

Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview And Scrutiny Committee Supplementary agenda No.1

Notice of a Meeting, to be held as a **Virtual Meeting** in accordance with Regulation 5 of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

A meeting of the committee will be held on:

Date: Thursday, 3 December 2020

Time: 6.30pm

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Membership: Councillors Bhutia (Vice-Chairman), Browne, Carr, Curry, Etheridge (Chairman), Fearn, Sylvia Griffin, Hubbard, Mahil, Andy Stamp, Thompson, Tranter and Williams

Agenda

10 Draft Capital and Revenue Budget 2021/22

(Pages
3 - 4)

The draft minute of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 November 2020 is attached

For further information please contact Ellen Wright, Democratic Services Officer on Telephone: 01634 332012 or Email: democratic.services@medway.gov.uk

Date: 1 December 2020

Information about this virtual meeting

Please note that any member of the press and public may follow proceedings at this 'virtual' meeting via a weblink which will be publicised on the Council's website ahead of the meeting. Please refer to this meeting via the meeting calendar for further details:

<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

Members of the press and public may tweet, blog etc. during the live broadcast as they would be able to during a regular Committee meeting.



BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 NOVEMBER 2020

DRAFT CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22

Extract from the record of the meeting:

Discussion:

Members considered a report which presented the Council's draft capital and revenue budgets for 2021/22 which was based on the principles contained in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2021-2023 considered by Cabinet on 17 November.

During the discussion the following comments and responses were made:

- It was noted that Kent County Council consulted residents on budget priorities. Officers confirmed that Medway would follow the same budget setting process as previous years which did not include public consultation.
- Officers noted a request that, where any future budget proposals might lead to potential redundancies, this should be made explicitly clear in the reports to Cabinet and Council.
- Members were advised that a 2% uplift assumption had been made in respect of most of the Council's fees and charges, although Directorates had discretion to propose a variation. Members were further advised that it was assumed the direct impact of Covid-19 would continue to mostly be funded by Government.
- Officers confirmed that the Council had discretion over the level of staff pay award.
- Regarding the number of large premises that had closed in the last two years, officers agreed to provide further information on the risks to the Council's business rates tax base.
- Concern was raised regarding the sustainability of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) budget on which there was growing pressure. Officers

responded that authorities had been required to implement the 2014 Department of Education (DfE) SEN reforms without adequate increase in the Dedicated Schools Grant. The Council had a SEN deficit plan which included measures such as investment into local SEN provision rather than expensive out of area provision and keeping SEN children in mainstream education where appropriate.

- On the issue of the accessibility of financial support for those required to self-isolate following testing, officers advised that grant applications had surpassed expectations which indicated that the publicity campaign had been good. There was little left in the discretionary fund and it would be replaced by a new scheme which would be available shortly.
- In response to a question on income opportunities, the Committee was advised that Medway Commercial Group was seeking to widen its customer base for its recruitment agency beyond the Council, to the NHS and external care providers for example.

Decision:

The Committee:

- a) noted that Cabinet had instructed officers to continue to work with Portfolio Holders in formulating robust proposals to balance the budget for 2021/22 and beyond; and
- b) commented on the proposals outlined in the draft capital and revenue budgets and forwarded the proposals to the individual overview and scrutiny committees.