

Agenda Item No: 13

Meeting of the Council 23 February 2016 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET General Fund Budget 2017/18

Details of proposed amendments received from Councillor Osborne

General Fund Revenue Budget 2017/2018 Amendments:

1. I MOVE THAT £10,000 be set aside from reserves to fund the start-up costs of a local lottery. This is to allow local groups to bid for funding projects that would enhance the District.

The Council can act as custodian of a local lottery following the example of other local councils to provide funds that support local projects.

The scheme would be administered by an independent body that would market/sell lottery tickets to people in the locality. After accounting for prizes to ticket holders surplus funds would be available to distribute as the Council determined. Bids would be invited from local groups to fund projects that lever in voluntary sector support thereby creating good value for the residents of Lewes District.

£10k will allow the set-up of the local lottery.

2. I MOVE THAT £20,000 be set aside from reserves to fund a feasibility study into providing low cost affordable homes for local people on easy access sites in the District.

The study would look at where it would be feasible and uncontroversial to site modest self-contained modular homes to help alleviate the chronic shortage of affordable homes in the District.

There is an increasing amount of supply of homes that can be constructed in a very short timescale for use by those in need until more permanent solutions can be found. Services to the tenants could be provided on or near the sites to assist with housing and health needs.

3. I MOVE THAT £20,000 be set aside from reserves to do a study of under occupied rural homes in the District and make recommendations on how a scheme to utilise them could be developed.

There are a lot of rural premises that could with a small amount of investment be brought into use or extended as dwellings to help house people with appropriate needs. Landowners could be rewarded by way of rental or capital works to their outbuildings that bring them up to standard.

In addition some annexes (including converted outbuildings) are already suitable for accommodation but face planning restrictions that prevent them being made available for rent. The study would explore the possibilities and implications of seeking a lifting of restrictions to enable more supply of accommodation suitable for rent in rural areas.

4. I MOVE THAT £30,000 be set aside from reserves to hold a food and drink festival in the District and develop a sustainable tourism strategy.

This would enable us to pump prime an event that brings tourists into the District to showcase the range of food and drink produced in the area acting as a marketing opportunity for local producers and an event in its own right. If successful then we would look to put this on a cost neutral basis in future. The rest of the investment would be used to develop a strategy that made the most of the assets that the District has and how we can increase visitor numbers on a sustainable basis in the future.

5. I MOVE THAT £50,000 be set aside from reserves to do a study of the potential to grow Miscanthus grass on low value agricultural land in the District to provide a sustainable energy source.

The proposal is to evaluate the possible growing of *miscanthus sinensis*, *miscanthus X giganteus* or *miscanthus floridus* or other similar within Lewes District for potential use as an energy crop. The aim will be to obtain grants for a 5 year investigative trial into the viability of *Miscanthus* as a crop in the South of England. If the project is successful, crops will have been grown and supplied to purchased power plant, so that the potential use of the crop as an energy supplier fully evaluated over 5 years.