

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the County Council held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 9 February 2023.

PRESENT: Mrs L Game (Chairman), Mr G Cooke (Vice-Chairman), Mr N Baker, Mr M Baldock, Mr P V Barrington-King, Mr P Bartlett, Mr D Beaney, Mrs C Bell, Mrs R Binks, Mr T Bond, Mr A Booth, Mr A Brady, Mr D L Brazier, Mr C Broadley, Mrs B Bruneau, Mr S R Campkin, Miss S J Carey, Sir Paul Carter, CBE, Mrs S Chandler, Mr N J D Chard, Mrs P T Cole, Mr P Cole, Mr N J Collor, Ms K Constantine, Mr P C Cooper, Mr D Crow-Brown, Mr M C Dance, Ms M Dawkins, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mr M Dendor, Mr R W Gough, Ms K Grehan, Ms S Hamilton, Peter Harman, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr A R Hills, Mrs S V Hohler, Mr S Holden, Mr M A J Hood, Mr A J Hook, Mrs S Hudson, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr A Kennedy, Mr J A Kite, MBE, Rich Lehmann, Mr B H Lewis, Mr R C Love, OBE, Mr S C Manion, Mr R A Marsh, Ms M McArthur, Mr J P McInroy, Ms J Meade, Mr J Meade, Mr D Murphy, Mr P J Oakford, Mr J M Ozog, Mrs L Parfitt-Reid, Mrs S Prendergast, Mr H Rayner, Mr O Richardson, Mr A M Ridgers, Mr D Robey, Mr A Sandhu, MBE, Mr T L Shonk, Mr C Simkins, Mr M J Sole, Mr P Stepto, Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE, Dr L Sullivan, Mr B J Sweetland, Mr R J Thomas, Mr D Watkins, Mr S Webb, Mr J Wright and Ms L Wright

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr J Cook (Democratic Services Manager) and Mr B Watts (General Counsel)

IN VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE: Mr D Ross

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

119. Apologies for Absence
(Item 1)

The General Counsel reported apologies from Mr Cannon, Mr Chittenden, and Mr Daley.

Mr Ross had given his formal apologies and joined the meeting virtually.

120. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant Interests in items on the agenda
(Item 2)

Mr Manion declared an interest that he was a host for Ukrainian refugees under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Ms Meade declared an interest that she was a carer.

Ms Wright declared an interest that she was an appointee for a family member.

The General Counsel advised that the procedure rules would apply in accordance with the Register of Members' Interests.

121. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2022 and, if in order, to be approved as a correct record
(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2022 be approved as a correct record subject to references to Hope not Hate standing up to fascism being included in Dr Sullivan's response to the Leader's report (Item 7 – *Report by Leader of the Council (Oral)*).

122. Chairman's Announcements
(Item 4)

- (1) With the deepest regret the Chairman informed Members of the very sad passing of Mr Cameron Beart, County Councillor for Sheppey. Mr Beart joined Kent County Council at the May 2021 election and served as a Member of the Council's Planning Applications Committee. He also served on the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee and the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee between May 2021 and July 2022. Mr Beart represented Queenborough and Halfway on Swale Borough Council and he was also Deputy Mayor at Queenborough Town Council. The Chairman advised Members that full tributes to Mr Beart would be given at the next meeting of County Council.
- (2) The Chairman referred to the tragic earthquake in Turkey and Syria which had taken the lives of thousands of people. The Chairman asked Members to join her in sending thoughts and best wishes for the emergency response and in expressing the Council's deepest sympathies to those who had lost loved ones in the disaster.
- (3) The Chairman held a one-minute silence in memory of Mr Beart and those who had suffered in the recent earthquake.

123. Section 25 Assurance Statement
(Item 5)

- (1) Mr Oakford proposed, and Mr Gough seconded the motion that:

“Pursuant to section 25 of the Local Government Act, County Council is asked to consider and note this report and agree to have due regard to the contents when making decisions about the proposed budget.”

- (2) The Chairman advised Members that the Section 25 Assurance Statement was a record of professional advice to assist in consideration of the proposed budget. Its consideration was a legal requirement and did not seek agreement to any of the budget proposals due to be considered.
- (3) The Corporate Director for Finance, as the Section 151 Officer, provided an overview of the Section 25 Assurance Statement. She confirmed that this report set out her professional opinion as Section 151 Officer as to the robustness of the budget estimates and the level of reserves. She advised that this view took account of the impact of global and national factors and the general economic environment. She acknowledged that setting a balanced budget for 2023/2024 and the medium term had been exceptionally challenging and highlighted that there were significant financial risks. She said, subject to all the proposals in the draft budget being delivered as planned, she was able to confirm the adequacy of the reserves and the robustness of the estimates.
- (4) The Chair put the motion set out in paragraph 1 to the vote and it was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED that pursuant to section 25 of the Local Government Act, County Council noted the report and agreed to have due regard to the contents when making decisions about the proposed budget.

124. Capital Programme 2023-33 and Revenue Budget 2023-24 (including Council Tax Setting 2023/24)
(Item 6)

- (1) The Chairman reminded all Members that any Member of a Local Authority who was liable to pay Council Tax, and who had any unpaid Council Tax amount overdue for at least two months, even if there was an arrangement to pay off the arrears, must declare the fact that they are in arrears and must not cast their vote on anything related to KCC's Budget or Council Tax.
- (2) The Chairman drew Members' attention to the Section 25 Assurance Statement, as considered under the previous item, reminding them of the agreement by Council to give it due regard while considering the Budget.
- (3) Mr Oakford proposed and Mr Gough Seconded the following motion:

"County Council, having given due regard to the s25 Report (published for consideration as agenda item 5 of this meeting), is asked to agree the following:

2023-33 Capital Programme

- (a) The 10-year Capital programme and investment proposals of £1,624.0m over the years from 2023-24 to 2032-33 together with the necessary funding and subject to approval to spend arrangements.
- (b) The directorate capital programmes as set out in appendices A & B of the final draft budget report published on 1 st February 2023.

2023-24 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan

- (c) The net revenue budget requirement of £1,310.9m for 2023-24.
- (d) The directorate revenue budget proposals for 2023-24 and the medium term financial plan as set out in appendices D (high level 3 year plan), E (2023-24 key services), appendix F (variations for 2023-24) and G (variations for 2023-26) of the final draft budget report published on 1 st February 2023.

2023-24 Council Tax

- (e) To increase Council Tax band rates up to the maximum permitted without a referendum as set out in section 6.10 (table 4) in the final draft report published on 1st February 2023. For the general precept the increase up to but not exceeding 3% raises an additional £25.048m taking the total general precept to £761,106,400
- (f) To levy the additional 2% social care precept (raising an additional £16.664m and taking the total social care precept to £115,672,900 out of the total precept set out in recommendation (g) below).
- (g) The total Council Tax requirement of £876,779,300 to be raised through precepts on districts as set out in section 6.9 (table 3) in the final draft report published on 1st February 2023.

Kent Pay Scheme 2023-24

- (h) The recommendations from Personnel Committee on the changes to Kent Pay Scheme as set out in section 7.8 of the final draft budget published on 1 st February 2023
- (i) The uprating of member allowances linked to pay awards as set out in section 7.10 of the final draft budget published on 1st February 2023

Key Policies and Strategies

- (j) The Fees and Charges policy as set out in appendix L of the final draft report published on 1st February 2023

- (k) The Capital Strategy as set out in appendix M of the final draft report published on 1 st February 2023 including the Prudential Indicators.
- (l) The Treasury Management Strategy as set out in appendix N of the final draft report published on 1 st February 2023
- (m) The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement as set out in appendix P of the final draft report published on 1 st February 2023.
- (n) The Reserves Policy as set out in appendix I of the final draft budget report published on 1st February 2023.

In addition:

- (o) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Finance (after consultation with the Leader, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate & Traded Services and the political Group Leaders) to resolve any Page 24 minor technical issues for the final budget publication which do not materially alter the approved budget or change the net budget requirement and for any changes made to be reflected in the final version of the Budget Book (blue combed) due to be published in March 2023.
 - (p) To note the information on the impact of the County Council's share of retained business rates and business rate collection fund balances on the revenue budget will be reported to Cabinet once it has all been received.
 - (q) To note the extraordinary impact of the economic consequences of global and national circumstances on spending and income in 2022-23, and knock on consequences and on-going impact in the final draft 2023-24 budget, capital programme and medium term financial plan.
 - (r) To note further potential economic volatility and the uncertain financial outlook for later years in the absence of a multi-year settlement from government (in particular from 2025-26 onwards with guiding principles and notional grant increases only confirmed for 2024-25) as well as uncertain impact of the delayed social care reforms and reforms to local government funding arrangements."
- (4) Dr Sullivan (Leader of the Opposition), Mr Hook (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) and Mr Lehmann (Leader of the Green & Independent Group) gave their responses to the recommendations.
 - (5) Following a general debate, the Chairman called for cross-directorate amendments.
 - (6) Dr Sullivan proposed, and Mr Brady seconded the following amendment:

Proposed Purpose:

“To amend the budget proposed by the Administration in line with the Labour Group’s Alternative Budget in accordance with sections 8.10 – 14 of the Constitution.”

Proposed Amount:

“See revised budget appendices A, B, D and G. Please also refer to the Labour Group’s alternative budget covering report, which includes the revised recommendation as proposed by the Labour Group.”

Proposed Funding Source:

“See revised budget appendices A, B, D and G. Please also refer to the Labour Group’s alternative budget covering report, which includes the revised recommendation as proposed by the Labour Group.”

Post meeting note – A covering report was circulated at the meeting and is attached to these minutes along with the revised budget appendices A, B, D and G.

- (7) The General Counsel provided a point of clarification regarding the formal recording of votes.
- (8) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 6 above and the voting was as follows:

For (13)

Mr Baldock, Mr Brady, Mr Campkin, Ms Constantine, Ms Dawkins, Ms K Grehan, Mr Harman, Mr Hood, Mr Lehmann, Mr Lewis, Ms Meade, Mr P Stepto, Dr Sullivan

Against (56)

Mr Baker, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mr Beaney, Mrs Bell, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Mr C Broadley, Mrs Bruneau, Miss Carey, Mr Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Cole, Mr N Collor, Mr Cooper, Mr Crow-Brown, Mr Dance, Mr Dendor, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mrs Hudson, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Kennedy, Mr Kite, Mr Love, Mr S Manion, Mr Marsh, Ms McArthur, Mr McInroy, Mr Meade, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mr Ozog, Mrs Parfitt-Reid, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Rayner, Mr Richardson, Mr Ridgers, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Shonk, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins, Mr Webb, Mr Wright, Ms Wright

Abstain (4)

Mrs Dean, Mr Hook, Mr Sole, Mr Streatfeild

Amendment lost.

Children, Young People and Education Directorate

- (9) The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services introduced the budget for this directorate prior to general debate and the taking of directorate specific amendments.
- (10) Mr Hook proposed, and Mr Streatfeild seconded the following amendment:

Proposed Purpose:

“This amendment seeks to maintain the current practice of the provision of disability packages of support for children and their families. Disability packages for children provide essential support to disabled children and their families, who otherwise would face extraordinary costs to access the same level of support. Disabled children are some of the most vulnerable in our communities and a cut to their support will put their physical and emotional wellbeing at risk. ‘Strict adherence to policy’ is a major reduction in this service and will provide only the absolute minimum when disabled children’s needs are often complex and unique on an individual basis. This authority cannot rely on the assumption that it will be guaranteed enhanced contributions from health when these budgets are already under extreme pressure. Maintaining this funding will allow for disabled children to be given the best possible life chances, independence and allow them to prosper in Kent’s vibrant community.

Note:

The amendment calls for funding by a reduction in the overall contribution to earmarked reserves for one year to allow for alternative sources of funding or savings to be identified.”

Proposed Amount:

“£1,529.3k.”

Proposed Funding Source:

“£1,529.3k reduction in the contribution to earmarked reserves.”

- (11) Dr Sullivan requested that Mrs Chandler’s comment regarding the intention that support for disabled children would not be stopped, be included in the minutes.
- (12) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 10 above and the voting was as follows:

For (16)

Mr Brady, Mr Campkin, Ms Constantine, Ms Dawkins, Mrs Dean, Ms Grehan, Mr Harman, Mr Hood, Mr Hook, Mr Lehmann, Mr Lewis, Ms Meade, Mr Sole, Mr Stepto, Mr Streatfeild, Dr Sullivan

Against (53)

Mr Baker, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mr Beaney, Mrs Bell, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Mr C Broadley, Mrs Bruneau, Miss Carey, Mr Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Cole, Mr N Collor, Mr Crow-Brown, Mr Dance, Mr Dendor, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mrs Hudson, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Love, Mr S Manion, Mr Marsh, Ms McArthur, Mr McInroy, Mr Meade, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mr Ozog, Mrs Parfitt-Reid, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Rayner, Mr Richardson, Mr Ridgers, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Shonk, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins, Mr Webb, Mr Wright, Ms Wright

Abstain (1)

Mr Baldock

Amendment lost.

(13) The Democratic Services Manager clarified the arrangements for proposing and seconding budget amendments, specifically that it was limited to one per Member and he confirmed the details were in line with the Constitution and the procedure note circulated to Members in advance of the meeting.

(14) Mr Lehmann proposed, and Mr Baldock seconded the following amendment:

Proposed Purpose:

“To fund a feasibility study to the possibility of insourcing a proportion of the Home to School transport provision for pupils in mainstream education. The costs in this area have increased at exceptional rates in recent years and alternative methods for provision of this service need to be investigated.”

Proposed Amount:

“£100,000.”

Proposed Funding Source:

“To be funded from reserves.”

(15) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 14 above and the voting was as follows:

For (13)

Mr Baldock, Mr Brady, Mr Campkin, Ms Constantine, Ms Dawkins, Ms Grehan, Mr Harman, Mr Hood, Mr Lehmann, Mr Lewis, Ms Meade, Mr Stepto, Dr Sullivan

Against (56)

Mr Baker, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mr Beaney, Mrs Bell, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Mr C Broadley, Mrs Bruneau, Miss Carey, Mr Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Cole, Mr N Collor, Mr Cooper, Mr Crow-Brown, Mr Dance, Mr Dendor, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mrs Hudson, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Kennedy, Mr Kite, Mr Love, Mr S Manion, Mr Marsh, Ms McArthur, Mr McInroy, Mr Meade, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mr Ozog, Mrs Parfitt-Reid, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Rayner, Mr Richardson, Mr Ridgers, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Shonk, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins, Mr Webb, Mr Wright, Ms Wright

Abstain (4)

Mrs Dean, Mr Hook, Mr Sole, Mr Streatfeild

Amendment lost.

Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate

(16) The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, the Cabinet Member for Environment, the Cabinet Member for Communities and Regulatory Services and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development introduced the budget for this directorate prior to general debate and the taking of directorate specific amendments.

(17) Mr Baldock proposed, and Mr Harman seconded the following amendment:

Proposed Purpose:

“Community Wardens are instrumental in ensuring safer and more resilient communities, and they provide vital preventative social care support to vulnerable residents by engaging in social prescribing. We propose to reverse the £500,000 part year saving, maintaining the 2022/2023 funding levels for this service, ensuring that Community Wardens are able to continue providing vital support at a time when adult social care services are overwhelmed and PCSOs are disappearing from our communities.”

Proposed Amount:

“£500,000 in 2023/24. £1,000,000 in 2024/25.”

Proposed Funding Source:

“**2023/24** funding source – The estimated council tax collection fund balance surplus of £4.487m

2024/25 onwards (subject to necessary legislation) - Working in partnership with district councils, KCC will pursue a policy of charging the maximum council tax premiums for second homes and empty homes. These two policies are expected to generate an additional £4.4m in tax income from 2024/25 (factoring in an assumption that districts are given a 25% incentive for co-operation with the policy).”

(18) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 17 above and the voting was as follows:

For (16)

Mr Baldock, Mr Brady, Mr Campkin, Ms Constantine, Ms Dawkins, Mrs Dean, Mr Harman, Mr Hood, Mr Hook, Mr Lehmann, Mr Lewis, Ms Meade, Mr Sole, Mr Stepto, Mr Streatfeild, Dr Sullivan

Against (54)

Mr Baker, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mr Beaney, Mrs Bell, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Mr C Broadley, Mrs Bruneau, Miss Carey, Mr Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Cole, Mr N Collor, Mr Cooper, Mr Crow-Brown, Mr Dance, Mr Dendor, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Kennedy, Mr Kite, Mr Love, Mr S Manion, Mr Marsh, Mr McInroy, Mr Meade, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mr Ozog, Mrs Parfitt-Reid, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Rayner, Mr Richardson, Mr Ridgers, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Shonk, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins, Mr Webb, Mr Wright, Ms Wright

Abstain (0)

Amendment lost.

(19) Mr Stepto proposed, and Mr Hood seconded the following amendment:

Proposed Purpose:

“As a result of the decision to reduce bus subsidies, many residents across Kent have been left without access to a bus service. The role of community transport is now even more important to ensure that residents without access to public transport are able to socialise, shop and access health appointments. We propose a £1m investment to fund electric minibuses for use by community transport organisations across Kent, to ensure that vulnerable residents are not left isolated as a result of the subsidy cuts.”

Proposed Amount:

“£1,000,000.”

Proposed Funding Source:

“To be funded in 2023/24 from the estimated council tax collection fund balance surplus of £4.487m, with a view to repaying from increased council tax premiums on second homes and empty homes from 2024/25 onwards if sufficient progress towards this has been made by districts by Winter 2023.”

(20) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 19 above and the voting was as follows:

For (17)

Mr Baldock, Mr Brady, Mr Campkin, Ms Constantine, Ms Dawkins, Mrs Dean, Ms Grehan, Mr Harman, Mr Hood, Mr Hook, Mr Lehmann, Mr Lewis, Ms Meade, Mr Sole, Mr Stepto, Mr Streatfeild, Dr Sullivan

Against (53)

Mr Baker, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mr Beaney, Mrs Bell, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Mr C Broadley, Mrs Bruneau, Miss Carey, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Cole, Mr N Collor, Mr Cooper, Mr Crow-Brown, Mr Dance, Mr Dendor, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mrs Hudson, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Kennedy, Mr Kite, Mr Love, Mr S Manion, Mr Marsh, Mr McInroy, Mr Meade, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mr Ozog, Mrs Parfitt-Reid, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Rayner, Mr Richardson, Mr Ridgers, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins, Mr Webb, Mr Wright, Ms Wright

Abstain (1)

Mr Shonk

Amendment lost.

(21) Mr Hood proposed, and Mr Campkin seconded the following amendment:

Proposed Purpose:

“KCC’s 2022 budget included a proposal to double the number of swathe cuts on rural roads to support the aims of Kent’s Plan Bee by optimising the range of habitats provided for pollinators across Kent’s rural verge network. We propose to reinstate the number of swathe cuts in line with the 2022/23 budget.”

Proposed Amount:

“£300,000”

Proposed Funding Source:

“**2023/24** funding source – The estimated council tax collection fund balance surplus of £4.487m

“
2024/25 onwards (subject to necessary legislation) - Working in partnership with district councils, KCC will pursue a policy of charging the maximum council tax premium for second homes. This policy will generate an estimated additional £1.7m in tax income from 2024/25 (factoring in an assumption that districts are given a 25% incentive for co-operation with the policy).”

(22) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 21 above and the voting was as follows:

For (17)

Mr Baldock, Mr Brady, Mr Campkin, Ms Constantine, Ms Dawkins, Mrs Dean, Ms Grehan, Mr Harman, Mr Hood, Mr Hook, Mr Lehmann, Mr Lewis, Ms Meade, Mr Sole, Mr Stepto, Mr Streatfeild, Dr Sullivan

Against (54)

Mr Baker, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mr Beaney, Mrs Bell, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Mr C Broadley, Mrs Bruneau, Miss Carey, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Cole, Mr N Collor, Mr Cooper, Mr Crow-Brown, Mr Dance, Mr Dendor, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mrs Hudson, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Kennedy, Mr Kite, Mr Love, Mr S Manion, Mr Marsh, Mr McInroy, Mr Meade, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mr Ozog, Mrs Parfitt-Reid, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Rayner, Mr Richardson, Mr Ridgers, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Shonk, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins, Mr Webb, Mr Wright, Ms Wright

Abstain (0)

Amendment lost.

(23) Mr Campkin proposed, and Mr Stepto seconded the following amendment:

Proposed Purpose:

“We propose to increase the weed control budget to allow KCC to consider and implement environmentally conscious methods of weed control to reduce our reliance on glyphosates and to support the goals of Plan Bee.”

Proposed Amount:

“£600,000.”

Proposed Funding Source:

“**2023/24** funding source – The estimated council tax collection fund balance surplus of £4.487m

2024/25 onwards (subject to necessary legislation) - Working in partnership with district councils, KCC will pursue a policy of charging the maximum council tax premium for homes that have remained empty for longer than one year. This policy will generate an estimated additional £2.7m in tax income from 2024/25 (factoring in an assumption that districts are given a 25% incentive for co-operation with the policy).”

(24) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 23 above and the voting was as follows:

For (17)

Mr Baldock, Mr Brady, Mr Campkin, Ms Constantine, Ms Dawkins, Mrs Dean, Ms Grehan, Mr Harman, Mr Hood, Mr Hook, Mr Lehmann, Mr Lewis, Ms Meade, Mr Sole, Mr Stepto, Mr Streatfeild, Dr Sullivan

Against (53)

Mr Baker, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mr Beaney, Mrs Bell, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Mr C Broadley, Miss Carey, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Cole, Mr N Collor, Mr Cooper, Mr Crow-Brown, Mr Dance, Mr Dendor, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mrs Hudson, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Kennedy, Mr Kite, Mr Love, Mr S Manion, Mr Marsh, Mrs McArthur, Mr McInroy, Mr Meade, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mr Ozog, Mrs Parfitt-Reid, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Rayner, Mr Richardson, Mr Ridgers, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins, Mr Webb, Mr Wright, Ms Wright

Abstain (1)

Mrs Bruneau

Amendment lost.

Adult Social Care and Health Directorate

(25) The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health introduced the budget for this directorate prior to general debate and the taking of directorate specific amendments.

(26) Mr Streatfeild proposed, and Mrs Dean seconded the following amendment:

Proposed Purpose:

“This amendment seeks to maintain the current practice of the provision of discretionary services in adult social care from the voluntary sector. The voluntary sector provides essential care services to the most vulnerable adults in Kent. Support from the NHS is not guaranteed due to their own budgetary restrictions, and this cannot be relied on. A reduction in essential services will significantly reduce the emotional and physical wellbeing of adults in care and would increase their vulnerability. Not only would this

cause immense harm but could increase costs in other areas of the authority and other public sector bodies. Without support, the voluntary sector would collapse due to the increase in costs they are experiencing. Maintaining this funding for Adult Social Care contracts with the voluntary sector will significantly improve the quality of life of those in care, maintain jobs for those in the sector, and reduced the burden on overstretched NHS services in Kent.

Note:

The amendment calls for funding by a reduction in the overall contribution to earmarked reserves for one year to allow for alternative sources of funding to be identified.”

Proposed Amount:

“£4,310.0k.”

Proposed Funding Source:

“£4,310.0k reduction in contribution to earmarked reserves.”

(27) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 26 above and the voting was as follows:

For (16)

Mr Brady, Mr Campkin, Ms Constantine, Ms Dawkins, Mrs Dean, Ms Grehan, Mr Harman, Mr Hood, Mr Hook, Mr Lehmann, Mr Lewis, Ms Meade, Mr Sole, Mr Stepto, Mr Streatfeild, Dr Sullivan

Against (48)

Mr Baker, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Mr C Broadley, Miss Carey, Mrs Chandler, Mrs Cole, Mr Cole, Mr N Collor, Mr Cooper, Mr Crow-Brown, Mr Dance, Mr Dendor, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Kennedy, Mr Love, Mr S Manion, Mr Marsh, Mrs McArthur, Mr McInroy, Mr Meade, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mrs Parfitt-Reid, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Rayner, Mr Richardson, Mr Ridgers, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Shonk, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins, Mr Webb, Mr Wright

Abstain (1)

Mr Baldock

Amendment lost.

(28) The Chairman proposed that, under s14.48 of the Constitution, Council resolve to extend the meeting beyond 5.00pm and it was agreed unanimously.

- (29) RESOLVED that the County Council agree to continue the meeting beyond 5.00pm.

Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate

- (30) The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services and the Cabinet Member for People and Communications introduced the budget for this directorate prior to general debate and the taking of directorate specific amendments.

- (31) Mr Oakford provided clarification regarding the rollover of Member Grants.

- (32) Mr Sole proposed, and Mr Hook seconded the following amendment:

Proposed Purpose:

“Member community grants provide essential funding to community and highways projects that would otherwise not be funded. In the period, 2021/22 186 grants were awarded with the total amount awarded being £237,631.54 with a range of organisations being supported such as charities, community groups, parish councils and sports organisations. Members of the council work at the heart of their communities and know where grants would be best spent. Retaining the current £10,000 grant funding enables members to give a fair distribution to organisations in need across their divisions and secure local highway improvement schemes.

Note:

The amendment calls for funding by a reduction in the overall contribution to earmarked reserves for one year to allow for alternative sources of funding to be identified.”

Proposed Amount:

“£518.4k.”

Proposed Funding Source:

“£518.4k reduction in the contribution to earmarked reserves.”

- (33) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 32 above and the voting was as follows:

For (17)

Mr Baldock, Mr Brady, Mr Campkin, Ms Constantine, Ms Dawkins, Mrs Dean, Ms Grehan, Mr Harman, Mr Hood, Mr Hook, Mr Lehmann, Mr Lewis, Ms Meade, Mr Sole, Mr Stepto, Mr Streatfeild, Dr Sullivan

Against (51)

Mr Baker, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mr Beaney, Mrs Bell, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Mr C Broadley, Miss Carey, Mr Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Cole, Mr N Collor, Mr Cooper, Mr Crow-Brown, Mr Dance, Mr Dendor, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Kennedy, Mr Kite, Mr Love, Mr S Manion, Mr Marsh, Mrs McArthur, Mr McInroy, Mr Meade, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mrs Parfitt-Reid, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Rayner, Mr Richardson, Mr Ridgers, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins, Mr Webb, Mr Wright

Abstain (1)

Mr Shonk

Amendment lost.

(34) Mr Harman proposed, and Mr Lehmann seconded the following amendment:

Proposed Purpose:

“We propose that funding for the Combined Member Grant scheme should held at £10,000 per Member. This grant is vital to ensuring Members are able to deliver targeted support within their communities at a time when residents and organisations across Kent are struggling due to the cost of living crisis. This is especially vital at a time when the authority is making wide ranging cuts.”

Proposed Amount:

“£518,400”

Proposed Funding Source:

“**2023/24** funding source – The estimated council tax collection fund balance surplus of £4.487m

2024/25 onwards (subject to necessary legislation) - Working in partnership with district councils, KCC will pursue a policy of charging the maximum council tax premium for homes that have remained empty for longer than one year. This policy will generate an estimated additional £2.7m in tax income from 2024/25 (factoring in an assumption that districts are given a 25% incentive for co-operation with the policy).”

(35) The Democratic Services Manager provided clarification regarding the duplication of amendments. He said two amendments regarding Member Grants had been considered valid by the Chair as they involved different funding sources.

(36) Following the debate, the Chairman put to the vote the amendment set out in paragraph 34 above and the voting was as follows:

For (17)

Mr Baldock, Mr Brady, Mr Campkin, Ms Constantine, Ms Dawkins, Mrs Dean, Ms Grehan, Mr Harman, Mr Hood, Mr Hook, Mr Lehmann, Mr Lewis, Ms Meade, Mr Sole, Mr Stepto, Mr Streatfeild, Dr Sullivan

Against (48)

Mr Baker, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mr Beaney, Mrs Bell, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Mr C Broadley, Miss Carey, Mr Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Cole, Mr N Collor, Mr Cooper, Mr Crow-Brown, Mr Dance, Mr Dendor, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mr Holden, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Kennedy, Mr Kite, Mr Love, Mr S Manion, Mr Marsh, Mrs McArthur, Mr McInroy, Mr Meade, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Richardson, Mr Ridgers, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins, Mr Webb, Mr Wright

Abstain (1)

Mr Shonk

Amendment lost.

(37) Mr Gough and Mr Oakford summarised the debate. As all the amendments had been determined, the Chairman put to the vote the substantive motion as set out in Item 6, paragraph 3 above and the voting was as follows:

For (51)

Mr Baker, Mr Barrington-King, Mr Bartlett, Mr Beaney, Mrs Bell, Mrs Binks, Mr Bond, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Mr C Broadley, Miss Carey, Mr Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mrs Cole, Mr Cole, Mr N Collor, Mr Cooke, Mr Cooper, Mr Crow-Brown, Mr Dance, Mr Dendor, Mrs Game, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hill, Mr Hills, Mr Holden, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Kennedy, Mr Kite, Mr Love, Mr S Manion, Mr Marsh, Mrs McArthur, Mr McInroy, Mr Meade, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Richardson, Mr Ridgers, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Shonk, Mr Simkins, Mr Sweetland, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins, Mr Webb, Mr Wright

Against (17)

Mr Baldock, Mr Brady, Mr Campkin, Ms Constantine, Ms Dawkins, Mrs Dean, Ms Grehan, Mr Harman, Mr Hood, Mr Hook, Mr Lehmann, Mr Lewis, Ms Meade, Mr Sole, Mr Stepto, Mr Streatfeild, Dr Sullivan

Abstain (0)

Substantive Motion Carried.

RESOLVED that;

County Council, having given due regard to the s25 Report (published for consideration as agenda item 5 of this meeting), agreed the following:

2023-33 Capital Programme

- (a) The 10-year Capital programme and investment proposals of £1,624.0m over the years from 2023-24 to 2032-33 together with the necessary funding and subject to approval to spend arrangements.
- (b) The directorate capital programmes as set out in appendices A & B of the final draft budget report published on 1 st February 2023.

2023-24 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan

- (c) The net revenue budget requirement of £1,310.9m for 2023-24.
- (d) The directorate revenue budget proposals for 2023-24 and the medium term financial plan as set out in appendices D (high level 3 year plan), E (2023-24 key services), appendix F (variations for 2023-24) and G (variations for 2023-26) of the final draft budget report published on 1 st February 2023.

2023-24 Council Tax

- (e) To increase Council Tax band rates up to the maximum permitted without a referendum as set out in section 6.10 (table 4) in the final draft report published on 1st February 2023. For the general precept the increase up to but not exceeding 3% raises an additional £25.048m taking the total general precept to £761,106,400
- (f) To levy the additional 2% social care precept (raising an additional £16.664m and taking the total social care precept to £115,672,900 out of the total precept set out in recommendation (g) below).
- (g) The total Council Tax requirement of £876,779,300 to be raised through precepts on districts as set out in section 6.9 (table 3) in the final draft report published on 1 st February 2023.

Kent Pay Scheme 2023-24

- (h) The recommendations from Personnel Committee on the changes to Kent Pay Scheme as set out in section 7.8 of the final draft budget published on 1 st February 2023
- (i) The uprating of member allowances linked to pay awards as set out in section 7.10 of the final draft budget published on 1st February 2023

Key Policies and Strategies

- (j) The Fees and Charges policy as set out in appendix L of the final draft report published on 1st February 2023

- (k) The Capital Strategy as set out in appendix M of the final draft report published on 1 st February 2023 including the Prudential Indicators.
- (l) The Treasury Management Strategy as set out in appendix N of the final draft report published on 1 st February 2023
- (m) The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement as set out in appendix P of the final draft report published on 1 st February 2023.
- (n) The Reserves Policy as set out in appendix I of the final draft budget report published on 1st February 2023.

In addition:

- (o) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Finance (after consultation with the Leader, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate & Traded Services and the political Group Leaders) to resolve any Page 24 minor technical issues for the final budget publication which do not materially alter the approved budget or change the net budget requirement and for any changes made to be reflected in the final version of the Budget Book (blue combed) due to be published in March 2023.
- (p) To note the information on the impact of the County Council's share of retained business rates and business rate collection fund balances on the revenue budget will be reported to Cabinet once it has all been received.
- (q) To note the extraordinary impact of the economic consequences of global and national circumstances on spending and income in 2022-23, and knock on consequences and on-going impact in the final draft 2023-24 budget, capital programme and medium term financial plan.
- (r) To note further potential economic volatility and the uncertain financial outlook for later years in the absence of a multi-year settlement from government (in particular from 2025-26 onwards with guiding principles and notional grant increases only confirmed for 2024-25) as well as uncertain impact of the delayed social care reforms and reforms to local government funding arrangements.