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**TONBRIDGE & MALLING**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

EXECUTIVE SERVICES

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**Chief Executive**  
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14 November 2025

Dear Councillor

**CABINET - TUESDAY, 18TH NOVEMBER, 2025**

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the Tuesday, 18th November, 2025 meeting of the Cabinet, the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

**Agenda No    Item**

5.    **Local Government Reorganisation - Business Case Submission (Pages 3 - 4)**

Consideration of recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 13 November 2025 in respect of the draft Local Government Reorganisation business case for submission by the Borough Council to meet the Government's deadline of 28 November 2025.

8.    **Annual Service Delivery Plan Quarter 2 (2025/26) Reporting (Pages 5 - 6)**

Consideration of recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 13 November 2025 in respect of the performance of the Borough Council during Quarter 2 of 2025/26 in relation to the milestones and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set out in the Annual Service Delivery Plan 2025/26.

Yours sincerely

DAMIAN ROBERTS  
Chief Executive

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## LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION – BUSINESS CASE SUBMISSION

### Item OS 25/57 referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 13 November 2025

Following an interim submission to the Government by the 21 March 2025 deadline to propose the Borough Council's preferred geography for new Unitary Councils across Kent, the report of the Chief Executive set out the detailed evidence-based work subsequently undertaken on the business case to enable a submission to be made by the Borough Council on the proposals for the Local Government Reorganisation to the Government by the 28 November 2025 deadline.

Particular attention was drawn to the business case for Option 3A, attached at Annex 3, which proposed a 3-unitary model with the West Kent authority comprising Tonbridge and Malling, Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone areas. Members noted that this option was potentially supported by five councils across Kent (the West Kent councils plus Folkstone and Hythe), although these Councils still had to complete their formal decision-making processes during November. The advantages of Option 3A, in comparison to Option 4B (a 4-unitary model), being the other option that had been broadly supported by councils in Kent and Medway area and developed by the Strategic Partner, KPMG, with the funding allocated by the Government, were outlined in Section 6 of the report.

Due regard was given to the financial and value for money considerations, risk assessment, legal implications and the Equalities Impact Assessment [Annex 4]. There was robust and detailed discussion on a number of areas including the impact on communities and parish/town councils, the operation of potential neighbourhood area committees and the importance of retaining localism and the role of elected and civic Mayors. Members expressed concern about the financial impact of local government reorganisation and the overall devolution timetable. Many of these issues would be for the new unitary authority to finalise but the need for a balanced approach to ensure financial stability was emphasised.

In recognition that the Borough Council had to submit a response to Government by 28 November 2025 and that option 3A offered the most efficient and least disruptive multi-unitary option for Kent, enabled long-term financial sustainability and reflected the position previously confirmed by Tonbridge and Malling at the interim submission to Government in March 2025, Cllr Oakley proposed, seconded by Cllr King and the majority of the Committee

#### **RECOMMENDED\*:** That

- (1) the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the draft proposals for Local Government Reorganisation, be noted; and
- (2) based on the evidence set out in the business case (Annex 3), the 3 unitary model, Option 3a be submitted to the Government by the deadline of 28 November 2025 as the Borough Council's preferred option for Local Government Reorganisation.

**\*Recommended to Cabinet**

[In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8.6, Cllrs Athwal, Cope and Hood asked that their vote against recommendation (2) be recorded in the Minutes.]

## **ANNUAL SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2025/26 – QUARTER 2**

### **Item OS 25/58 referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 13 November 2025**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Executive and an update on the Annual Service Delivery Plan (ASDP) 2025/26, attached at Annex 1, which provided data on the performance of the Borough Council during Quarter 2 of 2025/26 in relation to the milestones and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as set out in the ASDP 2025/26.

An overview of performance relating to the key activities in the ASDP for the period up to the end of September 2025 was set out in 5.1 of the report and an overview of status of the KPIs within the ASDP 2025/26 as of the end of Quarter 2 (end of September 2025) was set out in 6.1 of the report.

Members welcomed the positive progress made on the activities and KPIs RAG-rated Green while recognising further improvement works required for those currently rated Red, including the reasons behind the under-performance and mitigations being investigated to address the impacted areas, with particular reference made to CO2 emissions through council assets and activities and affordable housing. With regards to Private Rented Sector Offers, it was explained that the impact of significantly higher rent levels in the private sector remained challenging although the Housing Service remained committed to making positive progress in this area.

**RECOMMENDED\*:** That

- (1) appreciation be recorded for the overall progress made during Quarter 2;
- (2) appreciation be recorded for the achievements made during Quarter 2; and
- (3) the areas needing focus be noted.

**\*Recommended to Cabinet**

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