

COUNCIL – 10 FEBRUARY 2022

COUNCIL TAX 2022-23 AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

PROCEDURE NOTE

The Mayor will adopt the following procedure to deal with the business under Agenda Items 7 (Council Tax 2022-23) and 8 (Recommendations of the Executive).

AGENDA ITEM 7 – COUNCIL TAX 2022-23

AGENDA ITEM 8 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Mayor will take the report on Council Tax 2022-23 first, together with recommendations of the Executive meeting on 2 February 2022 relating to the following:

- 8A. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), General Fund, Service Plans, Budgets and Prudential Indicators 2022-23.
- 8B. Housing Revenue Account Budgets 2022-23
- 8C. Investment Programme 2021-22 to 2025-26
- 8D. Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies

The items above will be debated after the Leader of the Council's Budget Statement. For convenience, the relevant extracts from the minutes of the Executive are set out in Appendix A. The recommendations reflect the decisions of the Executive. The draft Council Tax resolution is set out in Appendix B.

The remaining recommendations from the meeting of the Executive on 20 January 2022, will be considered once the Council Tax for 2022-23 has been agreed. The recommendations are:

- 8E Notice of Motion - Cllr M Whitehand - Women's safety in public places EXE22-020.
- 8F Notice of Motion - Cllr E Nicholson - Male violence against women EXE22-021.
- 8G Notice of Motion - Cllr A-M Barker - Goldsworth Park lake footpath lighting EXE22-022.
- 8H Phase 2 – Infrastructure Capacity Study and Delivery Plan (IDP) - East of the Borough and Borough-wide Study EXE22-014.
- 8I Review of the Outlook, Amenity and Daylight Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) EXE22-012.
- 8J Review of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas Avoidance Strategy EXE22-013.
- 8K Review of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) EXE22-011.

The recommendations are set out in Appendix C to this report.

Items 7 (Council Tax 2022-23) and 8 (Recommendations of the Executive)

The recommendations before the Council are set out below.

EXECUTIVE – 3 FEBRUARY 2022**8A. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS), GENERAL FUND, SERVICE PLANS, BUDGETS AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2022-23 EXE22-001**

Councillor Ashall, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Financial Planning and Policy, introduced the report outlining the proposed General Fund, Service Plans, Budgets and Prudential Indicators 2022-23. Councillor Ashall reported that the General Fund Budget proposed an increase in Council Tax of 2% for 2022-23 which resulted in a Band D Council Tax figure for 2022-23 of £255.46, an increase of £5.00 per annum at Band D.

Attention was drawn to paragraph 8.18 of the report which asked the Executive to resolve that the parent guarantee provided by the Council to Total Gas and Power (TGP), the supplier of gas and top-up electricity to Thamesway, be increased to £843,000. It was explained that this was necessary due to the increase in energy costs and the increased quantity of gas required to supply Victoria Square. It was highlighted that the matter concerned a guarantee and not a cash payment.

Following an independent comprehensive assessment of the Council's assets and liabilities, the Executive received a copy of the Comprehensive Statement Response Report and was asked to agree the actions for the Council in response to the Statement. It was noted that the Comprehensive Statement had been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 24 January 2022 and the Executive welcomed the four key points raised by the Committee. The Executive agreed that the issues raised by the Committee be incorporated into the actions for the Council in response to the Statement.

The Executive noted that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) would be updated and brought to the Executive at its meeting on 24 March 2022 alongside the Council's Corporate Strategy.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Azad, reported that following on from the Comprehensive Statement, the Leader would be overseeing work to review the Thamesway Group of Companies. The Executive heard that the work would follow the same Member involvement as the Comprehensive Statement, with reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a Member Briefing, and reports to Executive and Council. It was hoped that the work would be underway by the end of March 2022. The Leader reminded the Executive of why the Thamesway structure had been first set-up by the Council and explained that Thamesway had been established to deliver Council objectives through long term investment in sustainable energy, housing, and regeneration, rather than short term profits. Some of Thamesway's achievements were highlighted, including the provision of 504 affordable homes, the popular Earn Your Deposit Scheme, a saving of 4,856 tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2021, as well as its work in Sheerwater and preventing homelessness. The Leader acknowledged that the Thamesway business and its finances were complex and advised that work was underway with Thamesway to improve transparency for Members.

Discussion ensued on the Government's current consultation on the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The Executive was informed that Officers had met with the Government to

explain the impact any changes to the MRP would have on the Council's finances. The Portfolio Holder was hopeful that Government would adjust its approach given the Council's concern at the proposals and how it would impact the Council.

Following a question regarding plans to bring into the Council additional resource and skills as suggested in the Comprehensive Statement carried out by EY, the Executive was advised that, as a matter of priority, plans were already underway and would incorporate the separate EY workstream which was progressing around Victoria Square.

The possibility of changes to the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) regulations for borrowing was raised. The Executive heard that the risk for the Council would be that borrowing would become less attractive and make investment in the Borough less viable or not possible depending on what future changes were made.

Members also discussed staffing numbers, contingent liabilities, and the repayment of interest costs. It was noted that the £55m of interest costs was paid back through the incomes received by the Council. The Portfolio Holder suggested that the March MTFs could provide more clarity on those incomes, and further information on contingent liabilities.

The Executive thanked the Finance Director and her team for their hard work in compiling the finance reports on the agenda.

RESOLVED

- That (i) as detailed in paragraph 8.18 of the report, the parent company guarantee provided to Total Gas and Power to ensure Thamesway can supply energy to Victoria Square, be increased to £843,000;
- (ii) the Comprehensive Statement (Appendices 5a and 5b to the report) and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's consideration of the Statement (section 4.21 of the report) be noted;
- (iii) the response to the Comprehensive Statement (Appendix 5 to the report) be noted;
- (iv) the actions for the Council in response to the statement as highlighted in section 4.19 of the report be agreed and that these actions to incorporate the issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee highlighted in section 4.21:
- a. *adopting a stronger strategic approach to the management of assets;*
 - b. *development of its commercial and strategic finance capacity and expertise in order to drive out the returns from our investments;*
 - c. *completing the review of Governance of Companies, the strategic alignment between the Council and Thamesway group (through the established business and financial planning framework) and the intelligent client capability retained within the Council. This review should address the specific risks highlighted for Thamesway Energy Limited (TEL) and Thamesway Milton Keynes Limited (TCMK);*
 - d. *strengthening the oversight of Town Centre management including the strategic management of the assets;*

- e. *continuing to develop and strengthen the Medium and Long-Term Financial Strategy and the strategic management of reserves within this.*

RECOMMENDED to Council

That (v) the Revenue Estimates and Human Resource requirements for 2022/23 be approved;

(vi) a Band D Council Tax for the Borough of Woking for 2022/23 of £255.46 be approved; and

(vii) the Prudential Indicators at Appendix 3 to the report be approved, subject to any changes arising from consideration of the Investment Programme, revenue budgets and Final Government Settlement.

Reason: To recommend that Council approves the resources necessary for the provision of services and raises the necessary revenue through the determination of Council Tax for 2022/23.

8B. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGETS 2022-23 EXE22-002

The Executive received the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budgets 2022-23 for recommendation to Council.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That (i) the draft Housing Revenue Account budgets for 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed; and

(ii) with effect from 4 April 2022, rents be increased by 4.1%.

Reason: To recommend that the Council approves the resources necessary to implement its objectives and to enable the Council to determine charges to tenants for 2022/23.

8C. INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2021-22 TO 2025-26 EXE22-003

The Executive received the Investment Programme 2021-22 to 2025-26 which set out the capital and one off investments required to deliver the Council's key strategies and objectives. The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Ashall, informed the Executive that a review of the temporarily suspended projects had been undertaken. It was noted that some projects had moved onto the pipeline projects list and others had been removed from the Investment Programme as they were no longer required. Councillor Ashall highlighted that the Government Settlement,

announced in December 2021, was only for one year which made medium term financial planning difficult.

Councillor Ashall provided an update on the status of the flood alleviation schemes, including Byfleet. The Executive heard that the projects had moved to the suspended list in 2020/21 whilst the Council sought funding to ensure the delivery was affordable. It was noted that the projects remained in the Investment Programme and were shown in the pipeline list to be brought into the funded Programme when an affordable funding proposal was identified.

Following a question regarding Opportunity Purchases, it was highlighted that such Purchases would be assumed to be neutral to the revenue budget.

Playground improvements were discussed and the Executive was informed that a future refurbishment programme was currently being prepared by Officers in discussions with the Portfolio Holder. It was noted that Officers would continue to progress with the refurbishment of the remaining three play areas identified in the current programme for which funding had been identified.

Following a query regarding payment to Rutland in respect of the Robin Hood site, it was explained that the payment was the balance remaining from the original approved loan facility relating to the acquisition of the Robin Hood site.

In answer to a question concerning the acquisition of the Victoria Square car park element by the Council, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that it had always been planned that the car park would be bought back by the Council to ensure that the Council benefited from the revenues.

Members discussed the Investment Programme process and it was explained that the Leader exercised proper authority when making decisions on projects, generally through consultation with the Portfolio Holder and responsible Officers. It was noted that the Investment Programme was subject to Council approval.

Members also discussed Celebrate Woking and Woking Gymnastics Club.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That (i) the Investment Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26 be approved subject to reports on projects where appropriate; and

(ii) the proposed financing arrangements be approved.

Reason: To recommend to the Council that it approves the capital resources for 2022/23 onwards considered necessary to support its service plans and objectives.

8D. CAPITAL, INVESTMENT AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES EXE22-004

The Executive received a report which set out the Council's Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies for 2022-23 and recommended to Council that the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Strategy be adopted. Members discussed the risks facing the Council's financial position, such as rising

interest rates and the risk of inflation. The Leader confirmed that the Council was aware of the risks facing the Council and commented on the timeliness of the EY report and the planned review of the Thameswey companies, noting that it was important to find mitigations to identified risks. The Portfolio Holder added that the key to the Council's financial success was the success of the Borough in attracting income from businesses and visitors.

RESOLVED

That (i) the Treasury Management Strategy set out in the report be approved;
and

RECOMMENDED to Council

That (ii) the Capital and Investment Strategies for 2022/23 be approved; and

(iii) the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators set out in table 1 of Section 4 of the Treasury Management Strategy and the MRP policy set out in Appendix A be approved, subject to any changes arising from consideration of the Investment Programme, revenue budgets and Government Funding Settlement.

Reason: To determine the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23 and to recommend to Council the Capital and Investment Strategies, Treasury Management Prudential Indicators and MRP Strategy to be adopted.

DRAFT COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION – 2022/23

1. That the revenue estimates for 2022/23, as submitted, be approved.
2. That it be noted that the Chief Financial Officer, in accordance with the terms of his delegated authority, has calculated the following amount for the year 2022/23 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B (3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended (the Act) as:-
 - a) 41,519.00 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax base for the year;
3. The Council calculates that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2022/23 is £10,606,601.
4. That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2022/23 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:-
 - a) £165,644,375 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act;
 - b) £155,037,774 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act;
 - c) £10,606,601 being the amount by which the aggregate at 4 a) above exceeds the aggregate at 4 b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year;
 - d) £255.46 being the amount at 4 c) above divided by the amount at 2 a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 31 B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year;
5. That it be noted for the year 2022/23 Surrey County Council and Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner have issued precepts to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings in the Council's area as shown in the table below.

6. That the Council, in accordance with Section 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the table below as the amounts of council tax for the year 2022/23 for its area and for each of the categories of dwellings :-

Valuation Band	Surrey County Council Basic £	Adult Social Care £	Total Surrey County Council £	Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner £	Woking Borough Council £	Aggregate of Council Tax Requirements £
A	960.61	123.65	1,084.26	197.05	170.31	1,451.61
B	1,120.71	144.26	1,264.97	229.89	198.69	1,693.55
C	1,280.81	164.87	1,445.68	262.73	227.08	1,935.48
D	1,440.91	185.48	1,626.39	295.57	255.46	2,177.42
E	1,761.11	226.70	1,987.81	361.25	312.23	2,661.29
F	2,081.31	267.92	2,349.23	426.93	369.00	3,145.16
G	2,401.52	309.13	2,710.65	492.62	425.77	3,629.03
H	2,881.82	370.96	3,252.78	591.14	510.92	4,354.84

7. That the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2022/23 is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved under Section 52 ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended.

Agenda Item 8 (Recommendations of the Executive)

The remaining recommendations before the Council are set out below.

EXECUTIVE – 20 JANUARY 2022

8E NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR M WHITEHAND - WOMEN'S SAFETY IN PUBLIC PLACES EXE22-020.

At its meeting on 2 December 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor M Whitehand

“The Council will bring forward policies that ensure women feel safe when out and about in Woking’s public places. One of which should be the designation of women only parking places in its car parks during the hours of darkness, especially those sited near staircases and entrances. Women’s safety should feature greatly in its community safety programme and every endeavour be given in establishing what areas can be reviewed that would deliver such assurance.”

Councillor Whitehand attended the meeting and spoke in support of the Motion. Discussion ensued on the advantages and disadvantages of women only parking spaces, and it was noted that neither the Council’s Parking Service Manager or Surrey Police Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO) were aware of any segregated type parking facility in the UK. The Executive was informed that the DOCO recommended that female only areas were not used and that people who were concerned around their safety should be encouraged to use the main car parks around the Peacocks Centre due to the high footfall.

Councillor Harlow, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, welcomed the Motion and was supportive of promoting more awareness of the measures already in place, such as clearly signed help points in the Council’s main larger car parks which were linked to the control room and manned 24 hours. It was noted that the Council’s car parks had been awarded the Park Mark, a Police Crime Prevention Initiative aimed at reducing crime and fear of crime in parking facilities. Officers would continue to look at further improvements in order to ensure women felt safe in the Council’s car parks.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the Motion be supported.

8F NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR E NICHOLSON - MALE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN EXE22-021.

At its meeting on 2 December 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor E Nicholson

“That Woking Borough Council notes that violence against women is a serious, prevalent, and preventable issue in our society.

Male violence against women must be ended, once and for all. Simply agreeing with the principle is not enough.

As a responsible authority we have a moral obligation to stand against and work to end male violence against women.

MOTION

Council recognises the importance of White Ribbon and its contribution as part of a global campaign taking action to stop male violence against women and resolves to become an accredited authority.

Council commits to making White Ribbon Day part of the civic calendar with ambassador-led activities involving staff, members and the public.

Council agrees to raise awareness of the White Ribbon Campaign through regular updates and features in internal and external communications and provide opportunity to highlight the work of the Women’s Refuge and the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner.

Council will provide support to staff and members to take the pledge never to commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women and to become ambassadors and champions. Council will work closely with local partnership agencies and organisations involved in tackling male violence against women to work towards making Woking a White Ribbon Borough.

Council commits to hosting annual awareness training for all members.”

Councillor Nicholson attended the meeting and spoke in support of the Motion. The Executive heard that the Council already acknowledged White Ribbon and had supported the 16 days of activism in recent years. The Executive was supportive of the Council becoming an accredited authority, noting that it would require a commitment across the organisation and a steering group to be identified to oversee a three year action plan. Following a question, the Executive was advised that the cost of accreditation was £300 annually and would also require sufficient staff resource. Councillor Kemp stated that he would be happy to volunteer as a male ambassador in support of White Ribbon.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the Motion be supported.

8G NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR A-M BARKER - GOLDSWORTH PARK LAKE FOOTPATH LIGHTING EXE22-022.

At its meeting on 2 December 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor A-M Barker

“Motion to update Goldsworth Park lake footpath lighting to LED system

Council notes that

Taking exercise in the open air has become increasingly popular in a Covid world.

Reducing journeys by carbon emitting vehicles is good for the climate change agenda.

Goldsworth Park lake path provides both a pleasant and enjoyable environment for exercise and a walking route for journeys across and around Goldsworth Park.

Well lit paths encourage use of walking routes, particularly in winter months.

Many people will not use paths with significant dark spots.

There have been recent failures of lights on the Goldsworth lake path and SERCO are struggling to find parts to fix the lights.

Unlike most lighting in the borough the lights around Goldsworth Park lake are the responsibility of Woking Council.

Surrey County Council is converting all of its lighting stock to more environmentally friendly LED lights, which last longer and have fewer problems.

Council calls for:

A review of options to secure replacement LED lighting for Goldsworth Park lake footpath, to include:

Investigating whether Surrey would take on the responsibility for these lights as there may be economies of scale to upgrade these lights alongside work on their own lighting stock

Exploring funding options from environmental funders to update the lights.

Look for funding that may be available from crime and safety budgets, including those held by the Police and Crime Commissioner.”

Councillor Barker attended the meeting and spoke in support of the Motion. Councillor Barker highlighted the benefits of LED lights in terms of cost effectiveness and energy use. The Executive noted that two of the lights around Goldsworth Park lake had been replaced with LED lights and Officers would gain feedback on the effectiveness of the new lights before making further plans. Officers would continue to explore funding options.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the Motion be supported.

8H PHASE 2 – INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY STUDY AND DELIVERY PLAN (IDP) - EAST OF THE BOROUGH AND BOROUGH-WIDE STUDY EXE22-014.

Following the Executive on 9 September 2021, Councillor Elson, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy, introduced a report which set out the second part of the joint Study with other local authorities and partners on the future infrastructure requirements of the east of the Borough. It was noted that the revised Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) also reviewed the borough-wide infrastructure needs to support the delivery of the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations DPD. It was noted that the Local Development Framework Working Group had considered the IDP at its meeting on 16 December 2021. The Portfolio Holder advised that an Infrastructure Sub-Group of the Joint Committee had been set up to co-ordinate the delivery of infrastructure.

Discussion ensued on the comprehensive report and it was noted that it was intended to combine Parts 1 and 2 of the Study and to publish the revised IDP as a single document. Comments raised regarding formatting could be taken on board by Officers.

Regarding crematorium capacity, the Executive was informed that no evidence was provided by infrastructure providers during the 2021 review to indicate that the needs of existing and future residents generated by planned growth would not be met by Woking Crematorium and crematoria in adjacent boroughs. However the Portfolio Holder highlighted that the IDP continued to identify an opportunity to enhance infrastructure provision at Brookwood Cemetery, including increasing cremation capacity.

Members discussed infrastructure needs in the Borough including gas and electricity, the need of the ambulance service, and the Byfleets pharmacy needs. It was noted that the IDP was a living document which was reviewed bi-annually and could be updated to reflect changes in requirements. Regarding electric vehicle (EV) charging capacity, the Executive heard that UK Power Networks (UKPN) had identified the growth in demand for EVs and was prioritising areas which its models had identified as the first ones to be overloaded when the new load materialised.

Following a query regarding out-of-date information in the IDP, the Portfolio Holder agreed to take the comments onboard and confirmed that the IDP would be updated before it was published.

Following a question concerning the latest status of the Rive Ditch Flood Alleviation Scheme and Horsell SANGs, the Executive was advised that the work was being led by Surrey County Council and supported by Woking Borough Council and Horsell Common Preservation Society as the landowner. It was noted that there had been delays in receiving the required consents. Once consent had been received it was hoped to commence the works, which were expected to take around six months to complete, in Spring 2022. Questions were also raised regarding cycling, playing pitches, playgrounds and Sanway-Byfleet Flood Alleviation project.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the contents of the Infrastructure Capacity Study and Delivery Plan be noted and approved.

Reason: To ensure that future development is supported by adequate infrastructure in a timely manner to facilitate sustainable development.

81 REVIEW OF THE OUTLOOK, AMENITY AND DAYLIGHT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) EXE22-012.

Following the meeting of the Executive on 9 September 2021, Councillor Elson, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy, introduced the report which outlined the responses to the consultation on the Outlook, Amenity and Daylight Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and recommended to Council that the proposed amendments be approved. It was noted that the Local Development Framework Working Group had considered the report at its meeting on 16 December 2021 and the Group's minor modifications had been incorporated into the SPD and the report.

Following a request for the document to highlight changes in order to make it more easily accessible, the Portfolio Holder agreed to discuss the request with Officers.

Discussion ensued on paragraph 3.18 of the revised SPD on page 172 of the Agenda Pack regarding communal amenity space. Officers advised that it would be difficult to request that a minimum amount of amenity space should be delivered by a development and advised against setting a rule in this regard, noting that other factors may make a scheme favourable. It was agreed that the issue would be discussed with Officers prior to Council.

Following a query regarding the list of consultees, the Executive was advised that Officers were currently reviewing the list to ensure it was up-to-date.

RECOMMENDED to Council

- That (i) the various representations to the Outlook, Amenity and Daylight Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation together with Officer's responses and recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted;**
- (ii) the revised Outlook, Amenity and Daylight SPD included in Appendix 2 to the report be adopted as Supplementary Planning Document for the purposes of managing development across the borough and other planning decisions;**
- (iii) Appendix 2 of the SPD which relates to examples of separation distances of other local authorities be deleted; and**
- (iv) the requirements of the SPD should apply from the date of adoption, in this case 10 February 2022.**

Reason: To ensure that there is up to date guidance on achieving suitable and appropriate outlook, amenity, daylight and sunlight in new residential development.

8J REVIEW OF THE THAMES BASIN HEATHS SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS AVOIDANCE STRATEGY EXE22-013.

Following the meeting of the Executive on 9 September 2021, Councillor Elson, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy, introduced the report which outlined the responses to the public consultation on the draft Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas (SPA) Avoidance Strategy, and recommended to Council that the proposed amendments to the revised Avoidance Strategy be approved. It was noted that the Local Development Framework Working Group had considered the Strategy at its meeting on 16 December 2021 and the Group's minor modifications had been incorporated into the Strategy.

Following a question regarding existing open space accessible to residents, the Executive was advised that existing open space could be brought to SANG standard if it met the necessary criteria. However, any existing use of the land would be discounted from the SANG capacity. Regarding transport and fuel costs for the ranger, the Executive was informed that the rangers patrolled the SANGs and the cost for doing so was part of the maintenance cost.

Discussion ensued on disabled access to SANGs. The Portfolio Holder commented that the Council would always consider accessibility when planning any new SANG or undertaking improvement works to existing SANG, with a view to making as accessible as possible within the limitations of the site. The use of boardwalks at Heather Farm was highlighted.

RECOMMENDED to Council

- That (i) the various representations to the consultation on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas Avoidance Strategy together with Officer's responses and recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted;**
- (ii) the revised Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas Avoidance Strategy in Appendix 2 to the report be adopted as Supplementary Planning Document for the purposes of avoiding harm to the integrity of the Special Protection Areas due to development pressures;**
- (iii) the requirements of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas Avoidance Strategy should apply to all relevant decisions from the date of adoption, in this case 10 February 2022; and**
- (iv) Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council work in partnership to ensure access to SANGs and other parts of the Borough by all modes are considered, and this to be added to the remit of the Infrastructure Task Group.**

Reason: To help avoid harm to the SPAs as a result of development.

8K REVIEW OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI) EXE22-011.

Following the meeting of the Executive on 9 September 2021, the Executive received a report which outlined the responses to the public consultation on the revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), and recommended to Council that the proposed modifications to the SCI be adopted to provide the necessary framework for involving the local community in planning decisions. It was noted that the Local Development Framework Working Group had considered the revised SCI at its meeting on 16 December 2021 and the Group's minor modifications had been incorporated into the SCI.

Councillor Ashall highlighted a modification which he was currently working on with Officers regarding making clear to residents who would receive neighbour letters and why, for example, neighbours two doors down from planning applications. The Executive welcomed the proposed modification and hoped that progress would be made before Council on 10 February 2022.

RECOMMENDED to Council

- That (i) the various representations to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) consultation together with Officers' responses and recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted;**
- (ii) the revised Statement of Community Involvement included in Appendix 2 to the report be adopted for the purposes of setting out how the Council wishes the local community to be involved and engaged when preparing key planning policy documents and determining of planning applications; and**
- (iii) the requirements of the Statement of Community Involvement should apply from the date of adoption, in this case 10 February 2022.**

Reason: To provide the necessary framework for involving the local community in planning decisions.

COUNCIL TAX 2022-23

Executive Summary

The Executive considered the draft service plans and budgets and the overall Council Tax requirement for 2022/23 on 3 February 2022 and has recommended their approval. Minutes 6 to 9 of the Executive meeting refer.

Surrey County Council and the Office of the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner have determined their requirements and the final precepts have been levied.

The precept levied by Surrey County Council is a 4.99% increase compared to 2021/22, including an increase to the Adult Social Care (ASC) precept. The Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner has increased the precept by £10, the maximum allowed for 2022/23.

The total of the precepts from Surrey County Council, Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner, and the budget required for the Borough's purposes result in a Band D Council Tax of £2,177.42 in 2022/23.

The draft formal resolution is attached at Appendix 3.

There is a statutory requirement for the Council Tax for 2022/23 to be set before 11th March 2022.

Recommendations

The Council is requested to:

RESOLVE in accordance with the recommendations of the Executive and the draft Council Tax resolution set out at Appendix 3 to the report.

The Council has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers:	None.
Reporting Person:	Leigh Clarke, Finance Director Email: leigh.clarke@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3277
Contact Person:	Leigh Clarke, Finance Director Email: leigh.clarke@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3277
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Simon Ashall Email: cllrsimon.ashall@woking.gov.uk
Shadow Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Ian Johnson Email: cllrian.johnson@woking.gov.uk
Date Published:	9 February 2022

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Executive at its meeting on 3 February 2022 made recommendations in respect of the Budget for 2022/23.
- 1.2 Following the Council's decision in respect of these recommendations, this report sets out the details necessary for the Council to determine the Council Tax level for 2022/23.

2.0 External Finance 2022/23

- 2.1 The Government published the Final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/23 on 7 February 2022. This confirmed the provisional figures which were included in the Executive report with a small increase (£1,900) in the Lower Tier Services Grant.

3.0 General Fund Budget 2022/23

- 3.1 The General Fund Summary, the variations in service requirements, together with the Housing Revenue Account Summary, are attached at Appendix 1. A summary of reserves is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.2 The total amount, the Council Tax requirement, to be met from local taxation in 2022/23 for Woking Borough purposes is £10,606,601.

4.0 Budget Variations 2022/23

- 4.1 The year on year change in the precept on the Collection Fund, after taking into account Woking's share of the collection fund surplus is an increase of £502,140. This can be explained as follows:

Budget variation 2021/22 to 2022/23	Feb-22
Cost (+)/ Saving (-)	£'000
Investment Programme/Treasury Management	1,646
Service Pressures	2,460
Reduction in Use of Reserves	4,210
Cost pressures	8,316
Increase in Fees and Charges	-321
Reduction in Covid Provision	-4,796
Fit for the Future savings and efficiencies	-1,773
Increase in Government Funding	-152
Increase in Assumed Business Rates income/New Homes Bonus	-735
Increase in Collection Fund Surplus	-37
Offset by increased income/savings	-7,814
Movement in Precept on Collection Fund	502

5.0 Collection Fund Surplus

- 5.1 The Council's share of the collection fund surplus as at 31 March 2021 in respect of Council Tax is £80,527. The budget includes a deficit for 2020/21 of £68,041 which is a third of the total forecast deficit as government regulations required spreading over 3 years. The budget also includes a surplus relating to retained Business Rates of £935,000 which represents the

forecast expected retained Business Rates over the baseline level including the benefit of being in the Surrey Business Rates Pool in 2022/23.

6.0 Council Tax Tax Base 2022/23

6.1 It should be noted that the Chief Finance Officer, in accordance with the authority delegated at a meeting of Council on the 6 December 2012 has calculated the Council Tax tax base for 2022/23 for the Borough of Woking to be 41,519.00.

7.0 Borough Council Tax at Band D

7.1 In 2021/22 the Borough element of the Council Tax is £250.46 at Band D.

7.2 For 2022/23 the Borough element of the Council Tax at Band D, is £255.46, representing a 2.0% increase in Council Tax from 2021/22. The 2022/23 Council Tax has been calculated as follows:

	£
Total amount to be met from local taxation and Government Grants for Woking Borough Council	12,996,961
Less External Finance (allocated through B Rates Pilot)	
- Local Retention of Business Rates (NNDR)	-2,134,965
- Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	0
- Lower Tier Services Grant	-95,753
- Services Grant	-147,156
	<hr/>
	-2,377,874
Less Council Tax surplus 31 March 2021	-80,527
Plus Forecast Council Tax deficit 2020/21 (after 3 year spreading)	68,041
Net Council Tax requirement for Borough purposes	<hr/> 10,606,601 <hr/>
Council Tax tax base for the Borough	41,519.00
Borough element of Council Tax at Band D	£255.46
(Net Council Tax requirement for Borough purposes divided by the Council Tax tax base for the Borough)	

8.0 Surrey County Council Requirements 2022/23

8.1 Surrey County Council has determined its requirements for 2022/23 at a meeting on 8 February 2022 and has levied a precept of £67,526,086.41 on the Borough. The resultant Band D Council Tax for Surrey County Council purposes is therefore £1,626.39, compared with £1,549.08 for 2021/22.

8.2 This is an overall 4.99% increase compared to 2021/22 on the SCC Council Tax including the Adult Social Care (ASC) precept.

9.0 Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner Requirements 2022/23

9.1 The Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner has determined his requirements for 2022/23 at a meeting on 4 February 2022 and has levied a precept of £12,271,770.83 on the Borough. The resultant Band D Council Tax for the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioners purposes is therefore £295.57 compared with £285.57 for 2021/22. This equals the maximum allowable £10 increase at Band D, equivalent to a 3.5% increase.

10.0 Composite Council Tax 2022/23

10.1 The Band D Council Tax for 2022/23, compared with 2021/22, is set out below:

Purposes of:	2021/22	2022/23	Increase %
	Actual £	Proposed £	
Surrey County Council - Basic	1,410.07	1,440.91	-
Surrey County Council - Adult Social Care	139.01	185.48	-
Surrey County Council - Total	1,549.08	1,626.39	5.0%
Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner	285.57	295.57	3.5%
Woking Borough Council	250.46	255.46	2.0%
Composite Council Tax	2,085.11	2,177.42	4.4%

10.2 The Council Tax for 2022/23, across all bands, may be summarised as follows:

Valuation Band	Surrey County Council Basic £	Adult Social Care £	Total Surrey County Council £	Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner £	Woking Borough Council £	Aggregate of Council Tax Requirements £
A	960.61	123.65	1,084.26	197.05	170.31	1,451.61
B	1,120.71	144.26	1,264.97	229.89	198.69	1,693.55
C	1,280.81	164.87	1,445.68	262.73	227.08	1,935.48
D	1,440.91	185.48	1,626.39	295.57	255.46	2,177.42
E	1,761.11	226.70	1,987.81	361.25	312.23	2,661.29
F	2,081.31	267.92	2,349.23	426.93	369.00	3,145.16
G	2,401.52	309.13	2,710.65	492.62	425.77	3,629.03
H	2,881.82	370.96	3,252.78	591.14	510.92	4,354.84

10.3 The formal resolution to give effect to the Council Tax is set out at Appendix 3.

11.0 Corporate Strategy

11.1 The Council Tax for 2022/23 will support the Council's General Fund revenue budget which has been prepared in line with the emerging Corporate Strategy priorities.

11.2 The Corporate Strategy and updated Medium Term Financial Strategy, together with any budgetary implications will be considered by the Council in March 2022.

12.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

12.1 The financial implications are explicit in the report.

12.2 The budget includes a risk contingency of £250,000. There are a number of areas of risks which have been reported to the Executive, and these areas will be closely monitored during the year.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 12.3 There are no human resource or training and development implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Legal

- 12.4 In accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council is required to set council tax by 11th March each year.

13.0 Engagement and Consultation

- 13.1 There has been a programme of community engagement during 2021 to inform the Corporate Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy from 2022/23.

REPORT ENDS

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - General Fund Summary
Summary of Variations
Housing Revenue Account
- Appendix 2 - Reserves Forecast
- Appendix 3 - Draft Council Tax Resolution 2022/23

GENERAL FUND SUMMARY

	ESTIMATE 2021/22 £	ESTIMATE 2022/23 £
TOTAL PROGRAMME REQUIREMENTS	3,649,603	4,046,406
Provision for lost income due to Covid-19	6,614,016	1,818,000
MTFS savings requirement	-100,000	-100,000
PROGRAMME REQUIREMENTS AND SAVINGS TARGETS	10,163,619	5,764,406
Management of Change	250,000	250,000
Risk Contingency	250,000	250,000
New Homes Bonus	-280,504	-230,905
Business Rates Surrey Pool	-200,000	-935,000
PFI Unitary Charge and management	175,000	175,000
Investment Programme items funded from revenue	134,000	140,000
NET COST OF SERVICES	10,492,115	5,413,501
<u>INTEREST AND OTHER ITEMS</u>		
- Interest costs	52,082,842	55,520,055
- Interest and Investment Income	-36,712,374	-38,503,475
NET OPERATING EXPENDITURE	25,862,583	22,430,081
<u>USE OF RESERVES/BALANCES</u>		
- Net Use of Revenue Reserves	-8,243,536	-4,033,535
- New Homes Bonus transferred to Reserve	80,504	0
- Contribution from Wolsley Place reserve	-1,003,347	-1,003,347
- Contribution from Capital Reserves (Depreciation)	-4,006,238	-4,006,238
- Contribution from Reserves - Management of Change	-250,000	-250,000
- Contribution from Reserves - IP items funded from revenue	-134,000	-140,000
AMOUNTS TO BE MET FROM LOCAL TAXATION AND GOVERNMENT GRANTS	12,305,966	12,996,961
EXTERNAL FINANCE - SETTLEMENT FUNDING ASSESSMENT	-2,134,625	-2,134,965
- Lower Tier Services Grant	-90,907	-95,753
- Services Grant (New 2022/23)		-147,156
PRECEPT ON COLLECTION FUND	10,080,434	10,619,087
<u>FORECAST COUNCIL TAX LEVEL</u>		
Precept on Collection Fund (from above)	10,080,434	10,619,087
Working share of Collection Fund Surplus(-)/Deficit	-44,014	-80,527
Working share of 2020/21 Collection Fund Deficit	68,041	68,041
	10,104,461	10,606,601
Council Tax Taxbase	40,343	41,519
Council Tax Requirement (£)	£250.46	£255.46
Year on year increase (£)	£5.00	£5.00
Year on year increase (%)	2.04%	2.00%

SUMMARY OF VARIATIONS

	People £	Place £	Us £	Total £
Original Estimate 2021/22	10,159,985	-12,862,166	6,351,784	3,649,603
<u>General Budget Pressures</u>				
Changes in Management and Administration costs	480,031	182,880	348,420	1,011,331
Changes in Capital Charges	-9,224	10,622	0	1,398
Contractual Inflation	11,891	219,799	0	231,690
Changes in Facilities Management Contract	26,000	-75,015	0	-49,015
Changes in Energy Costs	422,433	30,127	0	452,560
Business Rates Changes	-3,064	16,695	0	13,631
Changes in Insurance	452	-25,685	508	-24,725
Changes in Fees and Charges	-280,788	-16,927	-23,423	-321,138
Cost Reductions/Fit For the Future Savings	-437,436	-330,185	-43,500	-811,121
Other Minor Variations	-26,956	-2,713	0	-29,669
<u>Specific Service Issues</u>				
Contributions re Family Centres moved to M&A	510,870			510,870
Interpreter and Translation Income	-17,579			-17,579
Holiday Hunger Scheme Grant	-10,000			-10,000
Eastwood Leisure Centre	115,000			115,000
Reduction in Grants to Organisations	-177,020			-177,020
Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Funding	-77,758			-77,758
Additional Temporary Accommodation Rent (Waterman House)	-200,200			-200,200
Private sector leasing	88,081			88,081
Bed & breakfast	88,240			88,240
Brockhill CEV Grant	-90,000			-90,000
Brockhill Step Down	-29,000			-29,000
Hale End Court	12,462			12,462
Homelink Income from other Boroughs	-58,008			-58,008
Waste HGV Drivers		55,000		55,000
Playground maintenance		35,000		35,000
Women Support Centre - moved to direct staffing	-277,500			-277,500
Youth Development contribution from SCC	-32,500			-32,500
Car park security/cash collection		4,800		4,800
Garage rents (included in fees & charges report)		46,973		46,973
Courier Costs			10,000	10,000
Overview & Scrutiny Committee Annual Budget			20,000	20,000
Additional staffing pressures				155,000
Fit For the Future transformation projects				-250,000
Original Estimate 2022/23	10,188,412	-12,710,795	6,663,789	4,046,406

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	ORIGINAL ESTIMATE 2021/22 £	ORIGINAL ESTIMATE 2022/23 £
SUPERVISION & MANAGEMENT		
Estate Management	5,209,526	5,750,548
Rent Accounting/Collection	(41,265)	(41,265)
Home Support Service	683,294	683,294
Tenant Participation	24,599	24,599
Repairs Admin	60,131	39,333
Democratic Process	1,583,714	1,565,814
	<u>7,519,999</u>	<u>8,022,323</u>
DEPRECIATION	3,700,000	3,956,449
MAINTENANCE		
Day to Day Repairs	1,150,493	2,028,766
Planned Maintenance	1,104,979	591,650
	<u>2,255,472</u>	<u>2,620,415</u>
Debt Management Expenses	36,000	36,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>13,511,471</u>	<u>14,635,187</u>
<u>INCOME</u>		
GROSS RENTS & SERVICE CHARGES	18,137,062	19,322,718
Additional Bad Debt Provision For Covid Impact	-200,000	0
INTEREST COUNCIL HOUSE MORTGAGES	1,149	1,149
TOTAL INCOME	<u>17,938,211</u>	<u>19,323,867</u>
NET (COST)/SURPLUS OF SERVICES	4,426,740	4,688,680
Interest Payable and Similar Charges	5,216,852	5,463,712
Amortisation of Premiums and Discounts	29,817	29,817
Surplus (Deficit) for Year	<u>-819,929</u>	<u>-804,849</u>
<u>WORKING BALANCE STATEMENT</u>		
Surplus (Deficit) brought forward	332,271	339,341
Surplus (Deficit) for Year	-819,929	-804,849
Energy Refund To Tenants	0	0
Interest on Working Balances	0	0
Surplus (Deficit) carried forward	<u>-487,659</u>	<u>-465,508</u>
TRANSFER TO (FROM) RESERVES (HIP Reserve)	<u>-827,000</u>	<u>-802,708</u>
Surplus (Deficit) carried forward	<u>339,341</u>	<u>337,200</u>
No. of Dwellings @ 31 March	3,399	3,372
WORKING BALANCE PER PROPERTY	100	100

RESERVES FORECAST

APPENDIX 2

AT 31 MARCH	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
REVENUE RESERVES						
Investment Strategy Reserve	3,054	3,125	3,321	3,637	3,973	4,309
Forecast use of reserves due to COVID	0	-5,045	-6,863	-7,803	-7,803	-7,803
Underlying use of reserves net of MTFS savings	0	-2,370	-5,904	-8,938	-12,790	-16,642
Housing Investment Programme Reserve	4,201	2,936	1,686	536	-266	-1,068
Medium Term Financial Strategy Reserve	3,868	3,868	3,868	3,868	3,868	3,868
Provision for Flexibility Reserve	140	140	140	140	140	140
Leased Car Relief Vehicle Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-
Freda Ebel Bequest	2	2	2	2	2	2
Community Fund	543	543	543	543	543	543
Insurance Fund	26	26	26	26	26	26
Parking Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-
Environmental (CO2) Reserve	35	35	35	35	35	35
Wolsey Place Reserve	3,582	2,947	2,299	1,637	961	271
New Homes Bonus Reserve	1,244	1,162	1,162	1,162	1,162	1,162
Group Company Reserve	750	750	750	750	750	750
Woking Palace Reserve	50	50	50	50	50	50
Equipment Reserve	480	463	393	393	393	393
Peer grant Reserve	38	38	38	38	38	38
Business Rates Equalisation Reserve	9,576	2,456	2,456	2,456	2,456	2,456
Local Council Tax Support Scheme Hardship Fund	48	48	48	48	48	48
Westfield Common Reserve	108	108	108	108	108	108
PFI Reserve	2,739	2,739	2,739	2,739	2,739	2,739
Town Centre Management Agreement Reserve	451	393	335	277	219	161
Victoria Square Reserve	3,349	5,075	5,075	5,075	5,075	5,075
Sheerwater Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
Off Street Parking Reserve	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Syrian Refugee Reserve	1,207	1,207	1,207	1,207	1,207	1,207
Homelessness Support Reserve	183	183	183	183	183	183
Dukes Court Reserve	3,273	3,273	3,273	3,273	3,273	3,273
HS2 Reserve	2,800	2,800	2,800	2,800	2,800	2,800
	43,747	28,952	21,770	16,242	11,190	6,124
CAPITAL RESERVES & OTHER RESOURCES						
Usable Capital Receipts	5,509	3,904	2,915	2,066	2,607	3,148
Set Aside Capital Receipts	58,426	65,280	77,385	89,210	101,335	113,787
Major Repairs Reserve	15	15	271	527	783	1,039
Development Contribution Reserve	10,688	10,591	10,469	10,347	10,469	10,591
	74,638	79,790	91,040	102,150	115,194	128,565
WORKING BALANCES						
GF Working Balance	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
HRA Working Balance	334	334	334	334	334	334
	1,834	1,834	1,834	1,834	1,834	1,834
TOTAL RESERVES						
	120,219	110,576	114,644	120,225	128,217	136,522

DRAFT COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION – 2022/23

1. That the revenue estimates for 2022/23, as submitted, be approved.
2. That it be noted that the Chief Financial Officer, in accordance with the terms of his delegated authority, has calculated the following amount for the year 2022/23 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B (3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended (the Act) as:-
 - a) 41,519.00 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax base for the year;
3. The Council calculates that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2022/23 is £10,606,601.
4. That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2022/23 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:-
 - a) £165,644,375 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act;
 - b) £155,037,774 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act;
 - c) £10,606,601 being the amount by which the aggregate at 4 a) above exceeds the aggregate at 4 b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year;
 - d) £255.46 being the amount at 4 c) above divided by the amount at 2 a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 31 B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year;
5. That it be noted for the year 2022/23 Surrey County Council and Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner have issued precepts to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings in the Council's area as shown in the table below.

6. That the Council, in accordance with Section 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the table below as the amounts of council tax for the year 2022/23 for its area and for each of the categories of dwellings :-

Valuation Band	Surrey County Council Basic	Adult Social Care	Total Surrey County Council	Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner	Woking Borough Council	Aggregate of Council Tax Requirements
	£	£	£	£	£	£
A	960.61	123.65	1,084.26	197.05	170.31	1,451.61
B	1,120.71	144.26	1,264.97	229.89	198.69	1,693.55
C	1,280.81	164.87	1,445.68	262.73	227.08	1,935.48
D	1,440.91	185.48	1,626.39	295.57	255.46	2,177.42
E	1,761.11	226.70	1,987.81	361.25	312.23	2,661.29
F	2,081.31	267.92	2,349.23	426.93	369.00	3,145.16
G	2,401.52	309.13	2,710.65	492.62	425.77	3,629.03
H	2,881.82	370.96	3,252.78	591.14	510.92	4,354.84

7. That the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2022/23 is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved under Section 52 ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended.