

COMMENTARY ON SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2017/18

Employee Costs

An Apprenticeship Levy will be in place from April 2017 and, as such, an additional provision of £29,000 has been made.

Other changes to staff hours and vacant posts have resulted in budget reductions of £83,000.

Planning income

Additional planning income of £72,000 is expected. This is the result of new or increased charges for discretionary services such as pre-application discussions, legal queries and Planning Performance Agreements with developers.

Street Naming and Numbering

Additional income of £50,000 has been budgeted for new charges to developers for the naming and numbering of new properties.

Waste and Parks Management

Additional resources of £71,000 have been applied to this area to fund the growth in property numbers and increased costs in waste collection and street cleansing.

Fairfield

The rebuilt Fairfield Leisure Centre opened in February 2016. In 2017/18, the contractor will make a significant contribution to the Council. Recognising this income, and other responsibilities now fulfilled by the contractor, has resulted in a budget reduction of £352,000.

Rental income

A review of rental income across the asset base has resulted in a net reduction of £25,000 in rents and associated income. The reduction is mainly due to the expected end of the Civic Centre lease with Kent County Council.

Interest

The budget for interest income has been increased by £435,000. The main factor behind this increase is the change in the investment strategy. It is also expected that cash balances will remain strong in the medium term so that higher levels of interest income will be maintained.

Elections

Additional Individual Elector Registration costs together with an increased local population has resulted in pressures for the team. Further resources of £30,000 have been allocated to this area to fund the additional work required and to cover increased postage costs.

Temporary Accommodation

Given continuing pressures in this area, an additional budget of £200,000 has been allocated. The pressure is likely to continue and the Council will actively pursue a number of strategies to help contain the issue. The situation will be closely monitored.