only beneficiary from council tax? What about rugby, tennis, stoolball, hockey etc? Living alongside West Park playing field, I am able to witness first-hand the amount of time and money spent on maintaining the two football pitches. I honestly believe all sports should receive a share of council tax funding.

Also, I have a question about the Grasshoppers, who I believe are now using the pavillion on West Park - are they paying a commercial rent? If not, surely the pavillion should have been let to an organisation that would pay the going rent rate?

I am not familiar with budgets and accounting, but it does look like playing fields and pitches will have £3,000 less spent on them overall, so that is one good point in the proposal.

Also, I have never been able to understand why Luxfords Restaurant is subsidised by council tax payers - £20k this year and £30k next year?!? Why on earth isn't it put out to private tender, meaning we could hopefully have an income. rather than subsidising it?

Finally, I'd like to remind you that council tax in Wealden is **extremely** high, compared to other areas in the country. Wealden is eighth from the top, out of 362 authorities. For this reason alone, Uckfield Town Council, Wealden District Council and East Sussex County Council should all be making every possible effort to reduce the council tax burden! After all, I'd wager we're driving on some of the most 'pot-holed' roads in the country and I cannot remember the last time I saw a uniformed police constable on foot patrol!!! OK, so these two shortcomings are down to ESCC, but it's still an outrage when you consider how much council tax we have to pay!

A response was sent to the resident on receipt of the email on 9 January clarifying:

Just to clarify, we are in the process of liaising with our solicitors to draw up a full repairing lease agreement between Uckfield Grasshoppers and Uckfield Town Council for West Park Pavilion. The football club will be responsible for paying the Town Council a rental fee, recharges for insurance and utilities and for dealing with the maintenance and repair of the building. This is unlikely to be in place until the Spring when all the legal matters have been addressed. The hire of the football pitches on West Park will be treated separately from the pavilion and will involve hire as per normal.

Uckfield Town Council is taking a couple of our grounds services in-house from March/April which will reduce costs and ensure more proactive and direct management of our sites.

I am very familiar with your views on West Park and expenditure with regards to our football pitches as we have had previous correspondence on this.

And as for the losses predicted for the restaurant, like all areas of the hospitality industry we have been hit hard by the pandemic. There is no more furlough funding, and being a local authority no available grant funding. We therefore wished to prepare a budget that was realistic rather than just a paper based exercise. I hope you can appreciate that. We may see a much improved picture than this, but with covid variants still affecting business each winter, we would prefer to be realistic.

Despite the pandemic we have managed to end each financial year with a balanced budget, as staff have closely managed expenditure which has resulted in underspends in a number of areas of our business and we have also seen increases in income in other areas of our business which help to cover any losses elsewhere, so although one area of the business may appear to be down on income, our hard work in other areas of the council ensures we continue to remain strong.

Your Town Councillors are doing everything they can to reduce the burden on you as a local resident. Whilst your District Council and County Council continue to increase member allowances, our Town Councillors have frozen their allowances for the third year in a row. Whilst Wealden DC is looking to increase council tax by 2.5%, staff and councillors have

worked hard to prepare a budget for Uckfield Town Council 2022-23 which may only see an increase of 1.5 or 1.6% which works out a maximum of 27p per month over a ten-month council tax period. And finally, I would also like to confirm that the precept we receive from Wealden DC only makes up two thirds of the Town Council's annual expenditure. The remaining third of our funds is generated through our own means. Most parish and town councils do not have the capacity to do this.

We have developed a very good working relationship with our local PCSOs who look after the Uckfield area, and we agree that since the Police and Crime Commissioner has listened in the past 2-3 years, and there has been a push for more recruitment of PCSOs and PCs to return the streets this has improved engagement within the local area. We know our local PCSOs and they know our area well and we too hope that more focus will be placed on this as it does have positive results.



Our Strategic Plan

2022-2027



Uckfield Town Council

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Uckfield Town Council

Our five-year strategic plan sets out the direction for Uckfield Town Council between 2022 and 2027. It helps us to understand where we are today, where we want to be in the future and the steps we will take to get there. The plan therefore sets out a number of objectives, that we wish to achieve within this period.

The plan takes on board the current situation within which we are working, in particular the challenges and opportunities for Uckfield. It also reflects on the feedback we have received from both our residents and partners, about what matters.



The financial situation remains challenging, even more so than 2020 with the impact of the pandemic, but the Town Council is committed to doing the very best for the town, its residents, local businesses and visitors. We will work in partnership with the right agencies and community groups to do this, and ensure that Uckfield remains a beautiful place to live.

				
Cllr Jeremy Beesley (Ridgewood Ward)	Cllr Karen Bedwell (Ridgewood Ward)	Cllr Duncan Bennett (New Town Ward)	Cllr Ben Cox (New Town Ward)	Cllr James Edwards (Ridgewood Ward)
				
Cllr Helen Firth (New Town Ward)	Cllr Donna French (Deputy Mayor) (East Ward)	Cllr Gary Johnson (West Ward)	Cllr Jackie Love (Town Mayor) (North Ward)	Cllr Chris Macve (East Ward)
				
Cllr Spike Mayhew (New Town Ward)	Cllr Angie Smith (North Ward)	Cllr Colin Snelgrove (North Ward)	Cllr Paul Sparks (East Ward)	Cllr Diane Ward (West Ward)

Uckfield is one of five market towns located within the Wealden District. Its facilities serve not only the residents of the town but also the residents of its neighbouring villages.

The attractive setting of Uckfield brings both new residents and visitors to the town. Its location in the heart of Wealden and close proximity to the Ashdown Forest provides plenty of opportunities for leisure and recreation, in addition to the beautiful green open spaces and woodlands located within the town itself. Here are a few key statistics. The 2021 census in March 2021 will provide an up-to-date and accurate profile of our population.

15,105 residents

(2020 small area population estimate)



Living in just over 6,000 households

(2011 census)



Younger age profile is greater than District average

(0-15 years + 16-29 years)
(2020 small area population estimate)



Older age profile is less than District average

(65 years and over)
(2020 small area population estimate)



Good level of education

(81.7% of working age population have qualifications)
(2011 Census)





High rate of economic activity

(over 75.5% economically active)



Wealden has a high percentage of home ownership

(78.7% owner occupied)
(2011 Census)

~~Unemployed~~

Lower rate of unemployment (2.6%) than East Sussex average

(rate of Job Seekers Allowance claimants is slightly greater in two wards of Uckfield (Uckfield New Town and Uckfield North))



15.4% of the population have a limiting long term illness

(less than District average – 17.5% and County average – 20.3%) (2011 census)



High house prices

(the mean average house price reached £305,687 in 2020 and higher than £340,000 in Uckfield Ridgewood and Little Horsted Ward)

Turning Challenges into Opportunities

Challenges

Opportunities

Limited infrastructure to support future development

With an increase in the population and plans for further development within the town boundary, it is important for the key agencies to consider where improvements are required in terms of infrastructure – education, health, transport, sewerage capacity, water supply, broadband coverage and mitigation of flood risk.

Covid-19 Pandemic

With the national lockdowns and Covid restrictions, businesses in Uckfield will have had to face a number of financial pressures in 2020 and 2021.

Retaining our highly educated workforce

Uckfield has high levels of educational attainment but with good and improving transport links to Brighton, East Croydon and London mean much of the town's working age population are attracted to work out of the town.

Flood risk

The River Uck runs through the middle of the town which could place the town at risk of fluvial flooding. Mitigating measures are in place but the town is also susceptible to surface water run-off in heavy bouts of rain as a result of the undulating landscape of the town

Addressing traffic congestion

The road network through Uckfield Town and the A22 by-pass are heavily used by traffic. Although recent works in the High Street have improved accessibility for pedestrians and vehicles, there are still a number of pinch points on the corridors to the town, which could benefit from improvements and works being undertaken by utility companies to address capacity.

Limited financial resources

The Town Council along with other tiers of local government (District and County Councils) are being placed under increasing financial pressure. Despite this, the Council still needs to deliver the services for which it has responsibility and consider taking on services devolved from other tiers of local government under financial restraint. This may require the Town Council to be innovative and/or make difficult decisions.

Proposals for growth

Plans have been put in place to build a further 1,000 homes in the Ridgewood area of Uckfield Town. This reflects proposals within the Wealden Local Plan for growth and increasing housing stock

Range of facilities

The town has a substantial range of facilities, with its own independent cinema and leisure centre. High performing schools, free parking, a diverse selection of shops and nearby Ashdown Forest are a big draw for residents and visitors.

Central location within South East

Being in the heart of the Wealden District, the town is centrally located within the South East between London and the South Coast. Its close proximity to Gatwick Airport and Newhaven port provides job opportunities and ease of travel.

Our green spaces

Uckfield is fortunate to have two nature reserves, green open spaces and allotments. We need to encourage greater use of these spaces and continue to maintain them to a high standard.

Improvements to transport links

The train station platform has been extended, carriages increased and a new station car park created which will support an increase in rail users in the future. The Council also supports any future opportunities to re-establish the rail line between Lewes and Uckfield and build a new rail link between Uckfield and Brighton via Falmer.

Partnership working

As with all local authorities, the Town Council is in a strong position to work closely with its partner agencies to retain good quality services for residents. Partnership working can provide good value for money and increase opportunities.

Asset management

The Town Council has responsibility for a number of assets that could assist in generating higher revenues in the future. It would be prudent for the Town Council to develop an Asset Management Plan now, to effectively prepare for the future.

Our Vision

Preserving heritage,
providing for the future

Our Mission

Working with our partner agencies to provide a high standard of service delivery for residents, businesses and visitors to the town.

Our Corporate Priorities

People

- Cultural and Related services
- Luxfords and Civic Centre

Place

- Environmental and Regulatory Services
- Planning and Development Services
- Highways and Transport Services

Provision

- Central Services

Our Strategic Priorities - People

In addition to agreeing a set of specific priorities each year, the Town Council has set out a number of medium term aspirations for the town.

Cultural and related services

By 2027 we will have

- Supported local community and voluntary organisations and sought to assist them with their positive work within the town;
- Organised events which assist in attracting visitors to the town and support local businesses;
- Established a list of special and important dates or individuals within the town's history and commemorated these on heritage plaques;
- Investigated the viability of providing additional public convenience facilities within the town centre and seeking to obtain a changing spaces facility;
- Continued to maintain, improve and protect all of our natural areas to accommodate the demands of future growth of the town; encouraging community involvement;
- Explored whether there are opportunities for adding to or improving the existing skatepark facilities, and the drainage in the vicinity of the skate park;
- Supported the partnership work and continuation of the Uckfield Youth Club;
- Explored the issues around food poverty, particularly youth food poverty in Uckfield, and worked with the relevant authorities to try and tackle these local issues;
- Worked with partner agencies, to identify future options for providing more community space within the town to meet the needs of local community groups and organisations.

Luxfords Restaurant and Civic Centre

By 2027 we will have

- Made improvements to the decoration and flooring within the main corridors and meeting rooms;
- Decorated the Weald Hall and undertaken improvements to the venue's performance facilities;
- Considered options for providing a temporary but sound proof partition within the Green Room;
- Updated room facilities in line with the latest modern technologies, continued to improve WI-FI connections and ensured networking ports are of good quality;
- Made improvements to air conditioning within the Civic Centre building;
- Reconfigured the caretaker area within the Civic Centre to provide more secure storage capacity;
- Installed a new internal booking system for use by the Civic Centre for all venue and room hire;
- Implemented the introduction of an online booking facility on the Civic Centre website for the purchase of event tickets;
- Developed and implemented a communications and marketing plan for the Civic Centre, in addition to an annual calendar of events;
- Introduced a number of initiatives and increased takeaway options for customers in Luxfords Restaurant;
- Built a good online and social media presence for both the Civic Centre and Luxfords Restaurant;

Environmental and regulatory services

By 2027 we will have

- Maintained a good standard of grounds maintenance within the town to ensure Uckfield remains an attractive place to live;
- Maintained good quality floral displays within the town centre, to ensure Uckfield town centre remains an attractive place to live, work and visit;
- Financially contributed to East Sussex County Council's grass verge cutting contract in 2022/23, to retain a a good standard of service and ensured visibility is maintained on pavements and highways;
- Implemented arrangements in-house for cutting the Town Council's open spaces;



Our Strategic Priorities - Place

In addition to agreeing a set of specific priorities each year, the Town Council has set out a number of medium term aspirations for the town.

Environmental and regulatory services (Continued)

- Improved the facilities and surfacing at the Town Council's play areas with plans to upgrade at least one further playground;
- Introduced a number of initiatives to increase the use of our open spaces, and encourage greater physical activity (distance markers, fun games and activities which encourage movement);
- Worked with our partner agencies to increase opportunities for residents of all ages to take part in activities which improve their health and wellbeing;
- Continued working with Sussex Local Nature Partnership as part of their Green Spaces Project to understand the ecological benefits of green spaces as well as the social and health/wellbeing benefits, in order to develop a longer term vision and set of objectives for these sites – particular focus will have been given to Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve and Snatts Road Cemetery;
- Reviewed the Town Council's regulations for both allotment sites and Snatts Road Cemetery – providing a clear landlord/tenant style agreement where necessary;
- Adopted an action plan in response to our carbon audit, and ensured a periodic review of the audit is undertaken;
- Introduced changes and new initiatives in line with the Town Council's Climate Change Policy and action plan to reduce the Town Council's carbon emissions through reviews of our contracts, buildings, energy sources and management of nature and waste disposal;
- Worked with key stakeholders within Uckfield through the Green Partnership to tackle climate change and focus on the town's green agenda;
- Implemented the Town Council's Woodland Management Plan to ensure ongoing maintenance and continued the important tree planting scheme so that for every tree that has been removed, another tree has been planted. We will have also identified suitable sites where additional trees can be planted on Town Council land;
- Led by example, to deliver a project with Brighter Uckfield and Uckfield Chamber of Commerce to encourage Uckfield's businesses and organisations to reduce their use of single-use plastic and undertake a review around recycling and re-use;
- Continued to provide burial authority services with responsibility for the maintenance of the Cemetery at Snatts Road and Holy Cross churchyard;
- Considered and introduced proposals (if required) to expand cemetery provision at Snatts Road Cemetery, and allotment site provision in line with demand over the next five years;
- Continued to work with East Sussex County Council to gradually review street lighting and replace with new columns and LED lighting where necessary;

Planning and development services

By 2027 we will have

- Worked closely with the planning authority, Wealden District Council, to understand the latest legislative updates and guidance;
- Fed into Wealden District Council's Local Plan development process, as part of cluster meetings to respond to consultations and raise issues relating to Uckfield;
- Supported the development of a Neighbourhood Plan and worked with Action in Rural Sussex and the local Planning authority to enable this plan to be adopted and utilised alongside the Wealden Local Plan by developers;
- As a member of Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Committee, we will have worked with our partners (Wealden District Council and East Sussex County Council) to explore options for regeneration within the centre of the town, and possibility of expanding the retail and business offer;
- Promoted the need for affordable housing within Uckfield Town, to support those in housing need and first time buyers;
- Considered the infrastructure requirements for the town in terms of sport, leisure, recreation and community facilities through engagement with key stakeholders and local residents and businesses including future demand on Town Council services such as allotment and cemetery provision;
- Worked with Wealden District Council to ensure the Town Council is fully engaged in other regulatory matters such as licensing;
- Developed an annual process by which the Town Council reviews its assets and strategic asset management plan and consideration is given to

Our Strategic Priorities - Place

In addition to agreeing a set of specific priorities each year, the Town Council has set out a number of medium term aspirations for the town.

Planning and development services (Continued)

each of the Town Council's buildings to improve the efficiency and use of these properties

- Delivered a ten year programme of maintenance and decoration to all of the Town Council community buildings through schemes of major and minor works;
- Reviewed the condition of car parks adjacent to Town Council owned buildings and agreed a programme of repairs or resurfacing, with a

particular focus given to drainage and repair at Hempstead Recreation Ground, Ridgewood Village Hall car parks and the staff Civic Centre parking area;

- Arranged an annual display of Christmas lights;
- Worked with the Chamber of Commerce to engage with High Street landlords (commercial and residential) to promote and secure improvements to street frontages.

Highways and Transport services

By 2027 we will have

- Identified potential areas within the town which required improvements to pedestrian safety and worked with the relevant agencies to lobby for enhancements;
- Worked with our partner agencies to feed into improvements to the bus station area, to improve accessibility, signage and provide improved facilities such as real time bus information and public convenience(s);
- Worked with our partner agencies to identify highway issues within the access corridors into the town centre and utilised S106 developer contributions or Community Infrastructure Levy to improve the infrastructure and address matters relating to traffic congestion, traffic calming and road safety;
- Worked with the relevant partner agencies to address the danger of speeding vehicles and the possibility of extending the 20mph town centre speed limit;
- Introduced speed reduction initiatives including community speedwatch and behaviour change

campaigns, and explored the introduction of installing permanent speed indicator devices;

- Worked with partner agencies to identify and implement solutions for introducing parking controls within the town centre;
- Engaged in discussions to actively promote the re-opening of the Uckfield to Lewes railway line, and a direct route into Brighton;
- Worked with partner agencies to explore whether electric car charging points can be introduced in Uckfield town;
- Organised an annual day with partner agencies to educate young people about key issues – climate change and safety – potentially alternating the subject matter each year;
- Worked with partner agencies and landowners to explore the possibility of improving footway links between Ridgewood Farm, the SANGs and the nature reserves, and explored the possibility of creating a riverside walk;
- Created up to date street maps of the town, which highlight our open spaces and footways including the alleyways and twittens.



Our Strategic Priorities - Provision

In addition to agreeing a set of specific priorities each year, the Town Council has set out a number of medium term aspirations for the town.

Central Services

By 2027 we will have

- Improved communication with residents, businesses and visitors to the town through enhancements to the Town Council website and social media accounts;
- Improved the condition and display of existing noticeboards, and undertaken a review of their location to ensure they are clear and visible;
- Produced the Town Calendar in-house; working with local businesses to provide greater advertising opportunities and information about voluntary and community organisations.
- Improved accessibility to committee meetings by installing an additional hearing loop in the Council Chamber;
- Increased promotion of the town's key facilities;
- Further reviewed our existing financial processes – including digitalising our purchase order and invoicing;
- Encouraged applications from local traders and organisations in the Town Council's procurement procedures for contractual work within the town;
- Provided training and briefings for the Town Councillors and staff, to support them in their learning and development;
- Undertaken a periodic review of all key policies to ensure they remain up to date with the latest guidance and best practice;
- Reduced our use of paper within the Town Council office, by reviewing our working practices and procedures with regard to file retention, purchase orders and invoicing and record management;



Delivering our Objectives

Overview of the Town Council

The Town Council has 15 Town Councillors, who are elected every four years. The last set of town council elections took place in May 2019. The next set of local elections will therefore take place in May 2023.

The positions of Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor are elected by the Town Councillors each year at the start of the annual statutory meeting of Full Council which takes place in May.

All Town Councillors meet in the format of Full Council at least six times a year, and the town council's three main standing committees, are:

- General Purposes Committee (9 members)
- Environment and Leisure Committee (9 members)
- Plans Committee (7 members)

We also have two sub-committees responsible

for dealing with specific matters related to finance and human resources, called Personnel Sub-Committee and Finance Sub-Committee, which report their recommendations back to General Purposes Committee. These sub-committees meet on an ad-hoc basis when further detailed work is required.

Normally, formal committee meetings are held in the Council Chamber or Weald Hall of the Civic Centre, Uckfield. Residents are welcome to attend these public meetings and make statements in relation to items on the agenda of that committee, subject to the Chairman's discretion. Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, members of the public are able to film and record during a committee meeting to report on the meeting.

Financial information

General finances

Town Councillors are required to start the process of budget setting within the autumn, for the following financial year. This provides time to review our income and expenditure, the priorities of the Town Council, the priorities within the Town and the costs associated.

The precept is the local tax levied by the Town Council and collected on our behalf by Wealden District Council as the rating authority.

The precept for 2021/22 was agreed by the Town Council on 18 January 2021 at a figure of £955,945.

Capital expenditure

The Council adopts a balanced approach to its capital expenditure in respect of the

procurement of new assets and the maintenance of its existing assets. The first priority should however focus on developing and maintaining existing assets for the benefit of the community. Additional income may also be generated, where appropriate, through renting or leasing of these assets.

Reserves

The Council adopts a risk based approach to its level of reserves which will be reviewed annually or more frequently if necessary. Currently the minimum level of general reserves will be set at approximately three months gross operating costs. Reserves will only be held above the minimum level for specific, earmarked purposes.

Delivering our Objectives

Organisational structure

Delivery of the Town Council’s functions is overseen and managed by the Town Clerk, who is the Town Council’s proper officer and required to support and advise members in their role and issue any statutory notifications.

The Town Clerk is supported by a team of nearly 30 members of staff who are responsible for maintaining the town’s grounds and open spaces, buildings, facilities, and providing services to our customers within Luxfords Restaurant and the Civic Centre.

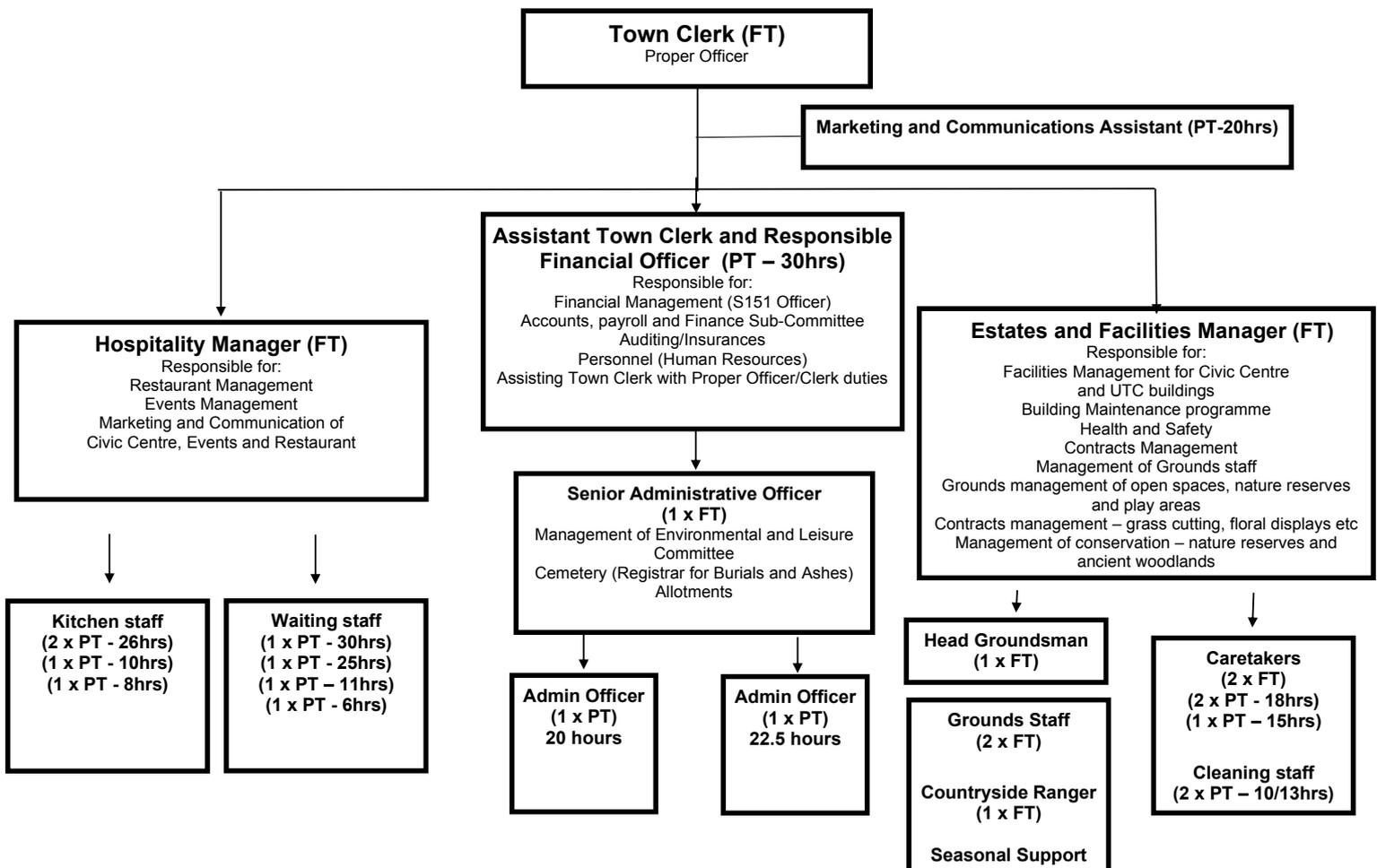
The Assistant Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer is responsible for managing the

Council’s finances, human resources and Council administration.

The Hospitality Manager is responsible for managing the restaurant, Civic Centre room hire and hospitality, and Civic Centre events programme.

The Estates and Facilities Manager is responsible for managing the maintenance and repair of the Town Council’s key buildings, liaising with external contractors, managing health and safety and our caretaking and cleaning staff as well as having responsibility for our open spaces and grounds management and grounds staff.

The following organisational chart presents the current staff structure:





Uckfield Town Council Offices
Civic Centre, Uckfield, TN22 1AE



Annual Plan 2022/23 PRIORITIES

PEOPLE	PROVISION
<p>COMMUNITY GRANTS We will award up to £54,500 of community grant funding to local groups and charitable organisations for the period 2021/22 (£27,500 to community groups, and £27,000 through service level agreements)</p>	<p>REDUCING DEPENDENCE ON PAPER We will look to reduce postage and paper usage by increasing correspondence by email with customers and reviewing our current procedures for the hire of facilities and purchase order and invoicing.</p>
<p>PUBLIC EVENTS IN THE TOWN We will work alongside the local business community and local community groups to deliver two free public events within the town; Weald on the Field and Uckfield Revival.</p>	<p>NEW BOOKING SYSTEM We will look to install a new booking system for the internal management of booking enquiries for the Town Council's rooms and open spaces.</p>
PLACE	
<p>IMPROVEMENTS TO OPEN SPACES We will undertake repairs and improvements to a number of our open spaces including installing new signage, repairing equipment, investigating drainage issues and responding to enhancements identified through the Green Spaces Project.</p>	<p>TOWN COUNCIL BUILDINGS We will review our older buildings by undertaking repairs and improvements, exploring options for vacant premises such as the Hub and exploring options for further community space within the town.</p>
<p>WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN We will commence work on our 10-year woodland management plan to ensure ongoing maintenance and tackle diseased trees as and when appropriate.</p>	<p>ROAD SAFETY We will work with partner organisations such as Sussex Police and East Sussex Highways to re-establish community speedwatch initiative(s) in the town and explore the installation of a speed reduction device.</p>
<p>GRASS VERGE CUTTING We will continue to contribute to the costs of the East Sussex County Council's grass verge cutting contract to retain a good standard of service, and ensure visibility is maintained on pavements and highways.</p>	<p>NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN We will support the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to prepare a draft Uckfield Neighbourhood Plan ready for submission to the local planning authority.</p>
<p>CLIMATE CHANGE We will investigate ways in which we can reduce our impact on climate change by seeking to deliver our climate change policy by reviewing our contracts, considering alternative fuel supplies, exploring additional insulation within our buildings, reviewing the equipment we purchase, managing our land for nature, and minimising waste.</p>	<p>INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING We will work with local partner agencies, residents and local businesses to understand the infrastructure requirements for Uckfield, in regards to sport, leisure, recreation and community facilities and the future impact on the Town Council's provision of allotment and cemetery space.</p>

	Proposed Income	Proposed Expenditure	Proposed Income	Proposed Expenditure
	2021/2022	2021/2022	2022/2023	2022/2023
General Purposes				
Revenue	169,172	771,764	177,515	770,720
New Initiatives etc.		63,500		78,754
Earmarked Reserve Projects		33,050		43,300
Sub Totals		868,314		892,774
Environment and Leisure				
Revenue	79,485	249,783	95,145	285,967
New Initiatives etc.		46,880		22,356
Earmarked Reserve Projects		20,500		25,250
Sub Totals		317,163		333,573
Luxfords Restaurant				
Revenue	178,650	197,775	164,500	193,389
Earmarked Reserve Projects		0		500
New Initiatives		0		0
Sub Totals		197,775		193,889
Gross Income/Expenditure	427,307	1,383,252	437,160	1,420,236
		955,945		983,076
Wealden District Grant		0		0
Net Budget Requirement		955,945		983,076
Tax Base	5684.5		5757.2	
Band 'D' Council Tax		£168.17		£170.76

1.54% increase
£2.59 increase

Environment and Leisure Budget 2022/2023

Committee	Nominal Code		2021/2022 Budget		2022/23 Draft Budget	Notes
		CULTURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, REGULATORY AND PLANNING SERVICES				
		Cultural and Related Services				
		Recreation and Sport - Leisure and Recreation Grounds				
E & L	5120	Playing Fields and Pitches	21000	0	18,000	
E & L	5176	Play Equipment Repairs/Maintenance	3000	0	3,000	
E & L	5203	Grounds Maintenance - Contract	16500	-	-	In House
E & L	5204	Grounds Maintenance - General	1800	0	2,000	
E & L	5201	General Equipment Repairs and Hire	2000	0	2,000	
E & L	5202	New Equipment	2500	0	2,500	
	5205	Hire of Equipment	100	0	500	
E & L		Vehicle Running Costs				
E & L	5269	* Transit	2000	-	2,000	
E & L	5279	* Movano	2000	-	2,000	
E & L	5275	*Tractor	1500	-	1,500	
E & L	5271	* Ford Ranger	1500	-	1,500	
		TOTAL	53,900	0	35,000	
		Income				
E & L	4110	* Sport Income	-10,500	0	-11,500	
E & L	4120	* Event Income	-3,000	0	-5,500	
		TOTAL	-13,500	0	-17,000	
		Net Expenditure	40,400	0	18,000	
		Public Open Spaces, Planting and Allotments				
E & L	5100	Allotments	2,030	0	1,500	
E & L	5231	Hempstead Meadows and West Park LNRs + sites of conservation interest	2,500	0	3,000	Increase in exp gates & fencing
E & L	5295	Litter Bins	3,000	0	1,000	Reduce minimal exp 2021/22
	5296	Litter Collection, Open Spaces	3,700	0	8,500	Increase in litter collections double since Apr21
E&L	5375	Repair & replacement of street furniture	1,500	0	1,500	
E & L	5330	Corporate Signage	250	0	500	
E & L	5058	Protective Clothing	650	0	650	
E & L	5280	Fencing	750	0	1,000	
E & L	5299	Horticulture - Bedding	300	0	300	
E & L	5285	Tree Works	4,000	0	12,000	Increase due to Ash die back and surveys
E & L	5377	Cleaning Materials GROUND	150	0	100	
	5033	HMLNR & WPLNR	500		500	
		TOTAL	19,330	0	30,550	
		Income				
E & L	4100	* Allotments	-6,000	0	-6,100	
	4101	*Allotment Deposits	-800	0	-800	
	4275	* Environment Sundry Income	-200	0	-200	
E & L	4123	West Park Culvert Maintenance Agreement with WDC	-360	0	-400	
		TOTAL	-7,360	0	-7,500	
		Net Expenditure	11,970	0	23,050	
		Culture and Heritage				
E & L	5394	Twinning Hospitality	0	0	0	
E & L	5300	Civic Centre Events	13,500	0	15,000	
	5301	Performing Rights Society	500	0	250	
	5302	Event Advertising /Marketing	4,000	0	4,000	
	5078	Weald on the Field and Revival	0		3,000	
		TOTAL	18,000	-	22,250	

Environment and Leisure Budget 2022/2023

E & L	4050	Civic Centre Events	-17,500	0	-20,000	
		Net Expenditure	500	0	2,250	
Planning and Development Services						
		Economic Development				
E & L	5370	Town Security CCTV	3,000	0	2,200	
E & L	5373	Floral Displays Town Centre Baskets & Troughs	3,500	0	3,500	
		TOTAL	6,500	0	5,700	
E & L	4350	Income - Roundabout	-850	0	-850	
E&L	4390	CCTV - Chamber & Heathfield PC Contribution	-650	0	-620	
		Total	-1500	0	-1470	
		Net Expenditure	5,000	0	4,230	
Environmental and Regulatory Services						
E & L		Cemetery Services				
	5181	* Grave Digging	5,200	0	6,500	
	5180	* Rates/Water	1,800	0	2,000	11% increase anticipated in water rates
	5182	*Litter	1,600	0	1,800	
	5186	* Maintenance	400	0	400	
		TOTAL	9,000	0	10,700	
		Income				
E & L	4180	* Cemetery - Interments	-29,000	0	-37,500	Anticipating continued increase in burial/interments in 2022/23
	4181	* Cemetery - Memorials	-6,000	0	-6,000	
	4182	* Cemetery - Sundry Income	-300	0	-200	
	4183	* Cemetery - Maintenance Charge	-3,000	0	-4,000	
		TOTAL	-38,300	0	-47,700	
		Net Expenditure	-29,300	0	-37,000	
HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SERVICES						
		Highways and Transportation				
		Street Lights - Supply, Maintenance and Repairs				
E & L	5080	* Supply & Maintenance	10,000	0	11,000	
E & L	5081	* Repairs	2,500	0	13,000	
E & L	5082	* New Lights	0	0	0	
E & L	5372	Road Safety Week (rename to Climate Change EXPO Week)	0	0	0	Utilising carry forward from 2020/21
E & L	5086	Bus Shelters	100	0	100	
	5053	New Bus Shelter	0	0	0	
E&L	5350	Roundabout Expenditure	100	0	100	
		TOTAL	12,700	0	24,200	
		Income				
E & L	4370	* Road Safety Week	0	0	-150	Bookings for EXPO will start in Jan 2022, but anticipate some income from Apr onwards
E & L	4295/4240	* Delegated Functions	-1,325	0	-1,325	
		TOTAL	-1,325	0	-1,475	
		Net Expenditure	11,375	0	22,725	
Other Buildings and Services to the Public						
E & L	5294	Graffiti Removal	50	0	50	
		TOTAL	50	0	50	

Luxfords Budget 2022/2023

Committee	Nominal Code		2021/2022 Budget		2022/2023 Budget	Notes
		OTHER SERVICES				
GP		Luxfords				
	5810	* Food Purchases	37,500		36,000	
	5820	* Bar Purchases Non Alcoholic	2,700		1,600	
	5825	* Bar Purchases Alcoholic	5,000		6,000	
	5840	* Paper Consumables	2,600		1,700	
	5845	* Maintenance & Repairs	2,000		2,000	
	5850	Equipment	2,000		2,000	
	5855	Luxfords equipment hire	250		200	
	5860	Luxford Postage	100		0	
	5870	Stationery	50		70	
	5865	Luxford Telephone	175		170	
	5875	Luxford Recruitment Advertising	0		0	
	5880	Luxfords General Advertising	1,500		750	
	5890	* Uniforms & Protective Clothing	200		200	
	5895	* Training	0		0	
	5980	* Credit Charges	1,500		1,500	
	5861	* Rates	9,500		8,500	
	5862	Electricity	6,200		9,900	
	5863	Gas	600		1,150	
	5864	Water	1,300		1,200	
	5866	* Litter Collection	1,200		1,200	
	5867	* Stock Taker	780		780	
	5940	Luxfords salaries	94,727		93,177	
	5941	Luxfords National Insurance	4,386		3,953	
	5942	Luxfords Pension	17,507		15,339	
	5945	Luxfords Casual wages	6,000		6,000	
		*Management costs	0		0	
		TOTAL	197,775		193,389	
GP		Income				
	4810	* Restaurant Food Sales	-122,800		-118,000	
	4820	* Restaurant Bar Sales	-8,000		-7,000	
	4825	* Takeway	0		-1,000	
	4910	* Function Food Sales	-26,500		-20,000	
	4920	* Function Bar Sales	-17,500		-15,000	
	4850	*General equipment hire	0		0	
	4940	*Hire of Equipment	-1,100		-1,000	
	4840	*Hire of Luxfords	-2,250		-2,000	
	4950	*Sundry Income	-500		-500	
		TOTAL	-178,650		-164,500	
		Net Expenditure	19,125		28,889	
		Long Term Earmarked Projects				
		New dishwasher	0		500	Saving or funding towards new commercial dishwasher. They cost in the region of £1k
		Total	0		500	

Luxfords Budget 2022/2023

		Total Budget Expenditure	197,775	193,389
		Income	-178,650	-164,500
		Net Expenditure	19,125	28,889

		<u>TOTAL 2022/23</u>		
		Total Revenue Expenditure	197,775	193,389
		New Initiatives	0	0
		Total Long Term Earmarked Reserve Projects	0	500
		Total Budget Expenditure	197,775	193,889
		Total Income	- 178,650	-164,500
		Net Expenditure	19,125	29,389

GP Budget 2022/2023

Committee	Nominal Code		2021/2022 Budget		2022/2023 Budget	Notes
		CULTURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, REGULATORY AND PLANNING SERVICES				
		Cultural and Related Services				
		Recreation and Sport - Community Centres				
	5609	C/C Wood Pellets	10,500		10,000	
	5610	C/C rates	38,800		39,500	
	5611	C/C electricity	6,000		9,600	60% increase
	5612	C/C gas	2,750		5,250	90% increase
	5613	C/C water	3,000		3,120	4% increase
	5617	C/C Refuse collection	1,730		1,750	
	5620	C/C regular maintenance contracts	12,000		10,000	Reduce £2k based on previous years expenditure
	5650	C/C publicity	500		0	Can use events advertising budget under E&L Committee
	5660	C/C repairs and renewals	30,000		25,000	Reduce for saving of Weald Hall floor
GP	5610 - 5676	Civic Centre	105,280	0	104,220	
	5743	The Hub	6,500		5,000	
	5744	The Hub rates	0		0	
GP	5743 - 5747	The Hub	6,500	0	5,000	
	5760	F/H rates	2,920		3,000	
	5761	F/H electricity	665		1,065	60% increase
	5762	F/H gas	3,360		3,685	90% increase
	5763	F/H water	300		312	4% increase
	5765	F/H regular maintenance	1,500		1,500	
	5766	F/H repairs	2,500		2,500	
GP	5760 - 5769	Foresters Hall	11,245	0	12,062	
	5720	Victoria Pavilion rates	4,100		4,200	
	5721	V/P electricity	3,270		4,962	60% increase
	5722	V/P gas	3,161		6,005	90% increase
	5723	V/P water	1,691		1,758	4% increase
	5725	V/P regular maintenance	2,500		2,750	New CCTV installed annual maintenance
	5726	V/P repairs	3,000		3,250	
GP	5719 - 5729	Victoria Pavilion	17,722	0	22,925	
GP		Ridgewood Village Hall	0		0	
	5711	W/P Pavilion electricity	610		976	60% increase - will recharge back to leaseholder
	5713	W/P Pavilion water	550		572	Will recharge back to leaseholder
	5715	W/P Pavilion regular maintenance	2,000		0	Building leased for 2022 onwards
	5716	W/P Pavilion repairs	2,000		0	Building leased for 2022 onwards
GP	5709 - 5718	West Park Pavilion	0		0	
		TOTAL	5,160	0	1,548	
		Income				
	4610	Weald Hall	-20,650		-21,000	
	4615	Weald Hall - Commercial	-840		-1,000	
	4620	Council Chambers	-9,400		-10,000	
	4625	Council Chambers - Commercial	-200		-100	
	4630	Ashdown Room	-12,112		-12,000	
	4635	Ashdown Room - Commercial	-3,600		-3,500	
	4640	Green Room	-12,400		-12,000	
	4650	Oakleaf Room	-9,500		-7,000	

GP Budget 2022/2023

	4660	Mayors Parlour	-3,000		-12,000	
	4670	Equipment hire	-1,000		-500	
	4671	Martlets Room	-9,500		-7,000	
	4673	Community Toilet scheme	-1,100		-1,100	
GP	4610 - 4700	* Civic Centre	-83,302	0	-87,200	
	4690	*Quickborn Suite	-8,500		-8,500	
	4796	CAB rent	0		0	
	4797	CAB re-charge of services	0		0	
	4798	Source re-charge of services	-1,350		-1,400	
		Source rent	-2,400		-2,400	
GP	4796 - 4798	* The Hub	-3,750	0	-3,800	
	4760	F/H regular users	-17,500		-15,000	Reduce Debs dancers moving venue 2022 6.5hr week loss
	4761	F/H occasional users	-100		-100	
	4762	F/H commercial	-50		-50	
GP	4760 - 4763	* Foresters Hall	-17,650	0	-15,150	
	4719	V.P Sussex Support Service Rent	-10,500		-10,500	
	4720	Victoria Pavilion	-260		-260	
	4721	V/P repayment of electricity	-1,025		-1,500	
	4726	Victoria Garages (Cricket, Ensemble)	-240		-240	
	4723	V/P repayment of gas	-850		-1,200	
GP	4720 - 4723	* Victoria Pavilion	-12,875	0	-13,700	
GP	4781	* Ridgewood Village Hall	-750		-900	Awaiting insurance premium breakdown for exact income
GP	4710	* West Park Pavilion	-150		-6,600	
GP	4677	* FiT Payments - Civic Centre	-5,000		-5,000	
		* RHI Payments - Civic Centre	-10,000		-10,000	
		TOTAL	-15,900	0	-22,500	
		Net Expenditure				
		Planning and Development Services				
		Economic Development				
GP	5530/5532	Festive Lights				
	5530	Festive Lights	12,000		15,000	Increased to diversify
	5532	Festive lights electricity	300		480	60% increase
		TOTAL	12,300	0	15,480	
		Income				
GP	4530	* Festive Lights	-2,000		-2,200	
		Net Expenditure	10,300	0	13,280	
		CENTRAL SERVICES				
		Corporate and Democratic Core				
		Corporate Management				
		Administration and Hospitality				
	5410	Admin - general	2,150		2,000	
	5412	Admin - telephones	3,500		5,000	Broadband increase with VP
	5413	Admin - photocopier	3,500		4,000	
	5415	Postage	400		300	
	5416	Stationary	2,250		2,000	
GP	5410- 5417	* Administration	11,800	0	13,300	
GP	5435	* Hospitality	0		0	
GP	5455	Health and Safety	2,000		2,000	

GP Budget 2022/2023

GP	5425	* Recruitment	200		200	
GP	5425	* General	250		250	
		Accountant, Audit and Internal Audit Fees	0		0	
GP	5475	* Accountant Fees	4,600		4,700	
GP	5495	* External Audit Fees	2,400		2,500	
GP	5494	* Internal Audit Fees	1,800		1,950	
GP	5497	Professional Fees	10,500		10,000	
GP	5793	Subscriptions	4,000		4,500	
GP	5794	Training	5,500		5,500	£724 in EMR plus underspend in 2021/22
GP	5430	Office Equipment	9,500		9,500	
GP	5460	Insurances	35,000		36,500	
GP	5577	Newsletter	5,100		5,100	
GP	5490	Protective Clothing	400		400	
GP	7903. 2300	Loan Costs	61,600		60,910	
GP	5580 - 5590	Bank and Credit Charges	0		0	
	5581	Bank charges	550		600	
		TOTAL	143,400	0	144,610	
		Income				
GP	4403/4410	* Training/Administration	-100		-100	
	4414	Luxfords - re-allocation administration charges	0		0	
GP	4579 - 4583	* Bank Interest				
	4579	Special Int, Bearing Interest (Now Business Reserve)	-120		-90	
	4583	Interest Misc (Fixed rate bond)	-900		-200	
		TOTAL	-1,120	0	-390	
		Net Expenditure				
		Democratic Representation and Management				
GP	5543	Members Allowances	19,260		19,260	No increase
GP	5544	Members Expenses	100		100	No increase
GP	5465	Mayors Allowance	1,773		1,773	No increase
GP	5470	Elections	0		0	
		TOTAL	21,133	0	21,133	
		Income	0			
		Net Expenditure				
		Grants and Partnerships				
GP	5480	Grants Section 142	19,500		19,000	
GP	5485	Grants - Power of Well Being	27,500		27,500	
GP	5487	Volunteer Bureau Service Level Agreement	8,000		8,000	
		TOTAL	55,000	0	54,500	
		Income	0			
		Net Expenditure				
		Other Buildings and Services to the Public				
GP	5730-5732	Cemetery Buildings East & West	0	0	0	
	5730	Cemetary Buildings rates	1,800		1,850	
	5732	Cemetary Buildings repairs/contracts	900		750	
GP		Signal Box, Osborn Hall, Foresters Hall Chapel	0		0	
	5735	Signal Box Repairs/contracts	1,500		1,500	

GP Budget 2022/2023

		* Osborn Hall	0	0	0	
	5750	All buildings cleaning materials	2,000		2,000	
	5770	* Foresters Hall Chapel	0	0	0	
GP	5772-5774	2a Vernon Road	200		200	
GP	5790	Bridge Cottage	0	0	0	
		TOTAL	6,400	0	6,300	
		Income				
GP	4730	* Cemetery Building East	-5,500		-5,500	
GP	4775-4776	* Signal Box + Insurance recharge	-4,600		-4,600	
		Signal Box, Osborn Hall, Foresters Hall Chapel				
GP	4780	* Osborn Hall	-425		-425	Awaiting insurance premium breakdown for exact income
GP		* Foresters Hall Chapel	-1,150		-1,150	
GP	4771	* 2a Vernon Road	-7,200		-7,200	
GP	4783	* Bridge Cottage + Insurance recharge	-5,200		-5,200	Awaiting insurance premium breakdown for exact income
		TOTAL	-24,075	0	-24,075	
		Net Expenditure	-17,675		-17,775	
		SALARIES				
GP	5680 - 5682, 5795	Caretakers/Other Buildings				
	5680	Caretakers - salaries	78,233		71,241	
	5686	Casual Caretakers	500		250	
	5681	Caretakers - National Insurance	3,511		3,315	
		Caretakers - Pension	19,878		15,851	
	5795	Other building - salaries	5,653		4,992	Other buildings' cleaner
GP	5540 - 5542	Administration				
	5540	Office staff - salaries	204,500		214,042	
	5541	Office staff - National Insurance	19,125		20,567	
	5542	Office staff - pension	44,424		39,384	
		TOTAL	375,824	0	369,642	
		Total Revenue Expenditure	771,764		770,720	
		Total Income	-169,172		-177,515	
			602,592	0	593,205	
		Saving for Long Term Earmarked Projects				
		Elections	5,000		5,000	
		W Hall Floor	5,000		5,000	
		Signal Box replacement boiler	250		0	Project Complete
		Civic Centre communal carpet - 10 year project	0		500	
		5 yearly EICR's for all outlets	2,800		2,800	
		Future reconfiguration or renovations to existing buildings	20,000		15,000	
		Civic centre lift upgrade	0		5,000	
		Climate change carbon emissions reduction projects	0		10,000	
			33,050	0	43,300	
		Total New Initiatives 2022/23				
		Building Maintenance	0		62,000	See breakdown

GP Budget 2022/2023

	Victoria Pavilion additional CCTV	0	2,000
	Civic Centre gutter clearance and bird netting	0	7,000
	Civic Centre signage	0	2,000
	262 Bus Service	0	3,900
	WPA NHS Top-Up	0	1,854
		0	78,754
		868,314	892,774

<u>Total</u>	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2022/23</u>
Total Revenue Expenditure	771,764	770,720
Total Long Term Earmarked Reserve Projects	33,050	43,300
Total New Initiatives	63,500	78,754
Total Budget Expenditure	868,314	892,774
Total Income	-169,172	-177,515
Net Expenditure	699,142	715,259

Agenda Item 16.0 - Appendix A

Proposed expenditure on Building Maintenance Fund 2022/23		
Year 8	Estimate	Actual
Signal Box refurb windows ext decoration	5000	
Civic Centre storage solution caretaker station	10000	
Foresters Hall render repairs	3000	
Osborn & Ridgewood car park drainage	30000	
Civic Centre parking resurface, repair drainage and parking markings	7500	
Foresters Kitchen fittings	4000	
Contingency	2500	
Total	62000	



UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Property Asset Management Plan

2022- 27

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1.0 Purpose of the Asset Management Plan

Uckfield Town Council first drafted an Asset Management Plan in 2001 in line with guidance from the Department of the Environment and Transport, and the Regions. It provided details of the operational assets at that time in terms of land and buildings, vehicles and non-operational assets which were leased out to other parties. However, this document did not closely align with the Town Council's strategic documents at that time nor was it referred to on a regular basis.

The Town Council produced a new Asset Management Plan in 2017. The Town Council recognised the important role that property plays in supporting the Town Council to deliver its strategic and annual plans and wants to provide a clear and accessible statement of its intentions for the portfolio both in the immediate year and over the next five years. The Asset Management Plan has been written in accordance with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Public Sector Property Asset Management Guidelines and further reflects good practice as recognised by Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. It provides a clear, approved strategy for the management of the Town Council's property assets.

2.0 Function of the Asset Management Plan

1. To manage the asset portfolio in support of the Town Council's Annual Plan and Strategic Plan;
2. To define the property portfolio, its value, condition and suitability to deliver the Town Council's priorities;
3. To outline the policy for holding, acquiring and disposing of the property assets;
4. To identify opportunities to rationalise, invest or develop the property portfolio to support the Town Council's corporate priorities and the need for financial return;
5. To raise awareness of property as a valuable and workable asset in support of the Town Council's corporate priorities;
6. To manage the asset portfolio to deliver the needs of the Town Council's services;
7. To maximise asset value and asset use through strategic maintenance and operational planning;

The property assets are managed both individually and as an entire portfolio to maximise operational value, income generation and capital value at all times whilst complying with the requirements for commercial sensitivity, economic viability, best value and probity.

The Asset Management Plan (AMP) identifies the anticipated maintenance budget requirement over a five to ten-year period for the building assets. This is used to assist in financial planning and to indicate ongoing costs related to the individual assets to inform strategic decisions on their future.

The AMP is subject to consultation processes which are summarised at Appendix 1.

The management of the property assets is subject to external and internal influences which are summarised at Appendix 2.

The AMP will support the Council in the delivery of its corporate priorities through ensuring that the portfolio is dynamically managed with focus directed towards priority areas, maintenance costs kept to a sustainable level and strategic decisions based on delivering services and optimising financial return.

3.0 The Town Council's Asset Portfolio

The Portfolio comprises 65 land and property assets. These assets comprise buildings, land, recreation grounds and playing fields, woodland, cemeteries, allotments, playgrounds and a signal box. In addition, the Town Council holds a number of wayleaves, licences and leases and street furniture.

Asset Type	Number of Assets
Allotment	7
Building	13
Cemetery	2
Land	16
Nature Reserve	3
Path	1
Playground	8
Pond	2
Recreation Ground	7
Woodland	6
Total	65

The assets are summarised in the Asset Register at Appendix 3 in accordance with these categories.

A number of the Town Council's assets were last valued in 31 March 2019. This exercise is typically undertaken every five years and will next be carried out in April 2024. The values given are made for capital accounting purposes in accordance with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Valuation Standards and with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards.

The basis of the value used for each property depended upon the type of asset held and whether it is used by the Council or held for investment purposes. The uses were categorised into:

Operational (specialised) – used by Council/purpose built properties

Operational (non-specialised) – used by Council/more general use

Non-Operational – usually held for investment

Heritage – a historic building held for its cultural, educational and environmental values

Please note that the most recent market valuation classified Bridge Cottage as a heritage asset. This is a change from the March 2014 asset valuation, as at that time, it was categorised as a non-operational asset held for investment purposes.

In March 2014, the asset portfolio was valued at £4,513,250 ^[1] (March 2014) with an annual rental income of £52,658 (*which includes all income from building rents and other rents and wayleaves at Nov 2018*) and an annual maintenance budget which has recently been in the region of £70-£100k to work through some major works required.

In March 2019, the asset portfolio was valued at £5,823,050 with an annual rental income of £55,271 (*which includes all income from lease/licence agreement rental payments and wayleaves only at December 2019*) and an annual maintenance budget which has recently been in the region of £60k to 70k per annum.

The works and servicing requirement for the buildings is prioritised to ensure that all legislative compliance needs are met followed by maintaining a 'fitness for purpose' to deliver the operational need and to maintain the asset value.

In 2014, a Building Maintenance Programme was commissioned which is now moving into its eighth year. The plan details the work needed on the building assets where the Town Council has a maintenance responsibility and provides an estimate of the cost of the work.

A new stock condition survey was carried out in 2019, which helps identify the plan of future works to be carried out over the next five years.

The Town Council reviews the building maintenance programme on an annual basis in order to prioritise works in accordance with the condition of all buildings. The Town Council has also recently reviewed works, to see what works can be carried out by local contractors and smaller firms in contrast to larger scale or specialist works.

Up to date rebuild valuations have also been undertaken of all Town Council buildings in 2019 and 2020 to inform the Town Council's building insurance policy. These may need to be reviewed in 2022/23 as a result of building material costs increasing.

4.0 Asset Management Strategy 2022-27

The Asset Management Strategy defines the framework for the property portfolio management over the next three to five years. The Town Council will:

- Manage the assets to support the objectives of the Strategic Plan;
- Manage the assets in accordance with relevant legislation;
- Undertake a review of existing land use;
- Consider the acquisition and disposal of assets to support the strategic priorities;
- Undertake a full review of leases, licences and other land interests to ensure that they are up to date and that all occupations are properly regularised;
- Review statutory compliance of the Town Council's buildings to ensure that proper procedures are in place to comply with Health and Safety requirements;
- Produce and update a Maintenance Strategy to support the Asset Management Strategy which, when combined will jointly assist in the delivery of the corporate priorities. The maintenance plan will identify the annual actions that will need to be carried out from year to year to achieve the Maintenance Strategy;
- Identify opportunities to work with partners to support wider public sector real estate strategies.

5.0 Asset Management Strategy Delivery 2022-23

The Asset Management Plan underpins the five-year property asset strategy and also breaks this down into stages to be achieved in each financial year of the Asset Management Plan. Over the next financial year, the Town Council will:

- Review and confirm the Maintenance Strategy for the next 5 years;
- Consider options for delivering the backlog of maintenance;
- Deliver year 8 of the planned building maintenance programme;
- Develop a programme and commence the review of the leases, licences and land titles;
- Consider initiatives listed within the Town Council's strategic plan to upgrade or improve the facilities offered by the Town Council such as West Park Pavilion etc. This will be considered in the context of the overall property portfolio;
- Explore options for creating further recreational facilities;
- Land holdings will be reviewed to reflect the Town Council's people and financial objectives;
- Manage consultants and contractors to deliver the asset management objectives;
- Report six monthly on the delivery of the asset management plan objectives.

6.0 Process for Adoption and Operation

The Town Clerk will present the Asset Management Plan to the Town Council for approval and adoption.

If approved, the Asset Management Plan will form the strategy under which the property portfolio is managed by the Town Clerk on behalf of the Town Council. The Town Clerk will agree targets for the delivery of the strategy over the forthcoming financial year and will report at the end of the financial year as part of the asset management plan annual review.

7.0 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Consultation and protocols

Appendix 2: External Influences

Appendix 3: Asset Register

Appendix 1 - Consultation and Protocols

The draft Asset Management Plan will be presented to the Town Council for consideration with a recommendation that it be accepted and formalised into the Final Asset Management Plan subject to any amendments that the Town Council wish to see included into the final document.

The AMP will then be amended to reflect the Town Council's decision and the final document will be published and will confirm the strategy upon which the property assets will be managed for the period of the Asset Management Plan.

The AMP will be presented to the Town Council each year in draft alongside the draft budget and draft priorities to summarise progress over the outgoing financial year and to identify targets for the forthcoming financial year. The Town Council will be invited to review progress and approve the following year's targets.

The Town Clerk will report to the Town Council on the progress of the Asset Management Plan on a six-monthly basis via Full Council and the delivery of the objectives for the specific financial year.

Appendix 2 – External Influences

Legislation

The property portfolio will be managed and maintained in accordance with relevant legislation to ensure compliance with Health and Safety, Landlord and Tenant, Planning and environmental legislation.

Best Practice

In addition, the portfolio will be managed in accordance with best practice following relevant industry guidelines and guidelines and policies from Central Government.

New leases will be let in accordance with RICS best practice; Asset maintenance will follow the RICS best practice on maintenance management as outlined in Strategic Facilities Management Guidance Note.

Where appropriate the Town Council will follow the Government's Transparency Code for recording asset database details.

Property Market

Recommendations for the strategic and operational management and maintenance of the Town Council's property assets will be made having regard to the nature of the property market at the relevant time.

Appendix 3 - Asset Register

Allotment

ID	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY	ASSET TYPE	TENURE	SIZE
OS13	Ridgewood Allotments (i)	Allotment land, declared Town Council land 1978. Members agreed in 2009 (FC.082.03.09) during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment that no allotment sites should be offered for housing development.	Allotment	Freehold	0.72ha
OS27	West Park Allotments	Allotment land, transferred from developer in 1987 with restrictive covenants in place. As per FC.082.03.09 above.	Allotment	Freehold	0.36ha
OS30	Bell Lane Allotments	Allotments leased from ESCC in 1995. As per FC.082.03.09 above.	Allotment	Leasehold	0.19ha
OS32	Bird-in-Eye Allotments	Allotment land purchased in 1932 with restrictive covenants. As per FC.082.03.09 above.	Allotment	Freehold	0.85ha
OS39	Framfield Road Allotments (i)	Allotment land purchased in 1932, divided by road to hospital in 1992. As per FC.082.03.09 above.	Allotment	Freehold	0.86ha
OS40	Framfield Road Allotments (ii)	Allotment land purchased in 1932, divided by road to hospital in 1992. As per FC.082.03.09 above.	Allotment	Freehold	0.43ha
OS48	Ridgewood Allotments (ii)	Allotment land, declared Town Council land 1978.	Allotment	Freehold	0.76ha

Building

ID	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY	ASSET TYPE	TENURE	SIZE
OS16	Ridgewood Village Hall	Hall leased on full repairing lease to Ridgewood Village Hall Management Committee. (25 year term from April 2010)	Building	Freehold, leased out	0.21ha
OS24	2A Vernon Road	Flat and garden to the rear of Foresters Hall. Purchased in 1994, rented out.	Building	Freehold, leased out	0.06ha
OS38	Foresters Hall	Community hall and associated land/car park purchased in 1986 and available for hire to community groups and individuals.	Building	Freehold	0.10ha
OS45	Victoria Pavilion	Pavilion building adjacent to Victoria Pleasure Ground. Ground floor of pavilion available for hire by recreation ground users or organisations. First floor of pavilion leased to Sussex Support Services. (5-year term from due for renewal Aug 2025)	Building	Freehold, leased out	0.03ha

ID	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY	ASSET TYPE	TENURE	SIZE
OS49	West Park Pavilion	<p>Pavilion building adjacent to West Park recreation ground. Pavilion is available for hire by recreation ground users or organisations.</p> <p>The building was transferred by developer in 1987 with restrictive covenants in place. Previously reviewed for redevelopment.</p> <p>Currently working with a local sports club to transfer the building to their management under a full repairing lease agreement for five years.</p>	Building	Freehold	0.02ha
OS50	The Hub	<p>Building purchased from ESCC in 2007.</p> <p>Wealden Citizen's Advice (previous tenants) moved to Uckfield Library in 2020.</p> <p>Northern side of building (the Source) is leased to The Baptist Church on a two-year lease agreement due for renewal early 2023.</p>	Building	Freehold	0.03ha
OS51	Civic Centre	<p>Building housing Town Council Offices, meeting rooms, function rooms and restaurant. Opened in 1991 by the Mayor.</p>	Building	Freehold	0.12ha
OS55	Bridge Cottage	<p>Historic building purchased from ESCC in 1984. Leased to Uckfield and District Preservation Society (25 year full repairing lease from December 2015). Previously reviewed for redevelopment.</p>	Building	Freehold, leased out	0.01ha

ID	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY	ASSET TYPE	TENURE	SIZE
OS55a	Bridge Cottage - Shop Adjacent	Building adjacent to Bridge Cottage and associated land. Purchased in 2010. Forms part of above lease arrangements with Uckfield and District Preservation Society.	Building	Freehold, leased out	
OS56	Signal Box	Former Signal Box building, purchased from British Railways Board in 1993. Leased out to commercial tenant (lease due for renewal in Dec 2021).	Building	Freehold, leased out	
OS57	Osborn Hall	Community hall leased out to Guide Association on a full repairing lease. (20 year term from Jan 2006 – review to be undertaken every five years).	Building	Freehold, leased out	0.02ha
OS63	Large storage unit - Victoria Pleasure Ground	Building used to store grounds equipment and vehicles. Completed in 2012.	Building	Freehold	
OS64	Double garage storage - Victoria Pleasure Ground	Set of double garages. One leased to Anderida Cricket Club and one is leased to Uckfield Performance Ensemble on full repairing leases. Currently due for renewal.	Building	Freehold, leased out	

Cemetery

ID	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY	ASSET TYPE	TENURE	SIZE
OS34	Snatts Road Cemetery and Chapel	Cemetery (new section) purchased in 1942.	Cemetery	Freehold	1.33ha

OS35	Snatts Road Cemetery and Chapel	<p>Cemetery and Chapel</p> <p>(Consecration of chapel removed by Lord Bishop of Chichester in 1999). One chapel and part of second chapel leased to commercial tenant – lease agreements due for renewal in Aug 2022). Part of second chapel utilised by Uckfield Town Council.</p>	Cemetery	Freehold	1.19ha
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Land

ID	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY	ASSET TYPE	TENURE	SIZE
OS1	Land to the north of Hart Close	Open land adjacent to road, transferred to Town Council by developer. Previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. It was considered unsuitable at the time.	Land	Freehold	0.22ha
OS2	Hempstead Fields	Open land adjacent to recreation ground, transferred to Town Council by developer in 1991. Previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.	Land	Freehold	1.69ha
OS6	Hunters Way	Open land with footpaths and tree planting, transferred to Town Council by developer in 1973. Previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. It was considered unsuitable at the time.	Land	Freehold	0.36ha

ID	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY	ASSET TYPE	TENURE	SIZE
OS7	Linnet Green	Open land adjacent to road, acquired by Town Council in 1955. Previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. It was considered unsuitable at the time.	Land	Freehold	0.05ha
OS9	Land at Harlands Farm	Open land and woods, transferred to Town Council by developer in 1989. Previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. It was considered unsuitable at the time.	Land	Freehold	0.30ha
OS10	New Barn Farm	Open land, transferred to Town Council by developer in 1990. Previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. It was agreed it was not appropriate at that time.	Land	Freehold	3.24ha
OS11	Oaklea Way	Open land adjacent to road, previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.	Land	Freehold	0.11ha
OS18	Rocks Park Bank	Open land adjacent to road junction. Previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. It was considered unsuitable at the time.	Land	Freehold	0.07ha
OS19	Rocks Park Flats	Open land with footpaths and tree planting, transferred to Town Council by developer in 1990. Previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.	Land	Freehold	0.28ha

ID	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY	ASSET TYPE	TENURE	SIZE
OS21	Land at Selby Road (Selby Meadows)	Open land under 10 year licence from December 2020 for community use with New Town Action Group. Land has been confirmed by Wealden District Council as being designated as an Asset of Community Value.	Land	Freehold, licenced out	0.13ha
OS22	Shepherds Gate	Open land, transferred to Town Council by developer in 1995. Previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. It was considered unsuitable.	Land	Freehold	0.16ha
OS23	Swallow Court	Open land, transferred to Town Council by developer in 1955. Previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. It was considered unsuitable.	Land	Freehold	0.03ha
OS31	Bellbrook Open Space	Open land, transferred from developer in 1995 with restrictive covenants. Previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. Considered unsuitable as currently a de facto Nature Reserve.	Land	Freehold	1.46ha

ID	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY	ASSET TYPE	TENURE	SIZE
OS33	Browns Lane Rockery and Path	<p>Open land, transferred from developer in 1991 with restrictive covenants. Previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. It was considered unsuitable.</p> <p>Licence now in place (2021) with Manor Park & Hempstead Meadows Residents' Association for the supply, planting and maintenance of up to five cherry trees, the installation of a bench and associated plaque in honour of those who lost their lives to Covid.</p>	Land	Freehold Trees under licence to RAssoc	0.08ha
OS37	Elizabeth Gardens	Open land with footpath. Previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. It was considered unsuitable.	Land	Freehold	0.14ha
OS52	Land and woods at Harlands Farm	Land and woods, transferred to Town Council by developer in 1989, adjacent to Harlands Farm. Previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.	Land	Freehold	0.03ha

Nature Reserve

ID	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY	ASSET TYPE	TENURE	SIZE
OS20	Hempstead Meadows LNR	Open land established as a nature reserve in 2002. Previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. It was agreed that none should be released.	Nature Reserve	Freehold	1.60ha
OS58	HMLNR extension	Open land adjacent to Hempstead Lane Local Nature Reserve, transferred to the Town Council by developer in 2008. Previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. It was agreed that none should be released.	Nature Reserve	Freehold	2.42ha
OS29	West Park Local Nature Reserve	Open land, transferred from developer in 1990 with agreement to create local nature reserve. Previously reviewed for redevelopment during a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. It was agreed that none should be released.	Land	Freehold	11.04ha

Path

ID	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY	ASSET TYPE	TENURE	SIZE
OS62	Land on South side of 32 Keld Drive and North side of 33 Keld Drive	Access path to the Bird-in-Eye allotments	Path		

Playground

ID	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY	ASSET TYPE	TENURE	SIZE
OS5	Hughes Way	Playground with play equipment, transferred to Town Council by developer in 1998. New play equipment installed in Feb 2018.	Playground	Freehold	0.09ha
OS12	Oakwood Drive	Playground with play equipment, transferred from developer in 1987.	Playground	Freehold	0.09ha
OS15	Ridgewood Play Area	Playground with play equipment, declared Town Council land 1978. New play equipment & MUGA installed in Oct 2016.	Playground	Freehold	0.03ha
OS17	Rocks/West Park Play Area	Playground with play equipment.	Playground	Freehold	0.33ha
OS36	Downland Copse	Playground with basketball court, transferred from developer in 1993.	Playground	Freehold	0.15ha
OS44	Luxford Field Play Area	Playground with play equipment, transferred to Town Council from ESCC in 1983. Play area shape redesigned and full play area upgraded with accessibility in Sept 2020.	Playground	Freehold	0.13ha
OS46	Hempstead Play Area	Playground with play equipment, acquired by Town Council in 1932. New play equipment installed in August 2013.	Playground	Freehold	0.02ha

ID	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY	ASSET TYPE	TENURE	SIZE
OS47	Victoria Play Area	Play area, part of Victoria Pleasure Ground, leased from Richard James Streatfield in 1897 for 999 years. New surfacing added in 2017.	Playground	Leasehold	0.09ha

Pond

ID	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY	ASSET TYPE	TENURE	SIZE
OS53	Harlands Farm Pond	Pond, transferred to Town Council by developer in 1989, adjacent to Harlands Farm.	Pond	Freehold	0.16ha
OS61	Balancing Pond at Harlands	Balancing pond behind pumping station on Mallard Drive, transferred to Town Council by developer in 1989, adjacent to Harlands Farm.	Pond	Freehold	0.21ha

Recreation Ground

ID	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY	ASSET TYPE	TENURE	SIZE
OS3	Hempstead Lane Recreation Ground	Recreation ground, acquired in 1932, with some restrictions.	Recreation Ground	Freehold	0.76ha
OS8	Luxford Field	Open land for recreation open space, public recreation ground or a site of a community building, transferred from ESCC in 1983. Requirements are in place that need to be observed and site considered sacrosanct by Town Council.	Land	Freehold	1.13ha

OS14	Ridgewood Recreation Ground	Open land used as recreation area, declared Town Council land 1978.	Recreation Ground	Freehold	1.94ha
OS25	Victoria Pleasure Ground Tennis Courts	Tennis Court, part of Victoria Pleasure Ground, leased from Richard James Streatfield in 1897 for 999 years.	Recreation Ground	Leasehold	0.12ha
OS26	Victoria Pleasure Ground	Recreation ground, leased from Richard James Streatfield in 1897 for 999 years.	Recreation Ground	Leasehold	3.37ha
OS28	West Park Playing Fields	Recreation ground, transferred from developer in 1987 with restrictive covenants in place. Incorporates football pitches.	Recreation Ground	Freehold	2.97ha
OS42	Harlands Farm playing fields	Open recreation ground, transferred to Town Council by developer in 1989, adjacent to Harlands Farm. Incorporates football pitches.	Recreation Ground	Freehold	2.07ha

Woodland

ID	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY	ASSET TYPE	TENURE	SIZE
OS4	Boothland Wood	Woodland transferred to Town Council by developer with restrictive covenants. .	Woodland	Freehold	4.99ha
OS41	Nightingale Wood	Woodland, transferred to Town Council by developer in 1989, adjacent to Harlands Farm.	Woodland	Freehold	2.00ha

ID	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY	ASSET TYPE	TENURE	SIZE
OS43	Bridge Farm Road Wood	Woodland, transferred to Town Council by developer in 2002 with restrictive covenants.	Woodland	Freehold	0.66ha
OS54	Harlands Farm woods	Woodland, transferred to Town Council by developer in 1989, adjacent to Harlands Farm.	Woodland	Freehold	0.16ha
OS59	Nightingale Wood (extension)	Woodland, transferred to Town Council by developer in 1989, adjacent to Harlands Farm.	Woodland	Freehold	0.31ha
OS60	Nightingale Wood (extension)	Woodland, transferred to Town Council by developer in 1989, adjacent to Harlands Farm.	Woodland	Freehold	0.46ha

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



STANDING ORDERS

Issue No.	Date Agreed	Details of amendments
1	2 nd May 2006	Reissued in new format
2	25 th March 2008	General Purposes (GP.070.03.08)
3	28 th April 2008	Full Council (FC.096.04.08)
4	6 th July 2009	Full Council (FC.018.07.09)
5	10 th January 2011	Complete reissue of document at Full Council in accordance with revised NALC Model Standing Orders. (FC.049.01.11)
6	16 th May 2011	Annual Statutory Meeting – Review of SO 34.2
7	11 th November 2013	Full Council (FC.55.11.13) Comprehensive amendments following introduction of Localism Act 2011
8	7 th July 2014	Amendments to start times of meetings.
9	20 th April 2015	FC - General review and update
10	4 th July 2016	FC – General review and update
11	22 nd August 2016	FC – Minor amendment to 9.3. Plus amendments to Section 34 (Financial Matters) following update to financial regulations approved by GP Committee on 15 th August 2016.
12	30 th July 2018	Refresh in line with NALC Model Standing Orders (revised 2018)
13	17 January 2022	FC - Full review in line with NALC Model Standing Orders (revised 2020)

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STANDING ORDERS

Standing Orders set out how all committees, sub-committees and associated groups of the Council conduct their business and should be read in conjunction with the Council's

- Financial Regulations
- Code of Conduct Policy (No. 43).

Reference to the masculine gender should also be construed as a reference to the feminine gender except where the context suggests otherwise.

Reference to, 'the Mayor', should also be construed as reference to the Chairman of any committee or sub-committee, except that of Full Council.

1.0 ROLE OF STANDING ORDERS

- 1.1 The Town Clerk shall provide a copy of the Council's Standing Orders to a Councillor upon delivery of his declaration of acceptance of office.
- 1.2 The Chairman's decision as to the application of Standing Orders at meetings shall be final.
- 1.3 A Councillor's failure to observe Standing Orders more than three times in one meeting may result in him being excluded from the meeting in accordance with Standing Orders.

2.0 VARIATION, REVOCATION AND SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

- 2.1 Any or every part of these Standing Orders except those printed in **bold type** may be suspended by resolution in relation to any specific item of business. Standing Orders printed in **bold type** cannot be altered.
- 2.2 A resolution permanently to add, vary or revoke a Standing Order shall when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

3.0 MEETINGS

Timing and Business

- 3.1 **Full Council - m**Meetings shall not take place in premises, which at the time of the meeting, are used for the supply of alcohol unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.
- 3.2(a) **Full Council - the minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**
- 3.2(b) **Committee meetings - the minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice OR (the minimum three clear days' public notice of a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issues or the day of the meeting)**

3.3 The duration of all Council committee or sub-committee meetings shall not exceed two hours, unless before this period is exceeded a proposal to suspend this Standing Order for a nominated length of maximum time receives a majority vote from those present. After this time the meeting shall be adjourned and any business not completed shall be completed at a resumed meeting to be notified by the Clerk; such resumed meeting shall be held before the next scheduled meeting. At the resumption, only the business not completed at the previous meeting shall be considered.

3.4 Meetings of the Council and its committees shall be held at the Uckfield Civic Centre normally from 7.00 pm on such dates as the Council may direct.

Questions by the Public

3.5 **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion by means of the following resolution:-**

"That in view of the special or confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960".

3.6 Subject to Standing Order 3.5 above, members of the public are permitted to make representations, ask, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda.

3.7 The period of time which is at the Mayor's discretion shall not exceed fifteen minutes.

3.8 Subject to Standing Order 3.6 above, each member of the public is entitled to speak once only in respect of business itemised on the agenda and shall not speak for more than three minutes.

3.9 In accordance with Standing Order 3.6 above, a question asked by a member of the public during a public participation session at a meeting shall not require a response or debate.

3.10 In accordance with Standing Order 3.9 above, the Mayor may direct that a response to a question posed by a member of the public be referred to a Councillor for an oral response or to an employee for a written or oral response.

3.11 A record of a public participation session at a meeting shall be included in the minutes of that meeting.

3.12 A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The Mayor may at any time permit an individual to be seated when speaking.

3.13 Any person speaking at a meeting shall address his comments to the Mayor.

3.14 Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wishes to speak, the Mayor shall direct the order of speaking.

Press and public attending and reporting on meetings

- 3.15(a) **Subject to standing order 3.5, a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To “report” means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to the persons not present.**
- 3.15(b) **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**
- 3.15(c) **Filming and recording of all Council, committee and sub-committee meetings open to the public is welcomed but restrictions do apply to protect confidential information and those individuals who do not wish to be recorded. The Town Council will provide assistance to anyone who wishes to carry out any recording in accordance with its Recording of Meetings Policy. (No. 72)**
- 3.16 **The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**

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Members' conduct at meetings

- 3.17 **Subject to Standing Orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Mayor may in his absence be done by, to or before the Deputy Mayor.**
- 3.18 **The Mayor, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Mayor is absent from a meeting, the Deputy Mayor, if present, shall preside. If both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor are absent from a meeting, a Councillor as chosen by the Councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- 3.19 **When a Member speaks at Full Council, and the Town Council's standing committees (General Purposes, Environment & Leisure and Plans), they must address the meeting through the Chairman and use the microphone. If more than one Member indicates that they wish to speak, the Chairman will ask one to speak and the others must wait in the order in which they notified the Chairman of their intention to speak, unless in the case of paragraph 8.16 when a Councillor wishes to interrupt on a point of order.**
- 3.20 **Subject to Standing Order 3.26 below, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the Councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting thereon.**
- 3.21 **The Mayor may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.**
- 3.22 **Members shall vote by a show of hands or, if at least two Councillors so request, by signed ballot. At the request of a Councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each Councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.**

- 3.23 The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
- (i) the time and place of the meeting;
 - (ii) record the names of Councillors who are present and the names of the councillors who are absent;
 - (iii) interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights (as detailed below)
 - (iv) the grant of dispensations to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - (v) whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
 - (vi) if there was a public participation session; and;
 - (vii) the resolutions made-
- 3.24(a) **The Code of Conduct adopted by the Council shall apply to Councillors in respect of the entire meeting.**
- 3.24(b) **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable prejudicial interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter.**
- 3.25 **An interest arising from the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council, the existence and nature of which is required to be disclosed by a Councillor at a meeting shall be recorded in the minutes.**
- 3.26 **Five Members or one-third of the total membership, whichever is the greater, shall constitute a quorum at meetings of the Council.**
- (For a quorum relating to committees, sub-committees and other meetings, please refer to Standing Order 19.1.9)
- 3.27 **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be adjourned.** Any outstanding business of a meeting so adjourned shall be completed at a resumed meeting to be notified by the Clerk; such resumed meeting shall be held before the next scheduled meeting. At the resumption, only the business not completed at the previous meeting shall be considered.
- 4.0 ~~THE ANNUAL STATUTORY MEETING~~ ORDINARY MEETINGS**
- 4.1 **In an election year, the Annual Meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new Councillors elected take office.**
- 4.2 **In a year which is not an election year, the Annual Meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council may direct.**
- 4.3 **The Annual Meeting of the Council shall take place at 7.00pm.**
- 4.4 **In addition to the Annual Meeting of the Council, at least five other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council directs.**
- 4.5 **The election of the Mayor of the Council and Deputy Mayor shall be the first business ~~completed~~ conducted at the Annual Meeting of the Council.**

- 4.6 The Mayor, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the Annual Meeting until his successor is elected at the next Annual Meeting of the Council.
- 4.7 The Deputy Mayor of the Council, if any, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Mayor at the next Annual Meeting of the Council.
- 4.8 In an election year, if the current Mayor has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the meeting until a successor Mayor has been elected. The current Mayor shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Mayor but ~~must~~ shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- 4.9 In an election year, if the current Mayor has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the meeting until a new Mayor has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the Mayor and ~~must~~ shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- 4.10 Following the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Council at the Annual Meeting of the Council, the order of business shall be as follows.
- 4.10.1 ~~In an election year, delivery by the Mayor and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council of his acceptance of office form unless the Council resolved for this to be done at a later date; To receive the Mayor's declaration of acceptance of office or, if not then received, to decide when it shall be received.~~
- 4.10.2 To elect a Deputy Town Mayor.
- 4.10.3 In the ordinary year of election of the Council to fill any vacancies left unfilled at the election by reason of insufficient nominations.
(Co-option Policy No. 44)
- 4.10.4 To decide when any declarations of acceptance of office which have not been received as provided by law shall be received.
- 4.10.5 Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
- 4.10.6 Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee
- 4.10.7 Consideration the recommendations made by a committee
- 4.10.8 Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities
- 4.10.9 Review of the terms of reference for committees
- 4.10.10 To appoint committees, sub-committees and other groups as necessary.

4.10.11 To appoint any new committees in accordance with standing order 19.0

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~~4.10.6 To appoint representatives to outside bodies.~~

4.10.12 Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations

4.10.13 Review of arrangements with other local authorities, not for profit bodies and businesses

4.10.14 Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back

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4.10.15 In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future:

4.10.16 Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment

4.10.17 Confirmation of arrangements for insurance over in respect of insurable risks

4.10.18 Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies:

4.10.19 Review of the Council's complaints procedure

4.10.20 Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation

4.10.21 Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media

4.10.22 Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures

4.10.23 Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence

4.10.24 Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council

~~4.10.7 To inspect any deeds and trust instruments in the custody of the Council as required.~~

~~4.10.8 To read and consider the minutes, provided a copy has been circulated to each Councillor not later than the day of issue of the summons to attend the meeting, the minutes may be taken as read.~~

~~4.10.9 After consideration, to approve the signature of the minutes as a correct record by the person presiding.~~

4.10.10 **Business as specified in the summons including:-**

4.10.11 **To deal with business expressly required by statute to be done.**

4.10.12 To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting.

- 4.10.13 To receive such communications as the person presiding may wish to lay before the Council.
- 4.10.14 To answer previously notified questions from Councillors.
- 4.10.15 To receive the minutes and consider reports and recommendations of committees.
- 4.10.16 To consider resolutions or recommendations in the order in which they have been notified.
- 4.10.17 To receive and consider reports from officers of the Council.
- 4.10.18 To authorise the sealing of documents.
- 4.10.19 Councillors may request an item to be placed on an agenda of the relevant committee at least seven days prior to the publication of the agenda supported by a written report. Questions do not require a seconder but the Chairman of the committee would use their discretion as to the inclusion of an item.
- 4.10.20 Any other business specified in the summons.

5.0 PROPER OFFICER

5.1 The Council's Proper Officer shall be either:

- (i) the Clerk or such other employee as may be nominated by the Council from time to time or
- (ii) such other employee appointed by the Council to undertake the role of the Proper Officer during the Proper Officer's absence.

The Proper Officer and the employee appointed to act as such during the Proper Officer's absence shall fulfil the duties assigned to the Proper Officer in Standing Orders.

5.2 The Council's Proper Officer shall do the following:-

- 5.2.1 **At least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee or a sub-committee,**
- Sign and serve on Councillors electronically if agreed, by delivery or post at their residences a signed summons confirming the time, date, venue and the agenda, and of a meeting of the Council and a meeting of a committee and sub-committee at least three clear days before the meeting.
- 5.2.2 **Provide, in a conspicuous place, Give public notice of the time, date, venue and agenda at least three clear days before a meeting of the Council or a meeting of a committee or a sub-committee (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by Councillors is signed by them).**
- 5.2.3 Subject to Standing Orders 6.1 – 6.5 below, include in the agenda all motions in the order received unless a Councillor has given written notice at least five days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it.

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5.2.4 Convene a meeting of Full Council for the election of a new Mayor of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office, in accordance with Standing Order 5.2.1 above.

To receive nominations for the position of Mayor and Deputy Mayor by a deadline of seven working days prior to the Annual Statutory Meeting of full Council. Any nominations put forward must include a short paragraph on why they would be suitable i.e. their background, desires etc.

If no nominations are received prior to the meeting, nominations are entitled to be put forward at the Annual Statutory meeting of Council.

If during the Municipal Year, the office of Town Mayor becomes vacant, then the Deputy Mayor will normally become Mayor for the remainder of that year.

5.2.5 Make available for inspection the minutes of meetings.

5.2.6 Receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities.

~~5.2.7~~ ~~Receive and retain~~Hold declarations of acceptance of office forms from Councillors.

~~5.2.8~~ ~~Retain~~Hold a copy of every Councillor's register of interests and any changes to it and keep copies of the same available for inspection.

5.2.9 Keep proper records required before and after meetings.

~~5.2.10~~ ~~Process~~Assist with responding to all requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998, in accordance with and subject to the Council's procedures relating to the same.

~~5.2.11~~ liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer (if there is one)

~~5.2.12~~ Receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary.

~~5.2.13~~ ~~Manage~~assist in the organisation of, storage of and access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).

~~5.2.14~~ Arrange for legal deeds to be executed (signed and sealed using the Council's common seal).

~~5.2.15~~ Arrange for the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

5.2.1~~65~~—Record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose.

5.2.1~~76~~ Refer any planning application received by the Council outside the normal Plans Committee cycle to the Chairman or in their absence the Vice chairman of the Plans Committee for consideration in accordance with the Council's Late Planning Applications Policy. (No. 74)

~~5.2.18~~ manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and

5.2.1~~97~~ Retain custody of the seal of the Council which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.

5.2.~~2048~~ Action or undertake activity or responsibilities instructed by resolution or contained in Standing Orders.

6.0 MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIREING WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER

~~6.1~~ A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

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~~6.24~~ Except as provided by these Standing Orders, no resolution may be moved unless the business to which it relates has been put on the agenda by the Town Clerk or the mover has given notice in writing of its terms and has delivered the notice to the Town Clerk at least seven clear days before the next meeting of the Council.

~~6.3~~ The Town Council may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 6.2, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.

~~6.4~~ If the Town Clerk considers the wording of the motion received in accordance with 6.2 is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing to the Proper Officer, at least seven clear days before the meeting.

~~6.5~~ If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.

~~6.2~~ The Town Clerk shall date every motion on notice when received by him, shall number each notice in the order in which it was received and shall enter it in a book which shall be open to the inspection of every member of the Council.

~~6.6~~ The decision of the Town Clerk as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.

~~6.7.3~~ The Town Clerk shall ~~insert record~~ in the summons for every meeting, all notices of motion or recommendation properly given in the order in which they have been received unless the Councillor giving a notice of motion has stated in writing that he intends to move at some later meeting or that he withdraws it.

~~6.8~~ Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Town Clerk of the reason for rejection.

~~6.4~~ If a resolution or recommendation specified in the summons is not moved either by the Councillor who gave notice of it or by any other Councillor, it shall unless postponed by the Council, be treated as withdrawn and shall not be moved without fresh notice.

~~6.5~~ If the subject matter of the resolution comes within the province of a committee of the Council, it shall, upon being moved and seconded, stand referred without discussion to such committee or to such other committee as the Council may determine for report; provided that the Mayor, if they consider it to be a matter of urgency, may allow it to be dealt with at the meeting at which it was moved.

~~6.6~~ Every resolution or recommendation shall be relevant to some subject over which the Council has power or duties, which affects its area.

7.0 MOTIONS AT A MEETING THAT DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE

7.1 Motions in respect of the following matters may be moved without written notice.

- 7.1.1 To appoint a ~~Chairman~~ person to preside at a of the meeting.
- 7.1.2 To approve the absences of Councillors.
- 7.1.3 To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 7.1.4 To correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of the previous meeting.
- 7.1.5 To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting.
- 7.1.6 To alter the order of business on the agenda for reasons of urgency or expedience.
- 7.1.7 To proceed to the next business on the agenda.
- 7.1.8 To close or adjourn debate.
- 7.1.9 To refer by formal delegation a matter to a committee or to a sub-committee or an employee.
- 7.1.10 To appoint a committee or sub-committee or any Councillors (including substitutes) thereto.
- 7.1.11 To receive nominations to a committee or sub-committee.
- 7.1.12 To dissolve a committee or sub-committee.
- 7.1.13 To note the minutes of a meeting of a committee or sub-committee.

- 7.1.14 To consider a report and/or recommendations made by a committee or a sub-committee or an employee.
- 7.1.15 To consider a report and/or recommendations made by an employee, professional advisor, expert or consultant.
- 7.1.16 To authorise legal deeds to be sealed by the Council's common seal and witnessed.
- 7.1.17 To authorise the payment of monies in accordance with Financial Regulations.
- 7.1.18 To amend a motion relevant to the original or substantive motion under consideration which shall not have the effect of nullifying it.
- 7.1.19 To extend the time limit for speeches.
- 7.1.20 To exclude the press and public for all or part of a meeting.
- 7.1.21 To silence or exclude from the meeting a Councillor or a member of the public for disorderly conduct.
- 7.1.22 To give the consent of the Council if such consent is required by Standing Orders.
- 7.1.23 **To suspend any Standing Order except those which are mandatory by law.**
- 7.1.24 To adjourn the meeting.
- 7.1.25 To appoint representatives to outside bodies and to make arrangements for those representatives to report back the activities of outside bodies.
- 7.1.26 To answer questions from Councillors.
- 7.1.27 To require a written report
- 7.1.28 To defer consideration of a motion;
- 7.1.29 To refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee

8.0 RULES OF DEBATE

- 8.1 Motions included in an agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear on the agenda unless the order is changed at the Chairman's direction for reasons of expedience.
- 8.2 Subject to Standing Orders 6.1 - 6.5 above, a motion shall not be considered unless it has been proposed and seconded.
- 8.3 Subject to Standing Order 5.2.3 above, a motion included in an agenda not moved by the Councillor who tabled it, may be treated as withdrawn.
- 8.4 A motion to amend an original or substantive motion shall not be considered unless proper notice has been given after the original or substantive motion has been

seconded and notice of such amendment, shall, if required by the Chairman, be reduced to writing and handed to the Chairman who shall determine the order in which they are considered.

- 8.5 A Councillor may move amendments to his own motion. If a motion has already been seconded, an amendment to it shall be with the consent of the seconder.
- 8.6 Any amendment to a motion shall be either:
- 8.6.1 to ~~leave remove out~~ words;
 - 8.6.2 to add words;
 - 8.6.3 to ~~leave out~~remove words and add other words, it shall not negate the motion-
- 8.7 A proposed or carried amendment to a motion shall not have the effect of rescinding the original or substantive motion under consideration.
- 8.8 Only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chairman. No further amendment to a motion shall be moved until the previous amendment has been disposed of.
- 8.9 Subject to Standing Order 8.8 above, one or more amendments may be discussed together if the Chairman considers this expedient but shall be voted upon separately.
- 8.10 Pursuant to Standing Order 8.8 above, the number of amendments to an original or substantive motion, which may be moved by a Councillor, is limited to one.
- 8.11 If an amendment is not carried, other amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Chairman.
- 8.12 If an amendment is carried, the original motion, as amended, shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved.
- 8.13 The mover of a motion or the mover of an amendment shall have a right of reply, not exceeding three minutes.
- 8.14 Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply in respect of the substantive motion at the very end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of the debate on the final substantive motion and immediately before it is put to the vote.
- 8.15 Subject to Standing Orders 8.13 and 8.14 above, a Councillor may not speak further in respect of any one motion except to speak once on an amendment moved by another Councillor or to make a point of order or to give a personal explanation.
- 8.16 During the debate of a motion, a Councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the Councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A Councillor raising a point of order shall identify the Standing Order which he

considers has been breached or specify the irregularity in the meeting he is concerned by.

- 8.17 A point of order shall be decided by the Chairman and his decision shall be final.
- 8.18 With the consent of the seconder and/or of the meeting, a motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer. A Councillor shall not speak upon the said motion or amendment unless permission for the withdrawal of the motion or amendment has been refused.
- 8.19 Subject to Standing Order 8.15 above, when a Councillor's motion is under debate no other motion shall be moved except:
- 8.19.1 to amend the motion;
 - 8.19.2 to proceed to the next business;
 - 8.19.3 to adjourn the debate;
 - 8.19.4 to put the motion to a vote;
 - 8.19.5 to ask a person to be silent or for him to leave the meeting;
 - 8.19.6 to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - 8.19.7 to exclude the public and press;
 - 8.19.8 to adjourn the meeting;
 - 8.19.9 to suspend any Standing Order, except those which are mandatory.
- 8.20 In respect of Standing Order 8.19.4 above, the Chairman shall first be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated before it is seconded and put to the vote. The Chairman shall call upon the mover of the motion under debate to exercise or waive his right of reply and shall put the motion to the vote after that right has been exercised or waived.

At the end of any speech a Councillor may, without comment, move "*that the question be now put*", "*that the debate be now adjourned*" or "*that the Council do now adjourn*". If such motion is seconded, the Mayor shall put the motion but, in the case of a motion "*that the question be now put*", only if they are of the opinion that the question before the Council has been sufficiently debated. If the motion "*that the question be now put*" is carried, they shall call upon the mover to exercise or waive their right of reply and shall put the question immediately after that right has been exercised or waived. The adjournment of a debate or of the meeting shall not prejudice the mover's right of reply at the resumption.

9.0 CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

9.1 **All Councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.** (Policy No. 43)

9.2 All Councillors shall undertake training in the Code of Conduct within 6 months of the delivery of their declaration of acceptance of office.

9.3 ~~Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a Councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has a disclosable pecuniary (prejudicial) interest. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest. s with a disclosable prejudicial (pecuniary) interest in relation to any item of business being transacted at a meeting must declare the existence and nature of that interest as soon as it becomes apparent to them unless it is a sensitive interest as previously disclosed in which case only the existence of that interest should be declared.~~ In all cases the Councillor must leave the room and not take part in any debate or vote unless a dispensation has been authorised by the Clerk.

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9.4 **An interest arising from the Code of Conduct shall be recorded in the minutes.**

9.5 Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Town Clerk as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.

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9.6 A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Town Clerk and that decision is final.

9.7 A dispensation request shall confirm:

(i) the description and the nature of the prejudicial interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;

(ii) whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;

(iii) the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and

(iv) an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought

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9.5 The Clerk, may authorise a dispensation for Councillors under the Code of Conduct, ~~in accordance with Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011~~ where:-

9.5.1 without the dispensation, the number of ~~Councillors or co-opted Councillors~~ ~~persons~~ prohibited from participating in any particular business would be so great a proportion of the ~~body meeting~~ transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business; or

9.5.2 without the dispensation the representation of different political groups on the ~~body meeting~~ transacting any particular business would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote relating to the business; or

9.5.3 granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area; or

9.5.4 it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

9.6 A dispensation granted under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 must specify the period for which it has effect, and that period may not exceed four years.

10.0 ~~ALLEGATIONS OF BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS~~

10.1 On receipt of a notification ~~by the District Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached that there has~~

~~been an alleged breach of~~ the Code of Conduct, the Clerk shall report this to the council.

10.2 Where the notification in standing order 10.1 relates to a complaint made by the Clerk, the Clerk shall notify the Chairman of the Council of this fact, and the Chairman shall nominate another staff members to assume the duties of the Clerk in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the Council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 10.4.

10.3 The Council may:

(i) provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to investigate the complaint or is a legal requirement;

(ii) seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter. ~~refer this to Wealden District Council's Monitoring Officer who will review the complaint and will make a decision as to whether it merits formal investigation.~~

10.4~~2~~ Upon notification by the District Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against him. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.

11.0 QUESTIONS

11.1 A Councillor may seek an answer to a question concerning any business of the Council provided seven clear days notice of the question has been given to the Proper Officer.

11.2 Questions not related to items of business on the agenda for a meeting shall only be asked during the part of the meeting set aside for such questions.

11.3 Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.

12.0 DRAFT MINUTES

12.1 If a copy of the draft minutes of a preceding meeting has been circulated to Councillors no later than the day of service of the summons to attend the scheduled meeting they shall be taken as read.

12.2 No discussion of the draft minutes of a preceding meeting shall take place except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the minutes shall be raised in accordance with Standing Order 7.1.4 above.

12.3 Minutes, including any amendment to correct their accuracy, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the Chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.

12.4 Upon a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, any previous draft minutes of the meeting shall be destroyed.

12.5 If the Chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms of to the same effect:

"The Chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on (date) in respect of () were a correct record but his view was not

upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

13.0 DISORDERLY CONDUCT

- 13.1 No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the Chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- 13.2 If, in the opinion of the Chairman, there has been a breach of Standing Order 13.1 above, the Chairman shall express that opinion and thereafter any Councillor (including the Chairman) may move that the person ~~be silenced~~ no longer be heard or be excluded from the meeting, and the motion, if seconded, shall be put forthwith and without discussion.
- 13.3 If a resolution made in accordance with Standing Order 13.2 above, is ~~disobeyed~~ ignored, the Chairman may take such further steps as may reasonably be necessary to ~~enforce it~~ restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or and/or he may adjourn ~~closing~~ the meeting.

14.0 RESCISSION OF PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

- 14.1 A resolution (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within six months except either by a proposal, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least five members of the Council, or by a resolution moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a Committee.
- 14.2 When a resolution moved under the provision of Standing Order 14.1 above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.
- 14.3 Any resolution passed by a committee reporting to Full Council may be placed on the next Full Council agenda for discussion in its own right if so requested in writing by at least five members of the Council. Once such a request has been received, further activities, clarification and information gathering excepted, shall cease on the original resolution

15.0 VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

- 15.1 Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. Any tie may be settled by the Chairman's casting vote.
- 15.2 The Mayor and Deputy Mayor should not serve longer than three complete consecutive municipal years in their respective offices.
- 15.3 Chairmen of committees and sub-committees should not serve as Chairmen longer than three consecutive years. Nor should any member of the Council be Chairman of more than one committee or sub-committee at any one time.
- 15.4 Neither shall the Mayor or Deputy Mayor be Chairman of a full committee.

16.0 EXPENDITURE

16.1 Any expenditure incurred by the Council shall be in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

16.2 **The Council's Financial Regulations shall be reviewed once a year.**

16.3 **The Council's Financial Regulations may make provision for the authorisation of the payment of money in exercise of any of the Council's functions to be delegated to a committee, sub-committee or to an employee.**

17.0 RESOLUTIONS ON EXPENDITURE

17.1 A resolution, by any committee, which would increase the expenditure upon any service which is under the management of that committee, or which would reduce the revenue at the disposal of the Council, or which would involve capital expenditure, shall be referred to the General Purposes Committee for decision.

18.0 EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

18.1 A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless the same has been authorised by a resolution.

18.2 **In accordance with a resolution made under Standing Order 18.1 above, the Council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two members of the Council who shall sign the deed as witnesses.**

19.0 COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

19.1 The Council may at its Annual Statutory Meeting, appoint standing committees and may at any other time appoint such other committees as are necessary, but subject to any statutory provision in that behalf:-

19.1.1 Shall not appoint any member of a committee so as to hold office later than the next Annual Statutory Meeting.

19.1.2(a) **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**

19.1.2(b) **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.** Such appointed members will have no voting rights.

19.1.2(c) **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**

19.1.3 The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and;

(i) shall determine their terms of reference

(ii) shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;

(iii) shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary

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meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;

(iv) shall, subject to standing orders 19.1.2(b) and (c) appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee

(v) may, subject to standing orders 19.1.2(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer five days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;

(vi) shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chairman of a standing committee;

(vii) shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chairman at the first meeting of the committee;

(viii) shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee, and a sub-committee which, in both cases, shall be no less than three or one third of its members;

(ix) shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;

(x) shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;

(xi) shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend and;

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- 19.1.3 May, subject to the provisions of Standing Order No.14, at any time dissolve or alter the membership of a committee.
- 19.1.4 Every committee shall at its first meeting before proceeding to any other business, elect a Chairman and may elect a Vice-chairman who shall hold office until the next Annual Statutory Meeting of the Council.
- 19.1.5 In the event of the ballot failing to determine the Chairman and Vice-chairman because of an equality of votes the candidate or candidates to be elected from those having an equal number of votes shall be determined at the first committee meeting which will be chaired by the Mayor. Any tie may then be settled by the Chairman's casting vote.
- 19.1.6 The Chairman of a committee or the Mayor of the Council may summon an additional meeting of that committee at any time. An additional meeting shall also be summoned on the requisition in writing of not less than a third of the members of the committee. The summons shall set out the business to be considered at the special meeting and no other business shall be transacted at that meeting.
- 19.1.7 Each committee may appoint working groups or steering groups for purposes to be specified by the committee. Sub-committees will be appointed by Full Council.
- ~~19.1.8 The Chairman, or in their absence the Vice-chairman of the committee shall be members of every sub-committee reporting to it unless they signify that they do not wish to serve.~~
- ~~19.1.9 Except where ordered by the Council in the case of a committee, or by the Council or by the appropriate committee in the case of a sub-~~

~~committee, the quorum of a committee or sub-committee shall be three or one-third of its members, whichever is the greater.~~

19.1.10 The Standing Orders on rules of debate, (except those parts relating to standing and speaking more than once), and the Standing Order on interests of Councillors in contracts and other matters shall apply to committees, sub-committees.

20.0 WORKING GROUPS AND STEERING GROUPS

20.1 Any committee may create working or steering groups, whose name and number of members and the bodies to be invited to nominate members shall be specified.

20.2 The working and steering groups will conduct their business in accordance with Working Group Policy No. 39 and Steering Group Policy No. 57.

20.3 Working and steering groups may make recommendations and give notice thereof to the parent committee.

20.4 Working and steering groups may consist wholly of persons who are not members of the Council.

21.0 EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

21.1 **The Mayor of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**

21.2 **If the Mayor of the Council does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested to do so by two Councillors, those two Councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two Councillors.**

~~21.3 The Chairman of a Committee (or a sub-committee) may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee (or sub-committee) at any time;~~

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~~21.4 If the Chairman of a committee (or a sub-committee) does not call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested to do so by two members of the committee (or sub-committee), any two members of the committee (or sub-committee) may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee (or sub-committee).~~

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22.0 ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL-ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

~~22.1 The Council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.~~

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~~22.24 "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of the "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioner's Guide"~~

~~22.3 All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's Financial Regulations.~~

~~22.4 The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a~~

statement to General Purposes Committee or Environment & Leisure Committee to summarise:

- (i) the Council's income and expenditure for that committee;
- (ii) the Council's aggregate income and expenditure for the year to date;
- (iii) the balances held at the end of that period being reported;

which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends (these are reported at each committee meeting so more frequently than quarterly).

22.5 As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:

- (i) each councillor with a statement summarizing the council's income and expenditure for the last quarter and the year to date for information, and;
- (ii) to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.

22.64 The year-end statement of accounts shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the council for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors at least 14 days prior to the anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June. of the Council, which is subject to external audit, shall be presented to the Council for formal approval.

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23.0 ESTIMATES AND PRECEPTS

23.1 The Council shall review the estimates not later than the end of January each year and shall fix the precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply each Councillor with a copy of the approved estimates.

23.2 Any committee desiring to incur expenditure shall give the Proper Officer a written estimate of the expenditure recommended for the coming year no later than the end of November each year.

23.3 The annual capital and revenue expenditures shall form the Council's budgets and the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

24.0 INTERESTS

24.1 If a Councillor has a personal interest as defined by the Code of Conduct (Policy No. 43) then they shall declare such interest as soon as it becomes apparent, disclosing the existence and nature of that interest as required which shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

24.2 If a Councillor who has declared a personal interest then considers the interest to be a disclosable interest, they must withdraw from the room during consideration of the item to which the interest relates unless a dispensation has been authorised by the Clerk in advance of the meeting.

24.3 **The Clerk may be required to compile and hold a register of Councillors' interests in accordance with any agreement with the Monitoring Officer of Wealden District Council and/or as required by statute.**

24.4 If a candidate for any appointment under the Council is to their knowledge related to any Councillor or the holder of any office under the Council, they and the person to whom they are related shall disclose the relationship in writing to the Clerk. A candidate who fails so to do, shall be disqualified for such appointment, and, if appointed, may be dismissed without notice. The Clerk shall report to the Council or to the appropriate committee any such disclosure. Where relationship to a Councillor is disclosed, Standing Orders No. 24.1 and 24.2 shall apply. The Clerk shall make known the significance of this Standing Order to every candidate.

25.0 CANVASSING OF AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY COUNCILLORS

25.1 Canvassing Councillors or the members of a committee or sub-committee, directly or indirectly, for appointment to or by the Council shall disqualify the candidate from such an appointment. The Clerk shall disclose the requirements of this Standing Order to every candidate.

25.2 A Councillor or a member of a committee or sub-committee shall not solicit a person for appointment to or by the Council or recommend a person for such appointment or for promotion; however any such person may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment.

25.3 This Standing Order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

26.0 INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

26.1 Subject to Standing Orders to the contrary or in respect of matters which are confidential, a Councillor may, for the purpose of his official duties (but not otherwise), inspect any document in the possession of the Council or a committee or a sub-committee, and request a copy for the same purpose. The minutes of meetings of the Council, its committees or sub-committees shall be available for inspection by Councillors.

27.0 UNAUTHORISED RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

27.1 Unless specifically authorised to do so by the Council or relevant committee or sub-committee by a resolution, no individual Councillor shall in the name or on behalf of the Council, a committee or a sub-committee:

27.1.1 inspect any lands or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect;

27.1.2 issue orders, instructions or directions

28.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

28.1 **No member of the Council or of any committee, sub-committee, working or steering group shall disclose to any person not a member of the Council any business declared to be confidential by the Council, the committee, sub-committee, working or steering group as the case may be.**

28.2 **Any Councillor in breach of the provisions of paragraph 28.1 of this Standing Order shall be removed from any committee, sub-committee, working or steering group of the Council by the Council and reported to the Standards Committee.**

29.0 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

29.1 **Before exercising the General Power of Competence, a meeting of the Full Council shall have passed a resolution to confirm that it has satisfied the prescribed statutory criteria required to qualify as an eligible Council. The prescribed statutory criteria are:-**

29.1.1 **the number of ordinary members of the Council that have been declared to be elected, whether at ordinary elections or at a by-election, is equal or greater than two-thirds of the total number of members of the Council;**

29.1.2 **the Clerk to the Town Council holds an appropriate qualification;**

and

29.1.3 **the Clerk to the Town Council has completed the relevant training, unless such training was required for the purpose of obtaining a qualification of a description mentioned in paragraph 29.1.2.**

30.0 ~~HANDLING STAFF MATTERS AFFECTING COUNCIL EMPLOYEES~~

30.1 If a meeting considers any matter personal to a Council employee, it shall not be considered until the Council, committee or sub-committee, (as the case may be), has decided whether or not the press and public shall be excluded pursuant to Standing Order 3.5 above.

30.2 Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of Council employees shall keep written records of all meetings relating to their performance, and capabilities, grievance and disciplinary matters.

30.3 The Council shall keep written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured under lock and electronic records shall be password protected.

30.4 Records documenting reasons for an employee's absence due to ill health or details of a medical condition shall be made available only to those persons with responsibility for the same.

30.5 Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to employee records referred to in Standing Orders 30.3 and 30.4 above if so justified.

30.6 Access and means of access by ~~keys and/or~~ computer passwords to detailed personnel records of employment referred to in Standing Orders 30.3 and 30.4 above shall be provided only to The Town Clerk ~~and~~ Assistant Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer, Access to keys to current personnel records and shall also be provided to the Estates & Facilities Manager and Civic Centre Hospitality Manager.

30.7 Subject to the Town Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's Assistant Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer shall notify the Chairman of

the Personnel Sub-Committee, or if they are not available, the Vice Chairman, of frequent or continued absence.

30.8 Subject to the Town Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Assistant Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer shall contact the Chairman of the Personnel Sub-Committee in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed in accordance with the Town Council's policy.

30.9 Subject to the Town Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter is raised by a member of the management team of Uckfield Town Council which relates to the Mayor or Deputy Mayor of the Town Council, this shall be communicated to the Chair of General Purposes Committee, which shall be reported back and progressed in accordance with existing HR policies.

31.0 HANDLING REQUESTS RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE FOR INFORMATION

31.1 In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme (policy no. 54) and respond to requests for information held by the Council as per the Council's policy 'Handling Access to Information' requests (Policy No. 16)

31.2 The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements)(England) Regulations 2015.

32.0 RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS AND MEDIA

32.1 All requests from the press or other media for an oral or written statement or comment from the Council shall be processed in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media. (Policy No 26)

33.0 LIAISON COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

33.1 An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the Councillors of the District and County Council representing their electoral wards.

33.2 When requested, letters ordered to be sent to the County or District Council shall be transmitted to the County Councillors for the division or to the District Councillors for the ward as the case may be.

34.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

34.1 The Council shall consider and approve Financial Regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:

34.1.1 the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal control;

34.1.2 the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;

- 34.1.3 the work of the internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
- 34.1.4 the inspection and copying by Councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments;
- 34.1.5 procurement policies (subject to Standing Order 34.2 below) including the setting of values for different procedures:-

34.1.6 whether contracts with an estimated value below £25,000 due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.

34.1.7 financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for the fitness of purpose.

34.2 For any proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value between £10,000 but not exceeding £25,000, the Town Clerk shall invite quotations from at least three appropriate firms from a preferred list of contractors as set out in the Financial Regulations.

34.3 A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds in 34.0 (financial regulations) is subject to Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include a requirement on the Council to advertise the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website regardless of what other means it uses to advertise the opportunity unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement); ,

34.4 A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of ~~Where the value of a contract is~~ in excess of £1891,33002 for a public service or supply contract or in excess of £4,773551,252413 for a public works contract or £663,540 for a social and other specific services contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include advertising the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website and in OJEU.

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34.5 A public contract in connection with the supply of gas, heat, electricity, drinking water, transport services, or postal services to the public; or the provision of a port or airport; or the exploration for or extraction of gas oil or solid fuel with an estimated value in excess of ~~£378,660~~ £363,424 for a supply, services or design contract; or in excess of ~~£4,551,413~~ £4,733,252 for a works contract, or ~~£820,370~~ £663,540 for a social and other specific services contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in OJEU) shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016.

34.6 Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts over the amount of £25,000 for the supply of goods, materials, services, or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
(i) a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
(ii) an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification, (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
(iii) the invitation shall be advertised in the manner that is appropriate;
(iv) tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Estates & Facilities Manager;
(v) tenders shall be opened by the Estates & Facilities Manager in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
(vi) tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the council or committee, with delegated responsibility.

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34.7 Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.

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35.0 TRAINING

35.1 All Councillors appointed to the Council will attend appropriate training courses.

35.2 Chairmen shall be expected to undertake appropriate training courses.

36.0 URGENT BUSINESS

36.1 If a matter is deemed "urgent" and if outside scheduled committee meetings or Full Council and with the consent of the Mayor and Chairman of committee, it can be agreed by the use of an Urgent Consultation Panel. The Panel will consist of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and Chairmen of committees. All decisions agreed by the panel will be reported to Full Council or the appropriate standing committee at the earliest opportunity.

37.0 MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

37.1 See also standing order 31.0

The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organizational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.

37.2 **The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).**

37.3 **The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

37.4 Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.

38.0 RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

38.1 The Council ~~shall~~may appoint a Data Protection Officer.

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38.2 The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his personal data.

38.3 The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.

38.4 The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.

38.5 The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.

38.6 The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.

Meeting of Full Council

Monday 17 January 2022

Agenda item 16.0

QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES – 2021/22

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a quarterly update on the Town Council's priorities for 2021/22 and the progress that had been made by the end of each quarter. This report provides a summary of progress to the end of December (end of quarter three).
- 1.2 The priorities identified for delivery in 2021/22 consist of initiatives which are often additional to the day to day responsibilities of the Town Council, but demonstrate by working together with colleagues and partner agencies, we can achieve a great deal for the town and its residents.
- 1.3 Organisations often spend time producing plans or lists of priorities, but do not review progress until the end of the year. With this paper, the Town Clerk provides an update to members to explain the progress being made to deliver these priorities.
- 1.4 It is critical to note that this has continued to be a difficult period for the Town Council, with the impact of Covid-19 lockdowns on service provision and planned projects. And during the past eight weeks in particular, we have been substantially impacted by staff absence caused by covid, relatives with covid, other sickness, holiday and additional personal circumstances affecting their availability. This led to fewer staff balancing larger workloads.

2.0 End of Quarter Three 2021-22: Progress Update

- 2.1 Of the 10 priorities, four are complete, five are making good progress and on schedule, and only one is behind schedule. This is excellent performance in a difficult couple of years. A very big thank you to a fantastic Town Council team for their hard work, dedication and perseverance to achieve these tasks.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are asked to review this progress report, and note the work undertaken to date.

Appendices: Appendix A: Quarter Three 2021/22 Progress Report

Contact Officer: Holly Goring

Key:

	= Progress behind schedule		= Some progress has been made
	= On schedule for completion		= Completed

APPENDIX A: End of Q3 - 2021/22 Progress Update

Priority	Status	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
1. COMMUNITY GRANTS We will award up to £47,000 of community grant funding to local groups and charitable organisations in 2021/22.	✓	All first instalment and second instalment payments have now been paid (May and October 2021). A total of £46,400 has been provided to local community organisations. Plus the £8k SLA payment to the Uckfield Volunteer Centre.	General Purposes Committee	Assistant Town Clerk & RFO
2. PUBLIC EVENTS IN THE TOWN We will work alongside the local business community and local community groups to deliver two free public events within the town; Weald on the Field and Uckfield Revival	✓	<p>Weald on the Field went ahead a couple of weeks later than normally planned on 21 August 2021, due to concerns around covid restrictions in the planning stages, but the event was a great success! A great line up of live music was performed from the Airstream Stage from 12noon until 8pm and there was a great variety of street food, pop up bars, local produce, crafts and clothing. It was a really lovely day and great to see everyone enjoying themselves in the fresh air and open space.</p> <p>Uckfield Revival went ahead on 2 October despite the weather. Due to limited resources within Town Council staff, Mike Skinner handled all of the vehicle enquiries which was a great help. The event went well and everyone was in good spirits but it did highlight that the event should really take place earlier in the year to reduce the risk of bad weather.</p> <p>The working group are due to meet on 9 November to debrief on both events in order to plan effectively for 2022.</p>	Full Council	Town Clerk
3. IMPROVEMENTS TO OPEN SPACES We will undertake repairs and improvements to a number of our open spaces including installing new signage, replacing play area surfacing, investigating drainage issues and upgrading a number of litter bins.	✓	<p>Signage for the Town's play areas and open spaces is gradually being upgraded with this year's budget now spent.</p> <p>The resurfacing repairs to Ridgewood Recreation Ground play area have now been completed.</p> <p>More animal friendly litter bins have been installed which reduce the spread of litter across open spaces by wildlife.</p> <p>Work to investigate drainage issues at Ridgewood Village Hall car park and Hempstead Recreation Ground car park have commenced, and will form a more detailed programme of surveys and work over the next 12-24 months.</p>	Environment and Leisure Committee	Estates & Facilities Manager

Priority	Status	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
4. GRASS VERGE CUTTING We will continue to contribute to the costs of East Sussex County Council's grass verge cutting contract to retain a good standard of service and ensure visibility is maintained on pavements and highways.		Payment was made to East Sussex County Council for 2021/22 to maintain existing service standards and frequency of cuts to the town's grass verges, back in April 2021. <i>(Urban verges used to receive 5-6 cuts per annum but East Sussex County Council can now only afford to fund two. Rural verges receive two cuts per annum).</i>	Environment and Leisure Committee	Town Clerk
5. CLIMATE CHANGE We will investigate ways in which we can reduce our impact on climate change by reviewing our contracts, buildings and equipment, managing our land for nature and minimising waste: - look to replace one grounds vehicle; - reviewing energy saving measures; -tree for a tree planting scheme		Work continues with the 'tree for a tree' planting scheme but in terms of the Town Council's buildings and equipment, the Estates & Facilities Manager commissioned a carbon footprint audit to be carried out which has provided an excellent base upon which the Town Council can assess where it is having most impact, and what steps the council needs to take to reduce our carbon emissions. The outcomes of this audit were presented to full Council on 13 September 2021. The Climate Change Working Group have been working hard to establish and research key areas for the Town Council to focus its attention, and have also set up a Green Partnership for the town; bringing together key agencies to understand where we can share best practice and work together to deliver a greener town, and a number of associated initiatives. A policy and action plan are being developed as we speak.	Environment and Leisure Committee	Estates & Facilities Manager
6. NEW FINANCE We will look to change from our existing cheque payment method, by two signatories to a dual authorisation BACS payment model and digitalise our purchase order and invoicing procedures.		The banking system has been set up for members of Finance-Sub Committee to assist the Responsible Financial Officer with authorisation of BACs payments. The first supplier payments were issued via BACs instead of cheque in February 2021 and have continued as planned with a number of councillors now set up to authorise payments. One of the original purchase order/invoice Matrix printers has now come to the end of its life, so all purchase orders are being processed on SAGE and printed on plain paper. Only one matrix printer is still running for invoices, but officers have now increased the number that are sent by email to customers.	Finance Sub-Committee	Assistant Town Clerk & RFO

Priority	Status	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
7. NEW BOOKING SYSTEM We will look to install a new booking system for the internal management of booking enquiries for the Town Council's rooms and open spaces		This has been placed on hold whilst staff resources get back up to speed.	General Purposes Committee	Town Clerk/ Assistant Town Clerk & RFO
8. ROAD SAFETY We will work with partner organisations such as Sussex Police and East Sussex Highways to re-establish community speedwatch initiative(s) in the town and explore the installation of a speed reduction device.		The Community Speedwatch scheme has been re-established with existing volunteers undertaking refresher training and three new volunteers undertaking the full training with Sussex Police and onsite device training. We still have another three to four volunteers interested in joining, so training will be arranged shortly. A new mobile handset for the community speedwatch team to use was purchased with the funding available. Further work is now required to bring the 'speed reduction device' back to Environment & Leisure Committee and agree a way forward.	Environment and Leisure Committee	Town Clerk
9. TOWN COUNCIL'S BUILDINGS We will review our older buildings and investigate how they could be better utilised to meet the needs of hirers, and local community groups.		A number of repairs and maintenance works have been undertaken to our buildings already including Foresters Hall in particular, and the completion of the Civic Centre Atrium works. Work is near completion on the Town Council's Annual Building Maintenance Programme. And longer-term discussions have commenced with regard to West Park Pavilion and increasing utilisation of this building, has now led to leasing the building out to a sports club on a full repairing lease.	General Purposes Committee	Estates & Facilities Manager
10. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN We will support the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to prepare a draft Uckfield Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the local Planning authority.		Detailed work is currently underway to review all documentation to bring it up to date, ensure it includes the latest evidence and have it ready to inform the overarching draft Neighbourhood Plan documents.	Full Council	Town Clerk

Meeting of Full Council

Monday 17 January 2022

Agenda item 17.0

TO CONSIDER PROVIDING SUPPORT TO THE 20S PLENTY CAMPAIGN

1.0 Background information

- 1.1 Campaign group '20s Plenty for Us' approached the Town Council alongside all Wealden based parish and town councils in December 2021, requesting the support of parish and town councils in reducing the speed of traffic and "to set 20mph as the normal speed limit and 30mph as an exception...in residential streets and in town and village centres – in other words in those places where people live, work, learn and play."
- 1.2 The campaign group advise that "Speed limits are set by East Sussex County Council as the Highway Authority, which also makes Traffic Regulation Orders to erect signs or change other road features like paint roundels or remove centre lines. Demonstrating widespread local community support is critical to securing the County's agreement to implement 20mph widely. Other counties, such as Oxfordshire and Lancashire in England, have agreed 20mph for every settlement, as have counties throughout Wales. Scotland has promised to offer 20mph widely and places like Warrington have 20mph in all their satellite villages."
- 1.3 The campaign group provided the following background information:

*"Traffic speed impacts the safety and quality of life for all East Sussex residents. Current ESCC policy has made it very difficult to seek speed limit reduction on a case-by-case basis, stating: 'For a speed limit to be effective, and as far as possible self-regulating, it **must appear reasonable to a driver** and adequately reflect the environment through which the road passes.'*

Yet the past few decades have seen remarkable changes to what is perceived as reasonable. Smoking in indoor public spaces, not wearing seatbelts, drink driving are just some examples of what was once deemed reasonable.

This same type of sea change is happening on 'reasonable' speeds, with 20mph increasingly seen as a reasonable default speed in areas with people.

Sadly, ESCC also has a very specific reading of the requirements for engineering improvements alongside signage if vehicles travel above a particular speed (24mph on average). This creates a catch-22 situation for many parish councils, whereby they pay large amounts for speed surveys or consultations, only to be told that the required traffic calming measures for reducing speeds are too prohibitive.

We have proof that standardisation of speed reduction over a wide area – with signage alone plus education – is often more effective and simplifies implementation; it also increases compliance.

Reduction to 20mph has been shown to:

- ***Reduce casualties*** – casualties fall by 5% for every 1mph of speed reduction; 20mph schemes typically lead to 20% fewer casualties overall (UK Department of Transport).

[\[http://www.20splenty.org/20mph_casualty_reduction.\]](http://www.20splenty.org/20mph_casualty_reduction.)

The most common cause for any type of accident is driver's reaction error. Going 20mph rather than 30mph is proven to improve reaction times as well as lessen impact. This lessens fatalities – there are 7-10 times fewer fatalities at 20mph than 30mph.

- **Reduce greenhouse gases and air/noise pollution** – 20mph leads to a 25% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and 50% reduction in noise pollution. [\[https://www.20splenty.org/new_research_on_emissions\]](https://www.20splenty.org/new_research_on_emissions).
By overlooking this, ESCC is running counter to their own Climate Emergency Action Plan, which states it will: 'review ESCC's policies, strategies, programmes, projects and practice to align with the climate emergency'; and that: 'Policy should provide clear and stable direction and a simple set of rules that supports corporate climate change mitigation and adaptation.'
- **Improve wellbeing** – 20mph leads to active travel increases by at least 20%, rising over time. https://www.20splenty.org/20mph_limits_encourage_walking_and_cycling
When roads are safer, we see more community cohesion – people walk and cycle more, and we have a safer community for vulnerable users, including the elderly, children and those with disabilities. Social isolation, anxiety and obesity decreases, mental and physical health increase. Improved community cohesion leads to a healthier, more robust town or village, with thriving schools, community centres, pubs, businesses, post offices and shops. 20mph encourages people to cycle to work. See link: <https://cyclingindustry.news/traffic-speeds-cycling-to-work-study/>
- **Cost effective** – 20mph signage and rollout costs approximately £3-5 per person. This is an incredibly small amount when placed against the costs of vehicle accidents themselves, not just to the driver but to society as a whole, for ambulance, police, hospital, clean up and damages. Wide-area 20mph limits are also seven times more cost effective per mph speed reduction than isolated zones with physical calming. [\[https://www.20splenty.org/20mph_limits_vs_isolated_20mph_zones\]](https://www.20splenty.org/20mph_limits_vs_isolated_20mph_zones)
- **Popular** – people from across all demographics want this (70% popularity with 10% unsure) <http://20splenty.org/why20mph>. Phil Jones, Cabinet Member for Transport in Camden said: "20mph is the most popular decision I ever made".

Over 26 million people in the UK live in a community with a default speed limit of 20mph. This includes the whole of Wales, Lancashire, Cheshire West and Chester, and (soon) in Scotland, Cornwall and Oxfordshire. A speed limit of 20mph/30kph is recognised as international best practice wherever people and motor vehicles mix.

Putting 20mph in place typically costs under 1% of what it costs a given area each year for road traffic accidents and for the impacts of physical inactivity.

http://www.20splenty.org/casualty_and_physical_inactivity_costs

A parish council that supports this proposal can better serve its residents. It can help compel ESCC to deliver significant improvements to wellbeing, to the climate and to a community's overall health while making huge financial savings – savings that accrue year on year.

Thank you for reading this letter, but please also take the time to watch a very clear and concise [7-minute video](#)."

1.4 Members of Uckfield Town Council have previously expressed their wish to extend the High Street/Town Centre 20mph zone wider within the Town Centre of Uckfield. This was discussed around the time of 2017, when the Town Council fed into a review of the town's main access corridors by East Sussex Highways.

2.0 Proposal to support 20s Plenty Campaign

2.1 A suggested proposal has been put forward by the campaign group which parish and town councils can seek to amend, adapt or support by:

- (i) Calling on East Sussex County Council to extend the 20mph zone wider within the town centre of Uckfield;
- (ii) Writing to East Sussex County Council to request that the County:
 - a) makes 20mph the default speed limit on streets throughout East Sussex in places where people live, work, shop, play or learn, leaving 30mph as the exception on those roads, where full consideration of the needs of vulnerable road users allows a higher limit; and
 - b) allocates a ring-fenced amount from public health, sustainability and transport budgets to enable 20mph to be implemented county-wide within five years.

3.0 Recommendation

3.1 Members are asked to consider the contents of the above report and advise if they wish to support this campaign, in the context of Uckfield's town centre.

Appendices: Appendix A: Background information from Campaign group.
Contact Officer: Holly Goring

Background information from '20s Plenty Campaign' group

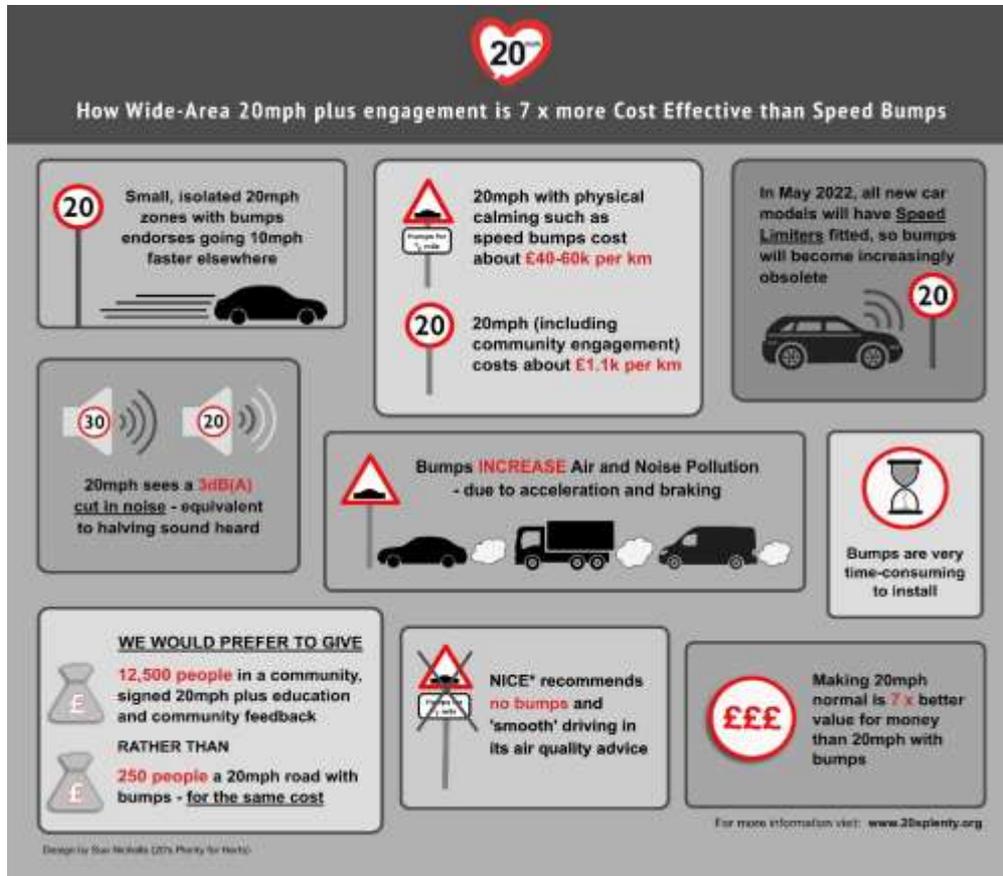
Background information on 20mph speed limits

1. **Accepted** as normal by local authorities where 25m people in the UK live, including the whole of Wales and (soon) Scotland. 20mph is global best practice where people mix with motor traffic.
2. **Popular:** Government and other surveys consistently find 70% support in residential streets which rises after 20mph limits are introduced.
3. **Affordable and cost effective**, with multiple societal, environmental, economic, and climate benefits.
4. **Prioritise quality of life:** 20mph helps to create places where human activity, including walking, cycling and social interaction, takes precedence over traffic.
5. **Safer:** The UK's Department for Transport estimates that speed a reduction of 1mph in built-up areas reduces casualties by 6%. 20mph schemes typically lead to up to 20% fewer casualties.
6. **Better for the environment:** 20mph reduces CO2 emissions by 26% and NOx by 28% compared with 30mph and is 50% quieter.
7. **Enforceable**, like any speed limit.
8. **Little impact on journey times:** The 'stop-start' nature of traffic in built up areas is a much more significant factor. Roads can stay at 30mph where the needs of vulnerable road users are met. Bus journeys and timetables times are generally unaffected.
9. **Speed reductions** occur, even without regular Police enforcement, to the benefit of all road users. Note: all new car models will have in-car speed limiters from 2022.
10. **Few signs needed:** 1 or 2 signs on entry and some repeaters to remind drivers and no need for physical calming.
11. **Sustainable:** Ties in closely with other policies to address climate change, improve air quality and enable more people to walk and cycle – especially for short journeys.

Signed schemes and public engagement are cost-effective and offer seven times better value for money than heavily-engineered schemes.

More on Benefits of Wide Area 20mph

1. Wide area 20mph is 7x more cost effective



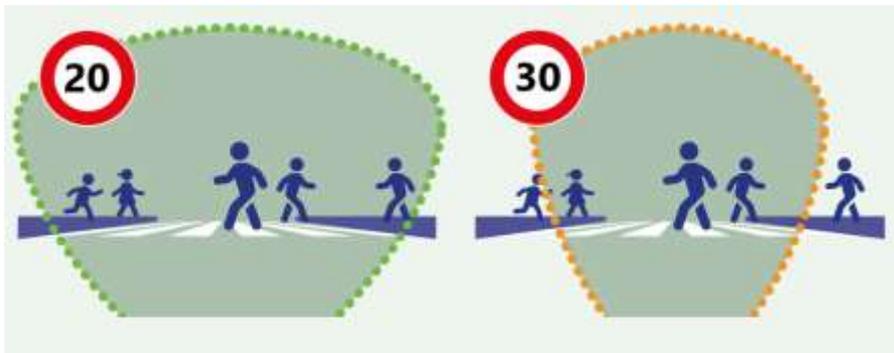
2. Safer streets for all, particularly children and the elderly

Significantly reduced risk of serious injury, especially for vulnerable road users together with less fear and intimidation from motor vehicles. Children under 14 years old cannot correctly judge traffic speeds and adults have to keep them safe by setting speed limits and driving at speeds that reduce danger. Being hit at 20mph is around 7x less serious than being hit at 30mph. It's like falling from the 1st floor rather than the 3rd floor of a building.



3. More time to see...

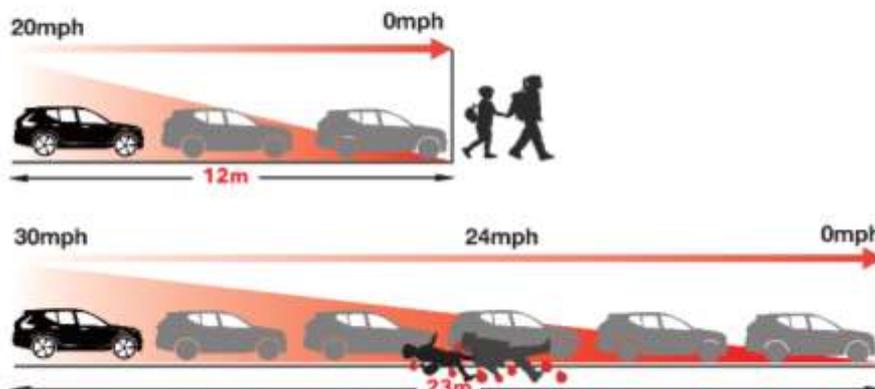
At 20mph your range of vision is greater, enabling you to anticipate danger better.



4. ...and more time to stop

Not only do you see danger earlier, you can stop more quickly. At the point that a car going at 20mph has stopped, a car at 30mph is still travelling at 24mph.

Thinking Distance + Braking Distance = Stopping Distance



5. Promoting healthy lifestyle: better public health, less pollution, better community



Inactivity and pollution are major causes of early death in

the UK and 20mph is associated with higher levels of activity.

As well as reducing obesity, heart disease and loneliness, increased walking and cycling reduces pollution, improves sleep patterns (vehicles at

20mph emit 50% less noise than at 30mph), makes people less anxious and more sociable. The elderly and vulnerable retain independent mobility longer, keeping them self-sustaining in daily life which reduces social care costs. Children can play out and learn independent mobility, with less taxi

duty for parents and carers. Finally, 20mph enables lifestyle changes, renewed community life and a positive atmosphere. Our towns and villages will be more attractive, liveable and sustainable places.

6. Enforcement

- As with any speed limits, 20mph is enforceable. Individual police forces choose to place different priorities on speed management. Some, such as Avon and Somerset and Metropolitan Police are very active; others less so.
- Even without regular enforcement 20mph limits reduce speeds, collisions and casualties, particularly where there is driver education through community engagement, such as Community Speedwatch.
- Compliance will increase over time, as drivers become used to 20mph. Compliant drivers effectively become pacer vehicles to enforce 20mph on the traffic behind them.
- The introduction of “in car speed limiters” – likely to be mandatory on new models from 2022 and all vehicles from 2024 – will further increase compliance without external enforcement. Although drivers can choose to override the limiter, most will welcome the reassurance that they are not breaking the law inadvertently. Vehicles will also have black boxes fitted, which can record the speed limit in the event of a collision, affecting a driver’s liability.

7. Strengthening the local economy

20mph aids local business as people want to shop, socialise and live in 20mph places. Helps fight the trend to online buying towards the local economy and, in particular, our local high streets and town centres.

8. Lowering the cost of traffic danger

Road casualties are responsible for the loss of over 2% of GDP. Collisions are predictable and preventable. Introducing a safer system by reducing speed brings down casualties, saves money as well as pain and suffering. The trend towards 20mph is well-established in the UK and other countries. With 20mph coming, don’t let where you live be left behind.

Wide area 20mph limit schemes typically cost no more than £5-6 per head. Where several places are made 20mph, together some costs, such as the Traffic Regulation Order, can be shared. Larger areas tend to be cheaper per person, since they required fewer signs.

20mph is not expensive and the investment cost brings benefits for years; typically it pays back within months. A calculator on the 20's Plenty website – see example below – can show the cost benefit for your Highway Authority: https://www.20splenty.org/cost_benefit_calculator.

Whole country calculator		Country		England	
		Cost per person	£5.00	Note 3	
		Streets converted	80%	Note 4	
		Casualty savings	20%	Note 5	
Cost:benefit of implementing 20mph		All roads	30mph roads		Note
DfT reported road casualties in England in 2019		139,695	78,998	57%	1
Of which, casualties on 30mph roads in LAs not yet committed to 20mph			50,607	36%	
Of which: killed			333		
Seriously injured			8,044		
Slightly injured			42,230		
Cost of reported casualties		£10,260m	£3,252m	32%	2
Casualty cost per person per year			£83		
Cost per person to implement 20mph			£5		
One-off implementation cost @ £5 per person living in LAs not committed to 20mph			£197m		
Expected casualty reduction of 20%			8,097 (all severities)		
Expected annual benefit			£520m (based on 20% casualty savings)		
Payback (months): first year IRR: 5 year benefit			4.5	264%	£2,403m

* Implementing 20mph on 80% of 30mph roads in England for a one-off cost of £197m could save 8,097 casualties and £520m each year. The investment pays back in 4.5 months with a first year IRR of 264%, saving £2,403m over five years.

* Costs for 20mph would be significantly less when implemented as a national default.

* DfT statistics, based on police records (note 1) show 139,695 casualties in England in 2019, of which 50,607 or 36% were on 30mph roads in Local Authorities not yet committed to 20mph, at a cost (note 2) of £3,252m. That's the equivalent of £83 per person per year.

9. Signed only limits reduce road speeds

Road safety is improved even without 100% compliance with a 20mph limit. Studies, such as those below show that reductions in average speeds are achieved without physical traffic calming or enforcement and such reductions are greatest on faster roads. Even relatively small changes in average speed result in significant casualty savings.

Over time, as 20mph limits become more established and in-car speed limiters become more widespread, compliance levels will increase and average speeds reduce further.

CASE STUDY - Bristol

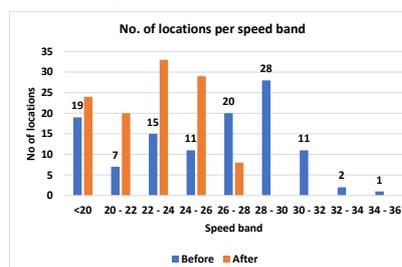
Much of Bristol is now 20 mph. Studies have found that speeds on 94% of surveyed roads had fallen, with an overall 2.7mph reduction in average speeds offering estimated casualty reductions per year of 4.53 fatalities, 11.3 serious injuries and 159.3 slight injuries.

These total an estimated cost saving of over £15 million per year - annual savings over 5 times greater than the one-off roll-out cost of £2.77m mostly funded by Government. Over a ten-year period, 20mph in Bristol will have saved 45 lives, 113 serious injuries, 1,593 minor injuries, and save over £147m net - a fantastic return on a public health investment! It also saves drivers on average £50 per vehicle per year on fuel.

CASE STUDY - Scottish Borders

In a trial involving over 100 communities in the Scottish Borders, speeds were shown to reduce by an

Scottish borders		Reduction	
20mph data		mph	%age
Pre-speed			
Up to 24mph		1.0	4.8%
24 - 27mph		3.3	12.5%
28+		5.3	17.5%

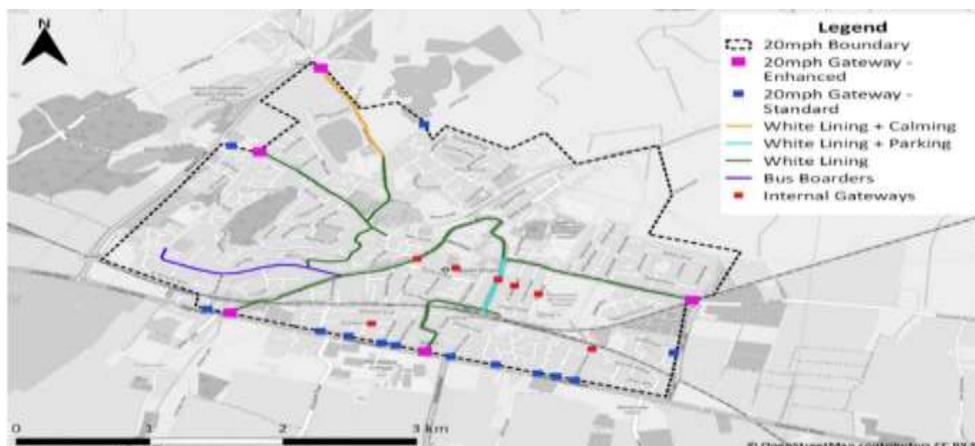
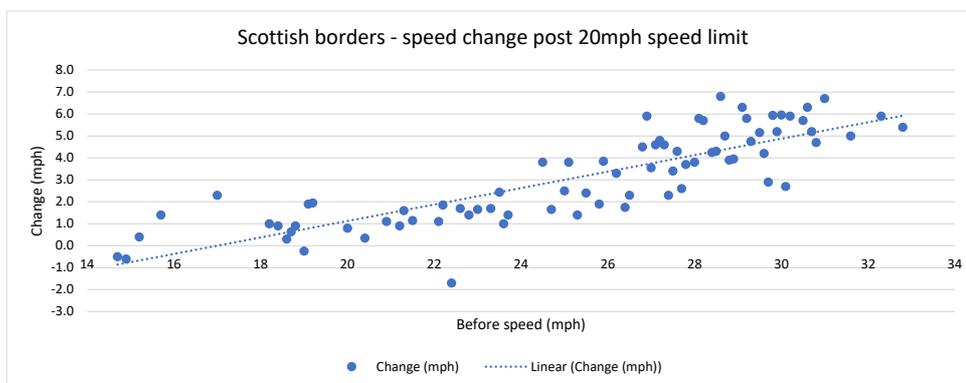


average of 3mph, with greater reductions in places with higher pre-speeds. As well as lowering speeds overall, the number of places with higher speeds also reduced. Before the scheme, locations experiencing average speeds above 28mph fell from over 40 to **NONE** after implementation.

CASE STUDY - Faversham

In this historic market town of 20,000 people in Kent, 20's Plenty for Faversham successfully campaigned for a town-wide 20mph limit, which went live in September 2020. As well as being popular, speeds reduced by 4 – 5 mph on the faster roads.

Initially opposed by Kent County Council, strength of local support and the technical design showed that it would be more cost-effective to implement a town-wide 20mph speed limit.



Low-cost techniques to reduce traffic speeds were accepted by the highway authority: attractive gateways to the settlement announcing the speed limit change and resident-led 'Community Corners', - as planters at key locations.

Meeting of the Full Council

Monday 17 January 2022

Agenda Item 18.0

TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The report sets out the engagements of the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
- 1.2 Please note that the Mayor, Councillor J. Love and Deputy Mayor, Councillor D. French were elected on 24 May 2021.

TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

- 12 December 2021 Sussex Association Bonfire and Carnival Societies Carol Service. Holy Cross Church and afterwards at Civic Centre, Uckfield.
- 14 December 2021 Churchcoombe Residents' Association Community Lights/Decoration judging. Uckfield.
- 18 December 2021 Uckfield Theatre Guild Pantomime. Civic Centre, Uckfield.

TO NOTE THE DEPUTY MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

- 15 December 2021 Ridgewood Village Hall Outreach Lunch Club award presentation. Ridgewood.
- 18 December 2021 Uckfield Theatre Guild Pantomime. Civic Centre, Uckfield.