

# FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIO STATEMENT 2014-15

Councillor Mike Rusbridge



## 1. Portfolio responsibilities

As the Portfolio Holder responsible for Finance and Governance, the majority of the services for which I have responsibility do not have any front-line presence. Their primary role is to support others through the provision of resources, assets, goods, advice and assurance. This Portfolio Statement sets out my key objectives for the forthcoming year.

My overall objective is to provide high quality support services whilst, at the same time, reducing the Council's overheads enabling us to put our money into our priorities.

## 2. Functions and services

As Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance I am largely responsible for the following services, covering a 2013/14 revenue budget of £2,747,920:

- Finance
- Internal Audit
- Legal services
- Business Continuity
- ICT (including GIS)
- Delivery Unit
- Revenues & Benefits

I am the Chairman of the Finance & Governance Cabinet Advisory Board and Vice Chairman for Cabinet. I also have responsibility for:

- Risk management
- Value for Money
- Governance
- Back office integration

## 3. Our achievements in 2013-14

- The Council received its Annual Audit Letter which commended the Council on sound financial statements supported by good working papers
- The Council has one of the lowest core government grant settlements yet set the second lowest Council tax rate in Kent
- The Council made staffing reductions and efficiencies of £604,000 with no major reductions in services
- The Council was able to balance the budget without the use of the Council's reserves for 2014-15 for the second year in a row
- The Council negotiated a capital income of approximately £3.3m from the rationalisation of its asset portfolio and the disposal of assets.

## 4. Key plans and strategies

- Budget and Capital Programme
- Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
- Value for Money Strategy (VFM)
- Treasury Management Policy & Strategy
- ICT Strategy and shared service arrangements
- Change programme (Business Delivery Unit)

## 5. Our priorities for 2014-15:

- Working to achieve a favourable financial health check and a good annual audit letter
- Setting fees and charges to recover cost of provision
- Improving access to services through electronic channels ('digital first')
- Delivering a more effective fraud detection programme
- Promoting and developing ideas from the income management group for service improvement
- Protecting the Council by ensuring adherence to and promotion of the Constitution including keeping the Constitution up to date and fit for purpose
- Managing the Council's strategic risks and maintain a continuous programme of review to prevent fraud and identify value for money opportunities
- Project management of key strategic projects such as the development of the concept of a Cultural and Learning Hub in Royal Tunbridge Wells

## 6. Contact

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