

By: Anna Taylor, Scrutiny Research Officer
To: Scrutiny Committee – 1 November 2023
Subject: Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Strategy
Status: Unrestricted

Introduction

- 1) Following the report to Cabinet on 5 October setting out the Budget Recovery Strategy – Securing Kent's Future, the Chairman and Spokespeople have requested a regular item to Scrutiny Committee to allow rigorous and appropriate scrutiny on this strategy from the Council's Scrutiny function. This initial item is intended to support cross-party discussion of the plan and to allow the committee to consider the best approach for planning and undertaking the required scrutiny activity as Securing Kent's Future progresses.
- 2) The report submitted to Cabinet on 5 October, and attached as an appendix, sets out four strategic objectives in relation to Securing Kent's Future:
 - Bringing the 2023/24 budget back into balance.
 - Delivering savings from identified opportunity areas to set a sustainable 2024/25 budget and MTFP.
 - Policy choices and scope of Council's ambitions.
 - Further transforming the operating model of the Council.
- 3) The Cabinet report also states that robust governance and scrutiny of the proposals and plans of individual proposals within the scope of Securing Kent's Future will be critical to the successful delivery and providing the necessary transparency for assurance of the council's overall financial position.
- 4) The Cabinet on 5 October agreed 8 recommendations as set out in the attached report and confirmed the key role that the Scrutiny Committee will have in scrutinising the Budget Recovery Strategy.
- 5) The ultimate purpose of Scrutiny is to improve services for the residents of Kent through influencing decisions and policies made by the Council. The Committee can do this by scrutinising the short and long term implications of policy choices and considering the effects that these choices will have on the residents of Kent.

Format for 1 November meeting

- 6) The Chairman and Spokespeople wanted to discuss the detail of the Budget Recovery Strategy at this stage, but the Chairman recognises that the

administration has produced the Council's 2024/25 Budget 2 months earlier than in previous years and acknowledges that this is a positive step towards improving the governance of the Council.

- 7) Therefore, the intention on 1 November is to hold a scoping meeting with the documentation already available to determine how the Executive envisages working with the Scrutiny Committee and to set out a programme of work for the Committee.
- 8) The Chairman and Spokespeople would like each Cabinet Member to provide an update on their area of work and to give an overview of the main issues being focussed on currently.

Recommendation

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to **agree** to the development of a specific programme of work relating to the oversight of Securing Kent's Future.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Strategy, KCC Cabinet, 5 October 2023.

Appendix 2: Securing Kent's Future – Detailed Financial Assessment of budget proposals.

Background Documents

Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Strategy & Financial Reporting, KCC Cabinet, 17 August 2023

[\(Public Pack\)Item 5 - Securing Kent's Future - Budget Recovery Strategy & Financial Reporting Agenda Supplement for Cabinet, 17/08/2023 10:00](#)

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