



Email: committeeservices@horsham.gov.uk
Direct line: 01403 215465

Finance and Assets Policy Development Advisory Group

Monday, 13th September, 2021 at 5.30 pm
via Remote Video Link

The Access to Information Procedure Rules are not applicable to Policy Development Advisory Groups and members of the public may not attend. Members of the Council who are not members of the Policy Development Advisory Group may attend to observe the proceedings, seating for which will be provided, subject to providing advance (by noon of the day of the meeting) written notification to the Chairman of the meeting and committeeservices@horsham.gov.uk

Councillors: Richard Landeryou (Chairman)

Matthew Allen	Brian Donnelly
Tony Bevis	Frances Haigh
Paul Clarke	Nigel Jupp
Michael Croker	Stuart Ritchie
Ray Dawe	James Wright

You are summoned to the meeting to transact the following business

Glen Chipp
Chief Executive

Agenda

	Page No.
1. Apologies for absence	
2. Notes of previous meeting	3 - 4
To receive the notes of the meeting held on 19 May 2021	
3. Update on the Council's financial position and Medium Term Financial Strategy	5 - 12
To receive a presentation from the Head of Finance & Performance	

Continued/...

4. **Early conversation about Revenues & Benefits and Internal Audit Services from 1 April 2023** 13 - 26

The current arrangements for provision of Horsham District Council's Revenues and Benefits and Internal Audit services expire on 31 March 2023. Both services are provided through local authority partnerships through a delegation. Should Councillors prefer to outsource the services at renewal then guidance to officers is needed in 2021 to allow a time for a full "above threshold" public procurement to take place.

The purpose of this discussion will be to tell Councillors about how these services are operating and discuss the alternative supply routes with them. The discussion will include consideration of changes of approach or changes of detail. A report on the proposed route will go to Cabinet in November.

Councillors who wish to read up in advance of the meeting should look at the quarterly reports to Audit Committee for internal audit and the most recent monthly Revenues and Benefits report (attached)

5. **Forward Plan Extract for the Finance and Assets Portfolio** 27 - 32

To note the Forward Plan extract for the Finance and Assets Portfolio

Finance and Assets Policy Development Advisory Group
19 MAY 2021

Present: Councillors: Paul Clarke (Chairman), Matthew Allen, Tony Bevis, Michael Croker, Brian Donnelly, Frances Haigh, Nigel Jupp, Richard Landeryou and Gordon Lindsay

Apologies: Councillor: Stuart Ritchie

Also Present: Councillor: Ruth Fletcher

23 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes from the previous meeting on 1 March were received.

24 **REVENUES & BENEFITS: COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME**

The Revenues & Benefits Operations Manager briefed the group on the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme, including details of the Government's additional £150 discretionary means support to working age residents during 2020/21. The Council Tax Reduction scheme had seen increased applications during the pandemic.

Additional funding had enabled the extra £150 discretionary scheme to continue in 2021/22. This along with a number of factors had led to an increased collection rate at year end. This informed the recommendation that the CTR Scheme should remain unchanged for 2022/23 because there is limited information on the post-COVID situation.

The advice from the PDAG to the Cabinet lead was to continue with the scheme unchanged for 2022/23.

25 **REVENUE & BENEFITS: BUSINESS RATES CHARITABLE RELIEF POLICY**

The Revenue & Benefits Officer briefed the group on details of the discretionary business rate relief schemes which were available to Councils. Details were provided on 6 different schemes, however the scheme designed for charities and not for profit organisations was highlighted to the group because there had been complaints about charities having to make a contribution.

Registered charities, including amateur sports clubs and not for profit organisations are currently automatically eligible for an 80% discount on business rates. The Council currently has discretion to award a further 15% discount as discretionary rate relief if the business is assessed as eligible, up to a maximum of £8,000. This policy had not changed for many years. The group were invited to consider whether the Council should offer a fuller discretionary

relief for eligible charities and begin consultation on this change. There were differing views from the Group but the balance of opinion was to go to consultation in summer 2021 on full relief for charities.

Councillors were reminded that because one year's notice has to be given if the policy is changed in February 2022 the change will not come in until April 2023.

26 **REVENUE & BENEFITS: BREATHING SPACE DEBT MORATORIUM**

The Revenue & Benefits Officer provided an update on a Central Government scheme which introduces breathing space for individuals who have fallen into debt, in order for them to resolve their issues and seek debt advice.

The recent legislation introduces a statutory requirement to provide a 60 day breathing space, or until an individual has recovered from mental health issues, if a referral was triggered via a debt advisor.

A second aspect of the new legislation was a statutory repayment plan, set to be introduced in 2022.

27 **USING THE TRANSFORMATION FUND IN 2021/22**

The Head of Finance and Performance briefed the group on the Transformational Fund 21/22 report going to Cabinet in June. The report included details of where the funds had been spent throughout the past year.

The report recommended approval to top the transformation fund up to £0.5m and delegation to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to spend on transformation projects in 2021/22. Members of the PDAG asked for the Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets to be added to the list of consultees on the use of the reserve.

28 **SALE OF COMMERCIAL PROPERTY INVESTMENT**

The Head of Property & Facilities briefed the group on a potential sale of a commercial property investment and provided information on the development potential for the site. The PDAG supported the sale in the circumstances described.

29 **FORWARD PLAN EXTRACT FOR THE FINANCE AND ASSETS PORTFOLIO**

The Forward Plan Extract was noted by the Group.

The meeting closed at 7.00 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

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**Parkside, Chart Way, Horsham,
West Sussex RH12 1RL**

FORWARD PLAN – Finance & Assets Portfolio

This notice sets out details of key decisions that the Cabinet or a Cabinet Member intend to make, and gives 28 days' notice of the decision under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. The notice also includes details of other decisions the Council intends to make.

The reports and any background documents that have been used to inform the decisions will be available on the Council's website (www.horsham.gov.uk) or by contacting Committee Services at the Council Offices.

Whilst the majority of the Council's business will be open to the public, there will be occasions when the business to be considered contains confidential, commercially sensitive or personal information. This is formal notice under the 2012 Regulations that part or all of the reports on the decisions referred to in the schedule may be private because they contain exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

If you wish to make representations about why part or all of the papers should be open to the public, please contact Committee Services at least 10 working days before the date on which the decision is to be taken.

If you wish to make representations to the Cabinet or Cabinet Member about the proposed decisions, please contact Committee Services to make your request.

Please note that the decision date given in this notice may be subject to change.

To contact Committee Services:

E-mail: : committeeservices@horsham.gov.uk

Tel: 01403 215123

Published on 01 September 2021

What is a Key Decision?

A key decision is an executive decision which, is likely –

- (i) To involve expenditure or savings of £250,000 or more as well as otherwise being significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (ii) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District.

	Subject/Decision	Decision Taker	Date(s) of decision	Is all or part of this item likely to be dealt with in private	Contact Officer Cabinet Member (NB include name, title and email address)
3.	Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy update	Cabinet	23 Sep 2021	Open	Jane Eaton, Director of Corporate Resources jane.eaton@horsham.gov.uk Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets (Councillor Richard Landeryou)
8.	Appropriation of rights in relation to Council owned property	Cabinet Council	23 Sep 2021 13 Oct 2021	Fully exempt	Brian Elliott, Head of Property & Facilities brian.elliott@horsham.gov.uk Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets (Councillor Richard Landeryou)
11.	Annual update to the Pay Policy Statement - Financial Year 2021/22	Council	13 Oct 2021	Open	Robert Laban, Head of HR & OD robert.laban@horsham.gov.uk Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets (Councillor Richard Landeryou)
13.	Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy update	Cabinet	25 Nov 2021	Open	Jane Eaton, Director of Corporate Resources jane.eaton@horsham.gov.uk Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets (Councillor Richard Landeryou)

	Subject/Decision	Decision Taker	Date(s) of decision	Is all or part of this item likely to be dealt with in private	Contact Officer Cabinet Member (NB include name, title and email address)
16.	Further Service Provision of the Revenues and Benefits and Internal Audit Services	Cabinet	25 Nov 2021	Open	Jane Eaton, Director of Corporate Resources jane.eaton@horsham.gov.uk Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets (Councillor Richard Landeryou)
18.	Provision of the External Audit of the Annual Accounts	Council	8 Dec 2021	Open	Jane Eaton, Director of Corporate Resources jane.eaton@horsham.gov.uk Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets (Councillor Richard Landeryou)
19.	Council Tax Reduction Scheme	Cabinet Council	27 Jan 2022 9 Feb 2022	Open	Dominic Bradley, Head of Finance & Performance dominic.bradley@horsham.gov.uk Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets (Councillor Richard Landeryou)
20.	Business Rates Discretionary Charitable Relief	Cabinet Council	27 Jan 2022 9 Feb 2022	Open	Jane Eaton, Director of Corporate Resources jane.eaton@horsham.gov.uk Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets (Councillor Richard Landeryou)

	Subject/Decision	Decision Taker	Date(s) of decision	Is all or part of this item likely to be dealt with in private	Contact Officer Cabinet Member (NB include name, title and email address)
21.	Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan	Cabinet Council	27 Jan 2022 9 Feb 2022	Open	Dominic Bradley, Head of Finance & Performance dominic.bradley@horsham.gov.uk Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets (Councillor Richard Landeryou)
22.	Council Tax Resolution 2022/23	Council	9 Feb 2022	Open	Jane Eaton, Director of Corporate Resources jane.eaton@horsham.gov.uk Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets (Councillor Richard Landeryou)

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