

Report to: Policy and Performance Advisory Committee

Date: 30 January 2025

Title: Policy Input and Development – summary of reports to be considered by the Cabinet on the 6 February 2025.

Exemption: None

Report of: Simon Russell, Head of Democratic Services

Wards: All

Purpose of the report: This report outlines the responsibilities of the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee when choosing to consult on reports from the Forward Plan that are due for consideration by the Cabinet on the 6 February 2025 and provides details of the recommendations to the Cabinet for each report.

Recommendations to the Committee: The recommendations are detailed at 1.3 of this report

Reasons for recommendations to the Committee: To provide a critical friend challenge to the Cabinet decision and policy making process.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 In its role as a provider of public scrutiny and as critical friend, the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee has a duty to provide a challenge to the executive decision and policy makers.
- 1.2 The Policy and Performance Advisory Committee is able to provide this challenge through the inclusion of the Cabinet’s Forward Plan of Decisions as a standing item on each of the Committee’s agendas, allowing the Committee to request the inclusion of reports due for consideration by the Cabinet on its agenda and by asking that the relevant officers, heads of service or directors, attend the Committee meetings and discuss the content of the reports.
- 1.3 Following consideration of each item, where the Members will be able to ask questions of the relevant officers, heads of service, directors and other stakeholders, the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee will provide one of the following three recommendations to the Cabinet:
- 1) To support the recommendations in the report in full; or

- 2) To support the recommendation in the report subject to the consideration by the Cabinet of any amendments agreed by Committee; or
- 3) To not support the recommendations in the report and give reasons.

1.4 The Cabinet will be provided with the recommendations from the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee when it considers the main report.

1.5 The following Cabinet reports and recommendations are included in the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee agenda for the meeting on the 30 January 2025:

1. Cabinet report:	Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation
Purpose of the report:	To inform Cabinet of the government White Paper on Devolution and the response made to the paper impacting on the Sussex area
Officer recommendations to the Cabinet:	Cabinet is asked to note the report.
Reasons for the recommendations:	The issues set out in this report are likely to have significant implications for this council alongside all other local authorities in England.
Lead Officer	Jo Harper, Head of Business Planning and Performance

2. Cabinet report:	General Fund Revenue Budget 2025/26, Capital Programme
Purpose of the report:	To agree the General Fund Budget 2025/26, updated Medium Term Financial Strategy and the updated Capital Programme and Treasury Management position.
Officer recommendations:	Members are asked to recommend the following proposals to Full Council: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The General Fund Base Budget 2025/26 and projected MTFS as set out in Appendix 1. 2) An increase in the Council Tax for Lewes District Council of 2.99% resulting in a gross Band D charge (including Special Expenses) of £234.99 for 2025/26. 3) The revised General Fund & Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 3. 4) The rates of Fees & Charges proposed within Appendix 6 to apply from 1 April 2025 and to implement changes to statutory fees and charges for services shown within Appendix 6 as and when notified by Government.

	<p>5) Delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer to take account in the 2025/26 base budget of any changes to funding allocations when the Final Settlement figures are announced.</p> <p>6) To note the Section 151 Officer's comments as outlined in the report.</p>
Reasons for the recommendations:	The Cabinet must recommend to Full Council the setting of a revenue budget and associated Council Tax for the forthcoming financial year by law.
Lead Officer	Homira Javadi, Chief Finance Officer

3. Cabinet report:	Treasury Management Strategy, Investment Strategy, Capital Strategy and Prudential Indicators 2025/26
Purpose of the report:	To approve the Council's Annual Treasury Management Strategy, Capital Strategy and Investment Strategy together with the Treasury and Prudential Indicators.
Officer recommendations to the Cabinet:	<p>Cabinet is asked to recommend the following proposals to Full Council, to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Approve the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A to the report; b. Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2025/26 (Appendix A); c. Approve the Prudential and Treasury Indicators 2025/26 to 2027/28 (Appendix A); and d. Approve the Capital Strategy 2025/26 (Appendix B).
Reasons for recommendations:	It is a requirement within the budget setting process for the Council to review and approve the Prudential and Treasury indicators, Treasury Strategy, Investment Strategy and Capital Strategy.
Lead Officer	Steve Houchin, Deputy Chief Finance Officer

4. Cabinet report:	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue Budget and Rent Setting 2025/26 and HRA Capital Programme 2024-29
Purpose of the report:	To agree the detailed HRA budget proposals, rent levels and service charges for 2025/26, and the HRA Capital Programme 2024-29
Officer recommendations to the Cabinet:	<p>Cabinet is asked to recommend the following proposals to Full Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. The HRA Revenue budget for 2025/26 and revised budget for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1 II. The five-year HRA Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 2 III. An increase of 2.7% to social and affordable rents (including shared ownership) with effect from 7th April 2025 in line with government policy IV. When social rented supported accommodation properties are relet to new tenants, the applicable rent will be increased by 10% above target rent with effect from 7th April 2025 in line with government policy V. When affordable rented properties are relet to new tenants, the applicable rent is reset to the lower of 80% of market rent (inclusive of Service Charges) or Local Housing Allowance, with effect from 7th April 2025 in line with government policy VI. That the revised service charges as set out in paragraphs 2.4 of this report and Appendix 3 are implemented with effect from 7th April 2025 VII. An increase of 10% to Garage rents with effect from 7th April 2025 VIII. To note that £5.982m of Major Works capital expenditure profiled over 4 years between 2024/25 to 2027/28, is being 50% match funded by grant, subject to Government grant bids. The Government scheme aims to improve EPC ratings in HRA properties.
Reasons for recommendations:	The Cabinet must recommend to Full Council the setting of the HRA revenue and capital budget and the level of social and affordable housing rents for the forthcoming year.
Lead Officer	Katie Haffenden, Principal HRA Accountant

5. Cabinet report:	Allocations Policy - Review of the Choice Based Lettings Model
Purpose of the report:	To seek approval to proceed with a public consultation on a new model of allocating Council housing stock.
Officer recommendations to the Cabinet:	Cabinet is asked to: (1) Give its approval to proceed with a public consultation on a new model of allocating Council housing stock; and (2) Approve the proposed new direct-allocations model
Reasons for recommendations:	To provide the local authority with greater flexibility over how and to whom to allocate our limited social housing stock, to ensure the right properties are matched with the right applicants more quickly, and to help us manage false expectations about the availability and demand for these properties
Lead Officer	Katie Dawkins, Housing Options and Wellbeing Strategic Lead

6. Cabinet report:	Local Development Scheme (January 2025)
Purpose of the report:	To seek Cabinet endorsement of the Local Development Scheme Update for approval by Full Council
Officer recommendations to the Cabinet:	(1) That Cabinet acknowledge the revised timetable, as set out in the updated Local Development Scheme, for the preparation of the Lewes Local Plan (ie for the planning authority area outside the South Downs National Park), and recommends it for approval by Full Council and resolve that it will come into effect the day after the Full Council meeting and be published on the council's website. (2) The delegated authority is provided to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure to make minor and presentational updates to the LDS where necessary
Reasons for recommendations:	To enable the publication of the updated Local Development Scheme outlining the revised timetable for the preparation of the Lewes District Local Plan, and other planning documents as required by Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).
Lead Officer	Nadeem Din, Head of Planning Policy