

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL



EXECUTIVE SERVICES

Chief Executive

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NB - This agenda contains proposals, recommendations and options. These do not represent Council policy or decisions until they have received proper consideration through the full decision making process.

Contact: Democratic Services
committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk

8 February 2021

To: MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITIES AND HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD
(Copies to all Members of the Council)

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the Communities and Housing Advisory Board to be held online via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 16th February, 2021 commencing at 7.30 pm. Information on how to observe the meeting will be published on the Council's website.

Yours faithfully

JULIE BEILBY

Chief Executive

A G E N D A

PART 1 - PUBLIC

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2. Declarations of Interest 7 - 8

Members in any doubt about such declarations are advised to contact Legal or Democratic Services in advance of the meeting

3. Minutes 9 - 14

To confirm as a correct record the Notes of the meeting of the Communities and Housing Advisory Board held on 10 November 2020

Matters for recommendation to the Cabinet

4. Tonbridge Allotments Association - Proposed Charges 15 - 18

This report brings forward a proposed review of charges and concessions for allotments in Tonbridge by the Tonbridge Allotments and Gardens Association for Member approval.

5. Annual Grants to Key Voluntary Sector Bodies 19 - 38

This report seeks endorsement of the grants for key voluntary and community sector organisations

6. Leybourne Lakes Country Park - Future Management and Facility Development 39 - 50

This report updates and brings forward a revised timescale on both the proposed transfer of the site management of Leybourne Lakes Country Park [LLCP] to the Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust [TMLT] and the Capital Plan scheme for the provision of additional lakeside facilities. The proposed transfer is identified in the Council's First Year Addendum to the Corporate Strategy.

Matters submitted for Information

7. Parks and Leisure - Response to Covid-19 51 - 56

This report provides updates on progress with the themes/activities identified within the Parks and Leisure section of the recently approved First Year Addendum to the Council's Corporate Strategy. This includes updates on the Council's Indoor and Outdoor Leisure Facilities, progress with Capital Plan Projects and the 2020/21 Events Calendar.

8. Community Safety Partnership - Update 57 - 60

This report provides an update on some of the recent work of the Community Safety Partnership.

9. Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Demonstrator 61 - 66

This report provides an update on the Council's successful Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Demonstrator competition consortia bid with Fenland District Council (FDC) to secure funding to enable the upgrade of circa 160 Clarion owned homes in Tonbridge and Wisbech (Fenland).

10. Urgent Items 67 - 68

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent due to special circumstances and of which notice has been given to the Chief Executive.

Matters for consideration in Private

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The Chairman to move that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting during consideration of any items the publication of which would disclose exempt information.

PART 2 - PRIVATE

12. Urgent Items 71 - 72

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent due to special circumstances and of which notice has been given to the Chief Executive.

MEMBERSHIP

Cllr J L Botten (Chairman)
Cllr S M Hammond (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Mrs J A Anderson
Cllr Mrs S Bell
Cllr R W Dalton
Cllr N Foyle
Cllr P M Hickmott
Cllr F A Hoskins
Cllr S A Hudson

Cllr K King
Cllr Mrs R F Lettington
Cllr L J O'Toole
Cllr W E Palmer
Cllr Mrs M Tatton
Cllr Miss G E Thomas
Cllr D Thornewell

Apologies for absence

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Declarations of interest

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TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

Tuesday, 10th November, 2020

Present: Cllr J L Botten (Chairman), Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr Mrs S Bell, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr N Foyle, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr S A Hudson, Cllr K King, Cllr Mrs R F Lettington, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr Mrs M Tatton and Cllr Miss G E Thomas

Councillors Mrs P A Bates, R P Betts, V M C Branson, C Brown, A E Clark, M A Coffin, Mrs T Dean, N J Heslop, M A J Hood, D Lettington, P J Montague, Mrs A S Oakley, M R Rhodes, R V Roud, N G Stapleton and K B Tanner were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor L J O'Toole

PART 1 - PUBLIC

CH 20/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

CH 20/25 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting of the Communities and Housing Advisory Board held on 21 July 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

CH 20/26 REVIEW OF CHARGES AND FEES 2021/22

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health provided an update on existing fees for licensing a house in multiple occupation (HMO) or caravan site together with recommended charges following a review of the costs of processing the respective applications. The proposed fee increases had been benchmarked against neighbouring authorities.

RECOMMENDED: That the following charges be approved with effect from 1 April 2021: 

£545 for processing a new mandatory HMO licence application;
£500 for the processing of a renewal application for a mandatory HMO licence;

£395 for processing a new caravan site licence application where the use of the site is for permanent residential use; and
£190 for the transfer of a caravan site licence for a permanent residential use site.

***Referred to Cabinet**

CH 20/27 REVIEW OF CEMETERY CHARGES 2021/22

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services and the Director of Finance and Transformation setting out charging proposals for 2021/22 regarding Tonbridge Cemetery. Details of the proposed charges were set out at Annex 2 to the report. A comparison with other Kent district councils' charges was provided and it was anticipated that the proposals would generate additional net income of approximately £700.

A number of Members expressed concern that the low level of income in comparison to expenditure meant that Tonbridge Cemetery was, effectively, being subsidised and suggested that a strategic and comprehensive review of the charges should be undertaken. It was hoped that, as the facility became more self-sustained, the burden on the general tax-payer could be reduced in the longer term.

RECOMMENDED: That Cabinet be asked to consider whether the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should undertake a broad, strategic review of the charges applied at Tonbridge Cemetery. ◀

***Referred to Cabinet**

CH 20/28 TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION POLICY

Decision Notice D200079MEM

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health provided details of a Temporary Accommodation Policy which set out the Council's approach to meeting its Statutory Housing Duties regarding the demand, supply, prioritisation and suitability of temporary accommodation. Particular reference was made to the need to demonstrate a clear and consistent approach to the provision of temporary accommodation.

RECOMMENDED: That the Temporary Accommodation Policy, as set out at Annex 1 to the report, be adopted.

CH 20/29 UPDATE ON DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT BUDGET AND SPEND

Decision Notice D200080MEM

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health gave an update on spend against the 2020/21 Disabled Facilities

Grants (DFG) budget and advised how changes in distribution of this money were being built into the Estimates process to provide a degree of certainty regarding funding for the approved social care capital projects in the current financial year as well as an option to fund hospital discharge/handypersons costs in 2021/22.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the following revisions, which are being incorporated into the 2020/21 Revised Estimates and 2021/22 Estimates due to be presented during the forthcoming budget cycle, be noted:
 1. the amendment of the 2020/21 capital plan provision for mandatory DFGs to £900,000;
 2. the use of £89,000 to fund the hospital discharge/handypersons costs for the current financial year 2020/21;
 3. the use of £16,000 to fund the One You Your Home scheme for the current financial year 2020/21;
 4. the use of £90,000 of underspend this year to enable the funding of hospital discharge/handypersons costs in 2021/22;
 5. the allocation of £77,400 from this year into the 2021/22 mandatory DFG budget to provide a buffer for an unknown allocation from central Government moving forwards; and
- (2) the removal of £125,000 of Council funding for DFGs in 2020/21 during the update of the Capital Plan be noted and viewed as an in-year saving.

CH 20/30 RENT GUARANTEE PILOT FOR PRIVATE LANDLORDS

Decision Notice D200081MEM

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health outlined a proposal to pilot rent guarantee and incentive payments for tenancies in the private rented sector. Under the proposal rent would be guaranteed through a financial commitment to pay any rent arrears during a tenancy to give financial reassurance to private landlords. Incentives would be through one off payments to private landlords.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) a pilot offer for incentive payments and rent guarantee, using both Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and the homelessness reduction initiatives budget, be approved to access tenancies in

the private rented sector. This to continue until 31 March 2021 initially with scope to continue beyond this date, dependent on the number of tenancies secured and associated staff resources. Incentive payments will be one off payments to a landlord and rent guarantee will be in place for 6 - 12 months;

- (2) in view of the pressure on the Temporary Accommodation budget and the difficulty in finding good quality private rented accommodation that can be used to discharge the duties of the Borough Council, the decision be taken by the Cabinet Member for Housing, in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Innovation and Property, and not held over to the next meeting of Cabinet in order to expedite this opportunity as quickly as possible; and
- (3) the pilot offer be monitored and a progress report provided to the Communities and Housing Advisory Board at regular intervals for review and consideration of extending the pilot offer. Monitoring of the pilot will include tenancy sustainment success, administration options, homelessness prevention and landlord and tenant feedback.

CH 20/31 REVISED SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Decision Notice D200082MEM

The report of the Chief Executive sought endorsement of an updated Safeguarding Policy and Reporting Procedure for Children, Young People and Adults at Risk. Attention was drawn to the different reporting arrangements and responsibilities arising from the change of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board to become the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP) and to the reporting of concerns about adult safeguarding.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the revised version of the Safeguarding Policy and Reporting Procedure for Children, Young People and Adults at Risk be endorsed; and
- (2) Councillor M Rhodes be the Member Champion for Safeguarding.

CH 20/32 LEYBOURNE LAKES COUNTRY PARK- FUTURE MANAGEMENT AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

Decision Notice D200083MEM

The report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services provided an update on the proposed transfer of the site

management of Leybourne Lakes Country Park (LLCP) to the Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust (Leisure Trust) and on the Capital Plan scheme for the provision of additional lakeside facilities. Members were reminded that the proposed transfer had been identified in the Council's First Year Addendum to the Corporate Strategy.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) subject to the Monitoring Officer being satisfied about the legality of the actions in relation to the potential transfer:
 1. the potential transfer of the site management continues to be addressed in liaison with the Leisure Trust in accordance with the principles of the existing Management Agreement;
 2. consultation continues with the relevant on site staff at LLCP in liaison with HR regarding their potential TUPE transfer to the Leisure Trust;
 3. a report be presented to the next meeting of this Board on the financial implications/viability of a future transfer; and
 4. the transfer only be progressed if it achieves a saving to the Council and an income stream to the Leisure Trust; and
- (2) in regard to the potential development of a new Lakeside Facility at LLCP
 1. Alliance Leisure Services Ltd be appointed through the UK Leisure Framework to progress the project up to the Cost Confidence stage outlined in its Development Proposal;
 2. the project only be progressed to the Cost Certainty stage by Alliance Leisure Services Ltd if there is confidence that the project can be funded from within the available budget; and
 3. approval be granted for a Planning Application to be submitted for the proposed facility development.

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION

CH 20/33 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The report of the Director of Central Services provided an update on the recent work of the Community Safety Partnership. Particular reference was made to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on crime levels and incidence of domestic abuse, the support of the White Ribbon campaign and the development of the national 'Friends Against Scams' initiative.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE**CH 20/34 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chairman moved, it was seconded and

RESOLVED: That, as public discussion would disclose exempt information, the following matters be considered in private.

CH 20/35 LEISURE TRUST UPDATE

(Reasons: LGA 1972 Sch 12A Paragraph 3 – Financial or business affairs of any particular person)

Decision Notice D200084MEM

The report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services provided updates on the reopening and operation of the Council's leisure facilities operated by the Leisure Trust and to potential changes to the Management Agreement and the Service Management Fee as a result of the Covid-19 virus.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the Service areas identified in sub-section 1.4 of the report be reviewed further in liaison with the Leisure Trust and updates be reported to future meetings of this Board;
- (2) the management fee (provisional) for the year 2020/21 be set at £300,000 and the cash advance remaining at the year-end be rolled forward and that the assumed level of support required in 2021/22 be part of the forthcoming budget setting process subject to the Monitoring Officer being satisfied as to the legality of the action to be taken; and
- (3) an update on the Government's recent funding announcement to support council leisure centres most in need be provided to the Communities and Housing Advisory Board.

The meeting ended at 9.17 pm

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

16 February 2021

Report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Key Decision

1 TONBRIDGE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION - PROPOSED CHARGES

1.1 Summary

1.1.1 This report brings forward a proposed review of charges and concessions for allotments in Tonbridge by the Tonbridge Allotments and Gardens Association for Member approval.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 In general, allotments across the borough are provided and managed by the relevant Town and Parish Councils. Allotments in Tonbridge are, in part, provided by the Borough Council.

1.2.2 The Borough Council own 7 allotment sites in Tonbridge providing community use for approximately 270 tenants. Allotment provision is seen as an excellent opportunity to promote both mental and physical well-being at an accessible cost. In a survey undertaken by the National Allotments Society its members also commented on the social and community benefits that allotments provide. To ensure a community focussed and cost-effective service for its sites in Tonbridge, the allotments are managed and maintained on the Council's behalf by the Tonbridge Allotments and Gardens Association. The Association is a well organised, not for profit community group, and has a very positive relationship with the Council.

1.2.3 Currently the Council pays the Association an annual sum of £5,100 to manage and maintain allotments in Tonbridge on the Council's behalf. This encompasses all functions related to allotment management including the administration of payments, managing day to day operations (including any dispute resolution) and day to day upkeep and repairs to the sites. The Council does, however, consider applications for additional financial support from the Association for larger capital improvement projects that in previous years have included improvements to disabled facilities and the provision of storage facilities/sheds. The current arrangements are considered to be a very efficient and cost-effective approach to the management of these Council facilities.

1.2.4 A new ten year Formal Agreement with the Association was made in September 2019. The Agreement has a clause stating that 'When setting rent levels for the future, TAGA shall bear in mind the need for the Sites to be self-funding in all respects'. It is a desire for both parties to try and achieve self-funding as soon as possible and for TAGA to accumulate their own capital reserve.

1.3 Proposed Charges

1.3.1 The Council has been advised that the Association has considered current charges and is proposing revised charges to be implemented from the 1 October 2022 (the Association has to approve these at their own annual general meeting in Oct 2021 for the following year). The proposed charges are to raise annual rents per rod by one pound every year from 2022/23 to 2024/25. Currently the charge is £6 per rod.

1.3.2 A typical full allotment plot is measured at 10 rods, with half plots (5 rods) also available. The table below shows the proposed charges for a full 10 rod plot based on the proposals. The current cost for ten rods is £60.

	Proposed Annual Charge
2021/22	£60
2022/23	£70
2023/24	£80
2024/25	£90

1.3.3 Whilst the proposed increases may appear high in terms of a percentage, they do represent a relatively small financial cost increase across a full year. By 2024/25 when the annual cost reaches £90 this still only equates to £1.73 per week.

1.3.4 In addition to the above, (as previously agreed by Members), a separate annual charge of £15 is made for those opting to rent a shed.

1.3.5 For Members information a comparison of the current Tonbridge charges in relation to charges by other local authority providers is shown below. The current Tonbridge charges fall in the middle of a varying range of charges applied by others.

Location	Charge per annum for 10 rods including water - 2020/21
Maidstone	£60
Ashford	£70
Sevenoaks	£41.50
Tonbridge	£60
Tunbridge Wells	£100

1.4 Proposed removal of age concession

- 1.4.1 The Association has also proposed the removal of the 50% discount that is currently given to over 65 year olds. This concession for allotments is considered dated and several other authorities have already removed this (Sevenoaks, Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells, Medway and Thanet).
- 1.4.2 Currently there are 100 tenants out of 290 receiving this discount.

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 The Formal Agreement between Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and the Tonbridge Allotments and Gardens Association requires any change in charges to be approved by the Borough Council prior to implementation.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 The Borough Council currently provides the Association with an annual sum of £5,100 to manage allotments in Tonbridge on its behalf. Additional financial support for the Association for larger capital improvement projects at the sites is considered on a case by case basis. This is considered to offer excellent value for money and these proposals will pave the way for the Association to be cost neutral in the future.

1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 The Association has an obligation to ensure that provision on site is suitable and safe for users. All users are required to adhere to a formal tenancy agreement.

1.8 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.8.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. It is the intention of the Association to cease the concession offered to over 65's giving all age groups the same equal charges.

1.9 Policy Considerations

1.9.1 Community, Healthy Lifestyles

1.10 Recommendations

- 1) It is **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that the proposed charges brought forward by the Tonbridge Allotments and Gardens Association as detailed in the report be agreed.

Background papers:

contact: Mike Harris

Nil

Robert Styles

Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD**

16 February 2021

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 ANNUAL GRANTS TO KEY VOLUNTARY SECTOR BODIES

To endorse the grants for key voluntary and community sector organisations

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 For many years the Borough Council has provided funding to support a number of key voluntary sector bodies who provide support services to residents within the Borough.
- 1.1.2 This time last year, we undertook a review of funding arrangements to secure appropriate grant agreements with each of our key organisations. The outcome of this review meant that three agencies opted to accept a slightly lower amount in return for the security of a fixed amount for the following 4 years. These were: Involve, Imago and Maidstone and West Kent Mediation Scheme.
- 1.1.3 Each of the above three organisations have produced a brief summary of their progress achieved against the objectives set out in the Service Level Agreements **[Annex 1]**. Obviously the pandemic has added increased pressure and changed methods of operating for all, but the reports highlight the excellent and vital work that has been undertaken over this very difficult period.
- 1.1.4 At the review last year, Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge and Citizens Advice North and West Kent (CANWK) felt it would be difficult to continue to offer their support services on a lower amount. Both organisations opted to maintain their existing grant amount, but to undertake a full review of the grant arrangements over the coming year via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.1.5 This review has been postponed as we are fully aware that the pandemic has increased demand for the services offered by both organisations. We therefore do not feel we can consider any grant reductions whilst the organisations deal with the emergency and provide vital support services in the community. Both

organisations have provided a brief summary of progress over the last 12 months [Annex 2].

1.2 Legal Implications

1.2.1 To be addressed via Service Level Agreements.

1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.3.1 For the three organisations with fixed 4 year grants, the funding as they enter year two of their agreements, will remain as follows:

Maidstone and West Kent Mediation Schemes - £4,320

Imago - £3,600

Involve - £ 3,600

1.3.2 For CANWK and Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge, it is suggested that another 1 year agreement be maintained at existing levels:

CANWK - £95,000

Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge - £8,000

1.4 Risk Assessment

1.4.1 N/A

1.5 Equality Impact Assessment

1.5.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.6 Policy Considerations

1.6.1 Community

1.6.2 Health and Safety

1.6.3 Healthy Lifestyles

1.7 Recommendations

1.7.1 That based on the good progress and the vital support provided to residents from Involve, Imago and the Mediation Schemes, that grant funding is **CONTINUED** for year 2 of the 4 year agreement.

1.7.2 That based on the good progress and vital support provided to residents from Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge and CANWK, grant funding is **MAINTAINED** at current levels for the financial year 2021/22.

The Chief Executive confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Gill Fox

Nil

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

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Report on the work of Maidstone Mediation Scheme (MMS) and West Kent Mediation Scheme (WKMS) in relation to the SLA 2020-2024

These are the combined number of referrals to both mediation services from March 2020 to date. 20/1/2021. Please note that to enable business continuity both services have been operating their services remotely and offering mediation and anger management course on line, via zoom, whatsapp etc. Both organisations have done their best in trying to keep their service running during the Pandemic thus ensuring that we have been available to those that have needed us.

40 Referrals. (0 schools trained in Peer mediation due to Lockdown)

- Neighbour/community cases 27. 1 case involved 9 second parties
- parent and teen cases 2
- family cases
- Anger Management courses.(MMS) 9
- preventing Homelessness 2
- Restorative justice process 0
- Due to Lockdown schools in TMBC area have not asked for Peer mediation training for their young people, they hope to resume this asap.
- When things return to normal Maidstone Mediation and West Kent Mediation will resume training 2 cohorts of new volunteers as and when we are able; they are trained in mediation skills to deliver neighbourhood mediation, family mediation to address the issues that arise in the home, to prevent them from being made homeless, sofa surfing and presenting at TMBC as homeless. We also work with families when there has been Adolescent to Parent violence and the threat of homelessness, residents/ parents ask for our support and help which prevents their children entering into the criminal justice system. We are also able to offer Anger Management courses to any resident from the age of 12 through to adults

All of our work takes away some of the burden off the statutory agencies; preventing, responding and resolving the common issues in the community. Statutory agencies are working at crisis levels; Police, Housing providers, the Council and Early Help preventative services. If the two mediation services did not exist, the burden on those agencies would increase exponentially.

We are able to offer a free service to those in the borough who most need it, both services have the Restorative Justice Quality mark for 'best practice' staff and volunteers have trained and achieved the certificate of competence in KCC E-learning safeguarding.

The Mediation services regularly attend the TMBC meetings, e.g. the TMBC CSVG, The TMBC DA forum, and Strategy group meetings. We attend any training that is offered to us e.g. Prevent training and also offer training to TMBC staff. We constantly remind agencies of the referral process and about our service.

Kim Salisbury

Manager

Maidstone Mediation Scheme.

Involve Kent - Report to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council 2020

Introduction

Involve Kent and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council have an established partnership in place through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) worth £3600 a year with the aim of promoting and supporting volunteering across the Malling Borough.

In this reporting year, like many other organisations, our work was severely impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic and following social restriction including 'lockdowns'. This impacted on our ability to connect and empower people in traditional ways and run operations as normal. In this period many volunteers themselves went into isolation due to age or health conditions and many organisations struggled to continue to provide volunteer roles as offices and activities ceased. However, the pandemic also provided new opportunities for volunteering and 2020 saw a mass movement of people committing to supporting vulnerable people in their community, through both national initiatives such as NHS responders and local and informal support for neighbours and friends. This report will detail how Involve Kent worked to both recruit, support and promote volunteering across the Borough of Malling during this difficult time.

Reporting on the specifics in the SLA for 2020;

Recruiting volunteers who reflect the demographic makeup of the district and including volunteers who have experienced need for support from voluntary or statutory services.

We have 36 volunteers from the district currently participating in Involve volunteer roles or activities. 12 of these engage in 2 or more activities or roles.

Volunteers are currently in the following roles:

1 exercise group (virtual) volunteer

3 Volunteers supporting people with a cancer diagnosis

3 Older people's befrienders

9 'Get Involved' volunteers taking part in gardening and DIY

9 Members accessing creative activities including knitting, sewing and craft

6 have completed 'Response' training courses

3 Volunteers are supporting the local link worker in the Snodland Medical Practice

8 Volunteer Drivers supporting the community

This represents 36 volunteers in total, however many of the volunteers undertook multiple placements in this period and 48 placements were filled by volunteers from the Malling Borough.

18 of these volunteers have identified support needs either in the form of mental or physical health, prior convictions or low confidence and have been supported by the Volunteering and Engagement Officer to access volunteer roles or activities within Involve.

Involve Cancer support volunteering in depth

Cancer support volunteers continued to offer support, befriending and advocacy for people with a cancer diagnosis in this period. From March 2020 this moved from being face to face support to telephone support. 3 Malling volunteers supported 14 people in the Malling area this year, including during the first lockdown, through the initial shielding requirements and later lockdowns. They ensured that people who were on many occasions nearing end of life had someone outside of their household to talk to. With support from the volunteers, clients have been able to access free transport to hospital appointments and have accessed virtual exercise classes and support groups in addition to the one to one support the volunteer offers.

Matching volunteers to opportunities within volunteer involving organisations

We supported 54 groups/organisations based in Tonbridge and Malling as they adapted to Covid restrictions with information and updates. During this period, many smaller volunteering involving organisations ceased to be able to offer roles/engage volunteers. We did however work with the Hub at Tonbridge and Malling council for which we actively recruited volunteers. We also promoted national volunteering initiatives including widely publicising the NHS Responders volunteer programme.

Providing support for individual volunteers, particularly those facing barriers to volunteering e.g. through age, disability, culture, income etc.

Volunteers are supported not only in their roles, but to access other opportunities. Our dedicated Volunteering and Engagement Officer offers 1-2-1 support, working with volunteers to identify opportunities they may wish to engage with. Volunteers are given information and/or support around education and training, further volunteer opportunities and full-time work, amongst other things.

Involve have a partnership with Community Learning and Skills who offer free training courses which include health & safety, assertiveness, mindfulness and IT skills. Courses run throughout the year and if volunteers need assistance getting to the venue due to confidence concerns, the V&E Officer can meet and accompany them to their course.

This year we supported groups of supported volunteers through lockdown which often had detrimental impacts on health and wellbeing and anxiety levels. We worked hard to provide both one to one support and to build online communities where volunteers could find some space for positive socialising. We also worked with other specialist support organisations including 'Mind' and ensured that supported volunteers knew where to turn if things got too much.

Involve Supported Volunteering in depth

Supported Volunteering provides the opportunity for people who are socially isolated to access volunteering and give something back to their community in a safe and supportive environment. This year 9 supported volunteers from the Malling area worked with us pre lockdown doing general light DIY for older people under the supervision of our handy person. In addition, 9 supported volunteers worked across our craft groups. These volunteers were extensively supported through lockdown through the provision of weekly calls and a range of virtual social opportunities including a weekly supported volunteer zoom quiz. Many of our supported volunteers really struggled with isolation and worsening mental health in this period and staff ensured that wellbeing and self-care were promoted throughout. One of our Malling supported volunteers worked throughout the summer to clear garden paths and cut grass so that older people had access to their outside space. Another of our supported volunteer gardeners from Malling completed his NVQ and found work in a local garden centre.

Promoting, stimulating and encouraging local interest in volunteering and community activity

This year we promoted volunteering across lockdowns, including in T & M hub, NHS responders. We updated our directory to highlight what specific groups were doing in terms of a Covid response and ensured that where needed, groups were supported to recruit volunteers.

Involve Befriending Volunteering in depth

As part of our Covid 19 response we recruited additional peer befrienders, 3 from the Malling area. They work to support people across T & M with 922 calls being made to people who were shielding in the ME16, ME18, ME19 and ME20 postcodes.

Promoting existing volunteer driver schemes within the area

Involve Kent continued to promote volunteer driving in the area. This was challenging as volunteers were often older themselves and many were isolating/shielding for much of this period. We did successfully recruit 8 volunteer drivers from the area. These drivers supported 36 people throughout lockdown making 315 trips with food, medication drop offs and transport to vital medical appointments.

Promoting good practice within organisations involving volunteers by providing support and information.

Information is distributed weekly in the 'Digest' newsletter – now with 1712 contacts receiving the Digest. The Digest includes events, news, training and vacancies.

Involve organise and facilitate 2 ad hoc VCS Groups networking events, that bring together colleagues across the VCS. In 2020 there were 2 virtual events giving information on working in a Covid secure way, accessing funding during the pandemic and providing information on our 25k grants programme.

In addition, our Information Officer re – mapped the area and ensured that an up to date directory of services operating during Covid was available to staff and organisations both in the voluntary and statutory sector.

Involve maintains relationships with 54 organisations across Tonbridge and Malling and are able to offer support and signposting to these groups when required.

Liaising with local organisations, including parish councils and other voluntary groups to promote services

Contact is maintained through regular newsletters promoting volunteering and other community initiatives.

Our online directory Connect Well has 54 organisations from Tonbridge & Malling registered on it, including Spadework, Tree of Hope and Malling Parkrun. This directory is free to join and due to being online, is publicly visible to all. This directory was constantly updated as activities closed, and new ones opened due to Covid this year.

Providing information through the Involve Kent website and online directory

The website is regularly updated alongside the new Connect Well directory, www.connectwellwestkent.org.uk . Volunteer opportunities are now advertised on Do-it.org and kentvolunteers.org.uk. Social media is now a key communication tool with 3072 'followers' and frequent updates. Volunteer opportunities are advertised in GP practices including Snodland.

Participating in local, regional and national campaigns, either individually or in partnership with other providers

National campaigns include; Volunteers Week, World Mental Health Day, Carers Week, Carers Rights Day.

We worked closely with T & M health action team and KCC public health team to ensure Covid response cohesion.

Providing input into strategic development of volunteering locally, regionally and nationally

Involve have maintained a relationship with Stronger Kent Communities, providing support in accrediting organisations applying for the REVAMP award. REVAMP is a quality mark designed to recognise good practice in volunteer management and was co-developed by Involve and SKC. Organisations from across the county are encouraged to apply.

Carrying out DBS checks on all volunteers working in Involve Kent, who work with vulnerable adults

All volunteers and staff working with vulnerable adults are DBS checked and a DBS check service is offered across the Malling area, enabling local groups to check their staff and volunteers.

Acting as an umbrella body for DBS checks for all Voluntary Organisations

We continue to act as umbrella body for DBS checks and promote the service widely.

Please see below a summary of activity delivered by Imago across the Tonbridge and Malling borough during 2020.

We have provided a volunteer recruitment service that has benefited organisations in Tonbridge and Malling. However 2020 has been a difficult year for volunteer recruitment, not least because organisations did not have available opportunities when they paused their services as a result of the pandemic. In addition we were unable to promote volunteering as we usually would at college career fairs, or at events organised by Job Centre Plus or by special interest groups.

- We have NCVO Accredited Volunteer Centre status
- Marketing volunteering: We liaise with voluntary and community groups and include their volunteering opportunities in our West Kent Volunteer Centre newsletters. In 2020 4 newsletters were produced in January, March, October and December. They are usually bi-monthly and so we would have expected 6 per annum. Our March 2020 edition, anticipating a lockdown of a few months was full of opportunities that people could consider while locked down and would be available when we re-emerged into normal life. Many of the usual volunteering opportunities were no longer available and most of the Volunteer Coordinators were on furlough. We were not able to respond to the increased

interest in volunteering with available opportunities as many services were temporarily closed. We started to see more volunteering opportunities becoming available as voluntary organisations offered more online support and so we were able to produce an edition in October. It included a variety of opportunities and contained adverts for NHS Responders and for volunteer Journey Makers at Tonbridge station, to help people returning to work and school who were anxious about using public transport. Our December issue contained lots of online volunteer recruitment opportunities to deliver largely virtual services.

- We received volunteering enquiries from local residents and we directed them to www.do-it.org, the latest Volunteer Centre newsletter or provided them with tailored advice about the volunteering opportunities usually available and the ones available at the time of their enquiry. Recently some volunteers have been interested in testing and vaccination opportunities.
- Good practice development - We facilitate a Volunteer Coordinators Forum and usually we would have physical meetings of this group. Some of our Coordinators have been furloughed (more than once) and sadly a few have lost their positions as a result of the pandemic and its impact on charity finance. We have kept in touch with the forum members and some have used the forum as an ongoing opportunity for peer support. For example, they have been sharing ways to keep their existing volunteers engaged when they are unable to volunteer.
- We have continued to operate our Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking service for organisations.
- Our Dial 2 Drive Community Transport service now has 16 registered drivers in the Tonbridge and Malling area and 170 clients. We stopped offering drives in March 2020 and restarted the service in November 2020. Since the service restarted we have had a reduced pool of volunteer drivers to call on as some are shielding. When our service wasn't operating our drivers were organised into a befriending network and, alongside our office volunteers and Dial 2 Drive staff, made regular befriending calls to Dial 2 Drive members.

In addition:

- We have provided direct one-to-one support to voluntary and community organisations that deliver services in Tonbridge including Crossroads, Compaid, Thrillseekers of Kent, Kisumu Children Trust, Home-Start South West Kent, Citizens Advice North and West Kent, Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge, Tree of Hope, DAVSS, Heart of Kent Hospice and Live Well Kent.
- Our Community Development Manager is a member of the Linda Hogan Community Fund panel that awards grants to Tonbridge based organisations.
- We produce monthly newsletters with sector information for local organisations. Our Imago newsletter is distributed to voluntary and public sector organisations, some of whom are Tonbridge based.
- We represent the voluntary sector on strategic partnerships including the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership and then disseminate useful information to the sector.
- We provided information to 5 thematic groups – the West Kent Young Peoples Provider Forum, the West Kent Older Peoples Provider Forum, the Community

Groups Network, the Disabled and Sensory Impaired Network and the Volunteer Coordinators Forum.

CANWK

(Year to date 2020/21)

The Covid-19 crisis has created unprecedented challenges for us all. At Citizens Advice in North and West Kent (CANWK) we have attempted to meet the challenges of the pandemic head-on; focussing on embedding our remote services, expanding capacity to meet demand and ensuring that our advice and support remains of the highest quality and accessible to the most vulnerable in our community. As a result, we have been able to provide advice for similar numbers of Tonbridge and Malling residents as in usual times, just delivered in different ways.

Key features of our approach to the pandemic so far:

1. Ensuring our staff and volunteers have the technology and support to operate remotely.
 2. Expanding our advice services to focus in increased demand for telephone and email advice.
 3. Promoting our services to ensure local people know how to reach us.
 4. Using our facilities as much as possible.
 5. Developing new and existing partnerships to reach out to vulnerable local people.
1. Ensuring our staff and volunteers have the technology and support to operate remotely:

Due to Covid-19, it became necessary for us to stop all face-to-face advice from 16th March and then to close our Tonbridge office to all volunteers on Monday 23rd March 2020. Throughout this time and since, we have been able to maintain our ability to give information, detailed and casework level advice to existing and new clients remotely, via telephone and email.

We have invested in our technology over this period to further improve and expand our abilities to operate remotely, and now have around 120 staff and volunteers actively working from home and fully supported by Supervisors and Managers. Each have been provided with necessary equipment to work remotely from home, including a softphone (uses computer app) or mobile phone, encrypted laptop and remote access to Casebook and Adviceline telephone service. We were already using Office365 for cloud storage and document sharing, and all staff have been trained to use Teams for meetings, information sharing and camaraderie with colleagues.

2. Expanding our advice services to focus in increased demand for telephone and email advice:

From the early days of the first lockdown, we have continued to provide an uninterrupted, high quality advice service through our ability to bring together the shared resources, volunteers and staff from all 5 CANWK offices to work together to meet demand. We quickly developed systems to share local knowledge amongst our Advisers from all areas, to ensure they had the knowledge

and confidence to help people with both general and locally-specific advice. By pooling our resources in this way, we have been able to not only maintain our services during lockdown, but actually increase services to meet rising demand.

As the situation developed, and it became clear that we would need to adapt our services for longer than initially hoped, we have been proactive in our approaches and used the need to adapt as a catalyst for positive developments in our services. Examples of these developments include:

- **Creating a new email advice service as an alternative to telephone advice.** This has not only increased our capacity to give advice in different formats, but has also enabled more of our trained volunteer Advisers to get back to advice-giving. Unfortunately remote telephone advice is more difficult for many of our volunteers, who may not have the skills or confidence to cope with live calls and remote supervision. The email advice service enables volunteer Advisers to research a client's problem and formulate a response, which can then be checked by a Supervisor before being sent as a reply to the client.
- **Introducing a more process-led approach to increase efficiency in the initial telephone advice** and ensure that all clients receive high quality advice at the level of support needed for their case. This approach follows guidance from National Citizens Advice and is ensuring high standards of advice are maintained, supports the client journey through our service and will help us to continue to cope with the challenges in meeting demand ahead.
- Using short-term funding (all of which must be spent by 31st March 2021) to **trial new ways of delivering advice.** For example, we have trialled employing a team of 6 full-time Adviceline Advisers, who completed their Citizens Advice training in 2 weeks and then began answering live calls supported by a supervisor. This team have been extremely successful in supplementing and supporting the efforts of our volunteers and within a period of just a few months, they are answering high numbers of calls and supporting clients at a very high standard. It is hoped that short-term initiatives such as this can not only help us meet unprecedentedly high demand now, but also support us in developing our services in the future.
- **Joining national Citizens Advice initiatives to expand telephone advice capacity; making Adviceline free to call and open for longer.** Since mid-November 2020 we joined a national Citizens Advice single queue initiative, which means that within our group, we answer whichever call is next without local priority. The result of this is that **more client's calls are being answered first time – currently 60%-80% depending on demand.** Further follow up support for clients, if it is needed, is still carried out by CANWK for our local clients. Furthermore, we took the opportunity to be in the first wave of freephone rollout from national Citizens Advice, which meant that we also switched to a **freephone Adviceline in November 2020.** This means that cost should never be a barrier to a client seeking our advice. With the new Adviceline

Introducing our new freephone number and extended opening hours

For free, independent, confidential and impartial advice please call

Citizens Advice in North & West Kent
0808 278 7810
Open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

or email your enquiry to
advice@nwkent.cab.org.uk

Advisers mentioned above, we have also been able to extend the opening hours of Adviceline to 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday (an additional 15 hours/week).

- Promoting our services to ensure local people know how to reach us.

Using social media, local community website and partner agencies, we have focused on increasing awareness of our advice services across Tonbridge and Malling. With the support of local foodbanks and community volunteer schemes, vulnerable residents have received CANWK leaflets (with contact information and key advice messages) with their food parcels.



- Using our facilities as much as possible.

Following the first lockdown, **Tonbridge Castle** has been an ideal office in the circumstances, with enough space for social distancing to allow some volunteers who could not give advice from home to return to support our efforts on the telephone and email advice services. Whilst we have needed to reduce numbers again during this latest lockdown, we have continued to maintain a presence at the Castle, both for Advisers and for clients who need to deliver paperwork for photocopying etc.

- Developing new and existing partnerships to reach out to vulnerable local people.

In our role as Coordinator and lead partner in the Advice Together Partnership (bringing together local advice organisations from across North and West Kent), we have also drawn together service information from our partners to create and share details of the range of advice services still available during the crisis – once at the beginning of the first lockdown and again at Christmas to include festive opening hours. This information has been well received by local stakeholders and helps to ensure that those most vulnerable in our community can still access the help and support they need. We are delighted to have welcomed the TMBC Housing Team to Advice Together and our Refernet online referral system, which will enable us to provide more seamless support to the most vulnerable local people.



Tonbridge & Malling residents supported in 2020/21

Since the start of lockdown, **we have supported over 1,500 TMBC residents, with over 5,600 issues.**

Early in lockdown, the issues people were coming to us with were more often information but now **issues are becoming much more complex and the need for our specialists input is rising** further. This is, at least in part, because people's

situations are more complicated and legislation across all our specialisms is constantly changing – further increases demand for advice and adds complexity to delivery.

Issues being faced by clients:

- 36% of issues for which people sought help were related to benefits and tax credits, including help with claiming Universal Credit. This was 57% during the earlier period of lockdown but has reduced as a proportion of total issues more recently as people begin to deal with the wider impact of Covid-19.
- 11% of clients sought help with employment problems including redundancy and entitlements.
- 15% of clients sought help with debt issues. The number of clients seeking help with their debts plummeted at the beginning of lockdown, as people were focused on urgent crisis and with the suspension of court proceedings and creditor action those in debt felt under far less pressure to address their issues. This is now changing; in the last 2 months we have seen debt cases rise substantially and we expect this trend to continue in the coming months.
- 56% of clients were seeking advice for problems which put them at risk of homelessness.

We have certainly seen changes in our client profile since the start of the pandemic, with the proportion of each of these groups having increased:

- More clients from outside of central Tonbridge wards - from 58% to 62%
- More clients of working age - from 84% to 89%
- More clients with mental health issues - from 30% to 34%
- More clients in full time employment - from 22% to 29%
- More clients in any employment - from 46% to 50%
- More clients who are home owners - from 19% to 29%

We will continue to monitor our client profile to ensure that we are continuing to reach out to those people who are most in need in these very challenging times.

Our learning so far

Having developed our services so quickly in response to the demand we have faced, we are now taking time to consider what we have learned and how we can use this experience as we move forward.

- **Increased capacity of telephone and email advice services enables residents across the borough to access our services more easily, with residents in the North of the borough finding our new ways of working more accessible than face-to-face support services focused in central Tonbridge.** Since the start of lockdown, we have seen an increase in the proportion of Tonbridge & Malling clients being from areas further out in the

borough, particularly East Malling, Kings Hill, Larkfield and Snodland and no decline in the proportion of clients from other outer areas including Aylesford, Ditton, Hadlow and East Peckham.

- There is no doubt that this **more integrated approach is much more efficient for us as an organisation**. With everyone operating remotely instead of in separate offices, we have been able to share services more easily and effectively. By developing our use of Teams and other online communication and information sharing tools, we have been able to share supervision and specialist advice team support far more efficiently, meaning that more clients have access to this advice.

Thank You

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone at Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council for their continuing support and encouragement during these most challenging times, which has been so appreciated by all our staff, volunteers and Board of Trustees. We look forward to continuing to work closely together to ensure local residents have the knowledge, skills and confidence to face the difficult times ahead.

Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge

During the year staff and volunteers have assisted a total 524 people with information and advice issues, resulting in £652,724 being gained in unclaimed benefits. The year has been extremely challenging due to Covid 19 as we have had to observe, national lockdowns, together with local tiers. This has resulted in mainly telephone interviews and completion of benefit forms by IT methods, which in itself has been a real challenge.

Many older people have severe hearing issues and do not have connectivity to the internet to be able to have face to face calls to assist. Some home visits and planned office based interviews have taken place with the appropriate social distancing and full PPE equipment in place. The office at Bradford Street has been manned throughout Covid, but on reduced hours, due to staff working from home on some days of the week. Appointments have been made for specialist advice, where other ways of contact could not take place.

We have continued to produce our own local factsheets and these have been circulated to clients and carers on a wide variety of topics, including Covid related issues. We have received a high volume of telephone calls from people asking for information and clarification on many topics, during the pandemic.

We have continued to assist older people in TMBC area with emergency shopping, afternoon teas, prescription collection, and activity bags.

(Normal Home Visit carried out when allowed to visit)

Information and Advice Case Study

Jennifer

Jennifer lives in Tonbridge. She asked Age UK's Information & Advice service for help as she was retiring on ill health grounds and was worried about how she was going to manage.

Bob visited her at home and discussed her situation. She has severe sight loss due to macular degeneration and was waiting for her gallbladder to be removed due to bad gallstones. In addition she has migraines and sciatica. She was depressed about her health and having to give up work.

We agreed to apply for Attendance Allowance health benefit immediately and decided to wait until she gave up work before applying for means-tested benefits. We also gave her some large print information on help for people with sight loss in Tonbridge.

We returned a month later and helped her apply for a Blue Badge disabled parking permit. We also applied for Pension Credit, Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support as she had now given up work.

She was awarded the Higher Rate of Attendance Allowance as well as means-tested benefits. In total, this increased her income by £282.07 per week which made a significant difference to her ability to manage. She was turned down for a Blue Badge but we offered to help her re-apply if she wishes.

We discussed her wider situation. She was widowed some years ago but sees her children and grandchildren. She doesn't know her neighbours and all her friends were based around work. We agreed to try and find a befriender for her. We also referred her to the One You service for help with further aids and equipment.

Edward

He is a 94 year old man who served in The Army - Suffolk Regiment between 1944-1948 stationed in Burma.

Edward lives alone following the unexpected death of his wife earlier this year. He has good family support however, losing his wife was a complete shock to him. Family insure he gets his medication, shopping, takes him to appointments and he usually goes to his granddaughter's home on a Sunday for the day.

Edward has an old left shoulder injury which limits his range of movement and impacts on his ability to self-care and his balance. He is resistant to formal support at home wishing to maintain his autonomy. He is a tenacious man and family support in area's he will accept. Edward was referred by his GP.

His bathroom requires adaptations to support his independence. He's had several falls landing on his shoulder resulting in extreme pain and he now has regular steroid injections to manage this. He has a personal alarm to enable him to gain assistance if needed and he struggles with complying to wear it stating 'I know where it is if I need it'

Since Edward's bereavement he has been scammed to around £30,000. Police and bank are aware of this and there is an ongoing investigation. He is no longer able to answer his phone which rings frequently throughout the day. Currently Edward is resistant to changing his phone number but he is considering it. He and his family are considering LPA. I have provided Age UK Factsheets regarding this.

Still driving Edward himself says he feels less confident now and both he and his family asked about funding for a mobility scooter. I agreed to refer to SSAFA to determine if he would meet the criteria for a grant to fund.

Action plan:

Referral to Information and Advice for support with applying for Attendance Allowance and Blue Badge. Applications completed and now waiting decisions.

Referral to Social Services for bathroom assessment.

Referral to SSAFA who have completed assessments for both a mobility scooter and bathroom. Bathroom assessment forwarded to Social Services.

Mobility scooter assessment forwarded to Edwards regiment to consider funding.

Legal Advice Factsheet provided for Edward and family to consider LPA

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**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD**

16 February 2021

Report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 LEYBOURNE LAKES COUNTRY PARK: FUTURE MANAGEMENT AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

Summary

This report updates and brings forward a revised timescale on both the proposed transfer of the site management of Leybourne Lakes Country Park [LLCP] to the Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust [Leisure Trust], and the Capital Plan scheme for the provision of additional lakeside facilities. The proposed transfer is identified in the Council's First Year Addendum to the Corporate Strategy.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 As reported to Members of this Board on the 21 July 2020 and subsequently approved by Cabinet, it was proposed that the site management of LLCPP be transferred to the Leisure Trust from the 1 April 2021. Further to this a report was also taken to the meeting of the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board on the 16 September 2020 and subsequently recommended by Cabinet for Council approval, in regard to the proposed facility improvements. In taking forward both projects the following aims are to be achieved:

- to achieve a financial saving to the Borough Council;
- to improve the financial position and sustainability of the Leisure Trust; and
- to improve the quality of onsite facilities and services to the visiting public.

1.1.2 An update report was taken to this Board on the 10 November 2020 where Members approved the following recommendations:

It is **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that subject to the Monitoring Officer being satisfied about the legality of the actions in relation to the potential transfer that:

- 1) the potential transfer of the site management continues to be addressed in liaison with the Leisure Trust in accordance with the principles of the existing Management Agreement;
- 2) consultation continues with the relevant on-site staff at LLCP in liaison with HR regarding their potential TUPE transfer to the Leisure Trust;
- 3) a report be presented to the next meeting of this Board on the financial implications /viability of a future transfer;
- 4) the transfer only be progressed if it achieves a saving to the Council and an income stream to the Leisure Trust.

It is **FURTHER RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that in regard to the potential development of a new Lakeside Facility at LLCP:

- 1) Alliance Leisure Services Ltd be appointed through the UK Leisure Framework to progress the project up to the Cost Confidence stage outlined in its Development Proposal;
- 2) the project only be progressed to the Cost Certainty stage by Alliance Leisure Services Ltd if there is confidence that the project can be funded from within the available budget; and
- 3) approval be granted for a Planning Application to be submitted for the proposed facility development.

1.2 Site Management

1.2.1 In progressing the actions above, the Heads of Terms for the proposed lease were considered by the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board on the 6 January 2021. In considering the potential lease Members expressed concern about agreeing decisions relating to the transfer on a piecemeal basis, and that the transfer should be considered in light of a full and comprehensive report that presented Members with all elements. This would include the lease, the detailed proposal from Leisure Trust and an evaluation of the financial benefits to both the Council and the Leisure Trust. Taking this into account Cabinet on 26 January 2021 agreed the lease in principle but deferred any final decision until a detailed and complete report be considered by this Board, bringing forward recommendations to Cabinet. Members will note from the proposed timescale below that this will be considered at the next meeting of this Board.

1.2.2 Taking the above into consideration a review has been undertaken of the current timeframe and a revised timeframe is shown below for Member comment and approval. The time frame proposes a revised potential transfer date of 1 July 2021. The Leisure Trust have been consulted and whilst being disappointed by the delay support the revised timescale.

- 8 March – Leisure Trust take financial proposal/Business Plan to its Board for approval and then present to the Council.
- 25 May – Report to CHAB presenting Leisure Trust Proposal and outcome of Cost Certainty in relation to the proposed lakeside facility.
- 02 June – Report to Cabinet to consider recommendations from CHAB.
- 7 June – Update report to Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust Board (if required).
- 1 July – Transfer to the Leisure Trust.

1.2.3 The revised timeframe will address the concerns raised by Members at the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board and provide the following benefits:

- The Leisure Trust will have all the information it requires from the Council and others to present its proposal.
- Adequate time is allowed for Officers to fully consider the financial benefits of the Leisure Trust’s proposal before presenting it to Council Members.
- Provides the opportunity to present the Trust proposal alongside the outcome of Stage 2 (Cost Certainty) for the building project.

1.3 Facility Development

1.3.1 As reported to the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board on the 16 September 2020, the Council has had a long-held aspiration to provide a purpose-built lakeside facility at the site to primarily provide year-round catering and a centre for water sports. The project is within the Council’s Capital Plan.

1.3.2 Members will be aware that the Council has a finite budget of £741,000 for the project that is being funded in full by external funding secured through Section 106 contributions. It will, therefore, be essential that the Council has confidence in the budget before committing further expenditure. It will then be essential that the contract is only let with cost certainty to reduce the risk of overspend.

1.3.3 Following approval at this Board on the 10 November 2020, Alliance Leisure Services Ltd (ALS) were appointed to develop the project to Stage 1 (Cost Confidence) in accordance with its Development Proposal previously presented to Members. This initial stage will provide the Council reassurance on delivery of the project within the identified budget and incorporates a number of site surveys and the costing of an outline design.

1.3.4 ALS are due to present the outcome of Stage 1 (Cost Confidence) to the Council in mid February 2021. Stage 1 will see the costing of an outline design and a

copy is attached at **Annex 1**. At this stage this is an outline design and further detail will be developed during Stage 2 (Cost Certainty). The design has been developed in liaison with both the Council and the Trust.

- 1.3.5 In accordance with the recommendation of this Board, highlighted above, the project will only be progressed to Stage 2 (Cost Certainty) if there is confidence that the project can be funded from within the available budget. Should this confidence be provided at Stage 1, it is proposed that ALS commence Stage 2 on the 1 March 2021. The outcome of Stage 2 will then be presented to Members of this Board on the 25 May 2021 alongside the Trust's financial proposal for site management and an assessment of the financial implications to the Council.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 The proposals outlined in this report are the subject of ongoing legal advice with the Council's legal service and external legal advisors to ensure that the Council is acting lawfully. Further external advice is currently being sought and any recommendations within this report are to be subject to the Monitoring Officer confirming that the action to be taken is lawful once the advice has been finalised.
- 1.4.2 The two existing on site staff working at LLCP will transfer to the Leisure Trust and their employment rights will be protected under the Transfer of Undertakings [Protection of Employment] regulations [TUPE]. The staff have been advised of the potential transfer and consultation will continue as the transfer progresses in liaison with the Council's HR department.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 In bringing forward these proposals to Members, the initial assessment undertaken in liaison with Financial Services suggested that the transfer of responsibility for management of LLCP including the proposed purpose-built lakeside facility could deliver a financial benefit to both parties. This would be by way of a cost saving to the Council and a net income stream to the Trust.
- 1.5.2 An early high level estimate of the immediate cost saving was put at £10,000 and a net income stream post construction of the lakeside facility of £30,000. It is important to note that these figures are high level and detailed work has not been undertaken with the Leisure Trust at this point. As set out in this report a detailed financial assessment is to be presented to Members at this Board on the 25 May 2021.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 With regard to the site management the transfer will only progress if the aims highlighted at 1.1.1 of this report are met including the financial benefits to both the Council and the Leisure Trust.

- 1.6.2 The facility development is being taken forward based on a phased approach including both Cost Confidence and Cost Certainty as highlighted within the report. The Council has a finite budget for the new building.
- 1.6.3 There is clearly a risk that if the projects do not proceed the opportunity to maximise income from the Park will not be achieved, quality of service on site will not improve and savings will not be generated. Taking into account the Council's overall financial position and the discretionary nature of the facilities there is clearly a need to deliver the site as cost effectively as possible.

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.7.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.8 Policy Considerations

- 1.8.1 Asset Management, Biodiversity & Sustainability, Community and Procurement.

1.9 Recommendations

- 1.9.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that subject to the Monitoring Officer being satisfied about the lawfulness of the actions in relation to the potential transfer that both the potential management transfer and facility development progress as outlined within this report.

The Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Darren Lanes
Neil Lawley

Robert Styles
Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services

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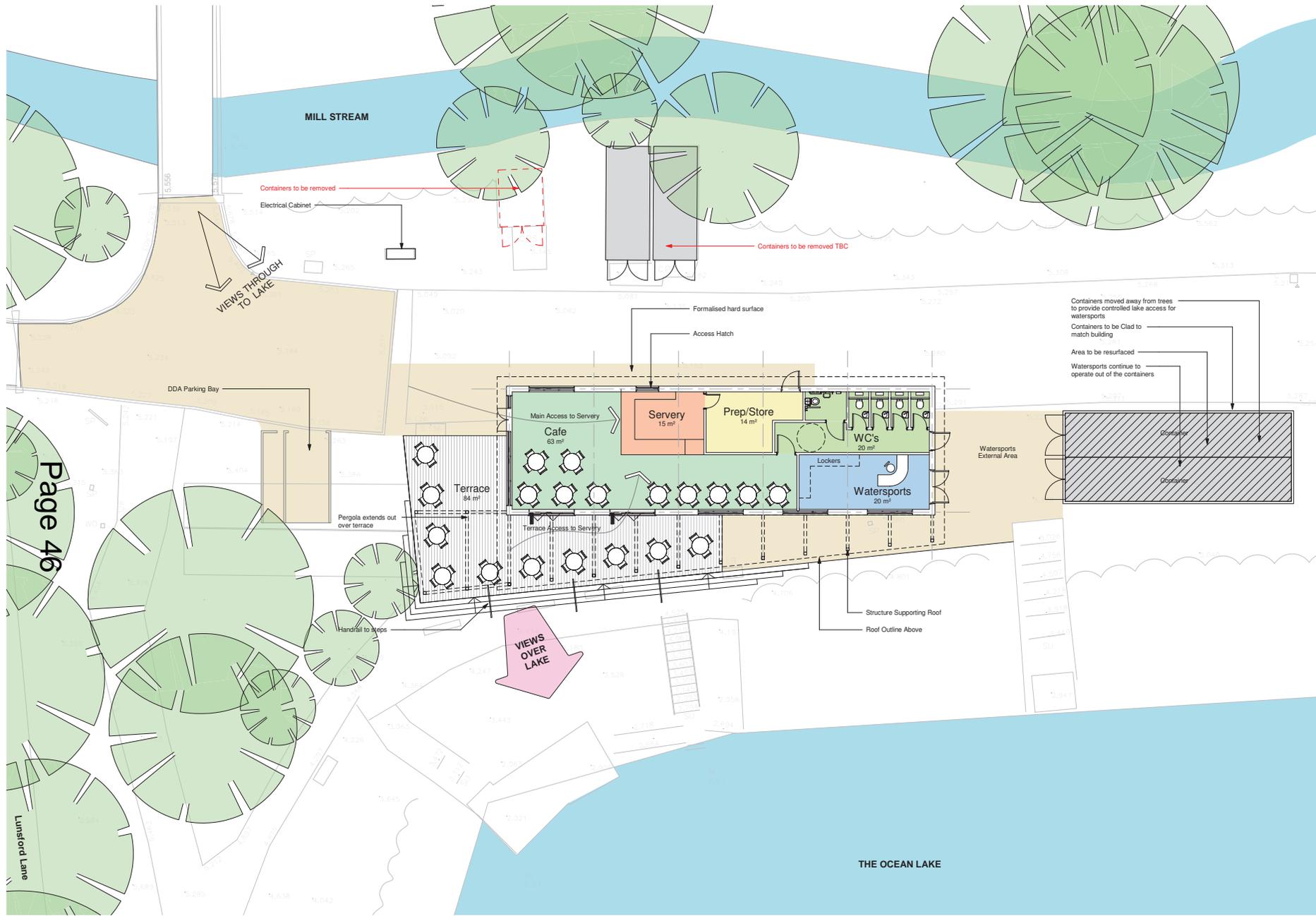
Saunders
Boston
Architects

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Leybourne Lakes

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18.02.21





- No. Note
- 1 All dimensions to be verified on site by GENERAL CONTRACTOR prior to any work, setting out or shop raise & set prepare.
 - 2 Drawings not to be scaled. Work to figured dimensions only.
 - 3 © copyright SAUNDERS BOSTON LIMITED. All rights reserved. This plan is the property of SAUNDERS BOSTON LIMITED at all times and may not be reproduced or copied in whole or in part without their prior written consent.
 - 4 This drawing and related specifications are for use only in the stated location.
 - 5 This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all other Consultants drawings and specifications.
 - 6 Drainage has not been surveyed and any/all pipe locations and below ground drainage runs are tentative.
 - 7 It is assumed that all works will be carried out by a competent contractor who will be working, where appropriate, to the appropriate British Standard.

Area Schedule Option D

Name	Area
Cafe	63 m ²
DDA WC	3 m ²
Prep/Store	14 m ²
Servery	15 m ²
Watersports	20 m ²
WC's	20 m ²
N.I.F.A.	134 m ²
G.I.F.A.	138 m ²
G.E.F.A.	155 m ²

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Lunford Lane



Rev	Description	Date	By	CHK	Auth
P2	Issued for client meeting	18.01.21			
P1	Issued following client review	28.01.21			
01	Issued				

Client: Alliance Leisure Services
 Job: Leybourne Lakes
 Drawing: Ground Floor Plan - Option D



Saunders Boston Architects

Eastern Gate House, 119 Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB3 9BA
 Tel: 01223 367733
 Email: info@saundersboston.co.uk

The Conservator, The Gallery, King's Wharf, The Quay, Colchester, Essex CO1 1JL
 Tel: 0206 346627
 www.saundersboston.co.uk

PRELIMINARY

SBA Project Code: **1844**
 Drawn: JS
 Checked: MNL
 Date: 07.01.21
 Suitability Code:

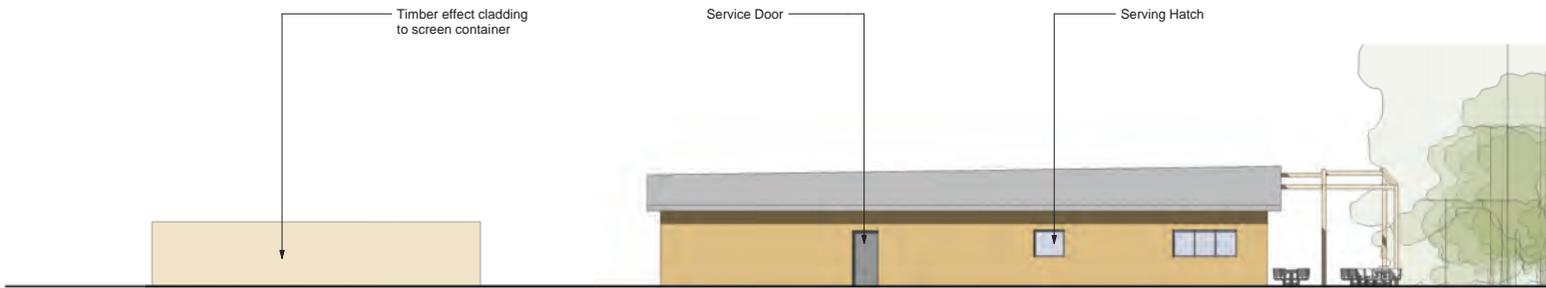
Scale: 1 : 100 @A1
 Revision: **P2**
 project originator zone level type role number
 1844-SBA-XX-00-DR-A-010D



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Lake Entrance View

- No. Note
- 1 All dimensions to be verified on site by GENERAL CONTRACTOR prior to any work, setting out or shop drawings being prepared.
- 2 Drawings not to be scaled. Work to figured dimensions only.
- 3 © copyright SAUNDERS BOSTON LIMITED. All rights reserved. This drawing remains the property of SAUNDERS BOSTON LIMITED at all times and may not be reproduced or copied in whole or in part without their prior written consent.
- 4 This drawing and related specifications are for use only in the stated location.
- 5 This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all other Consultants drawings and specifications.
- 6 Drainage has not been surveyed and any/all pipe locations and below ground drainage runs are indicative.
- 7 It is assumed that all works will be carried out by a competent contractor who will be working, where appropriate, to an approved method statement.



Aluminium Standing Seam Roof



Cembrit Timber Effect Plank



Grey Aluminium Windows & Doors

North Elevation
1 : 100



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South Elevation
1 : 100



East Elevation
1 : 100

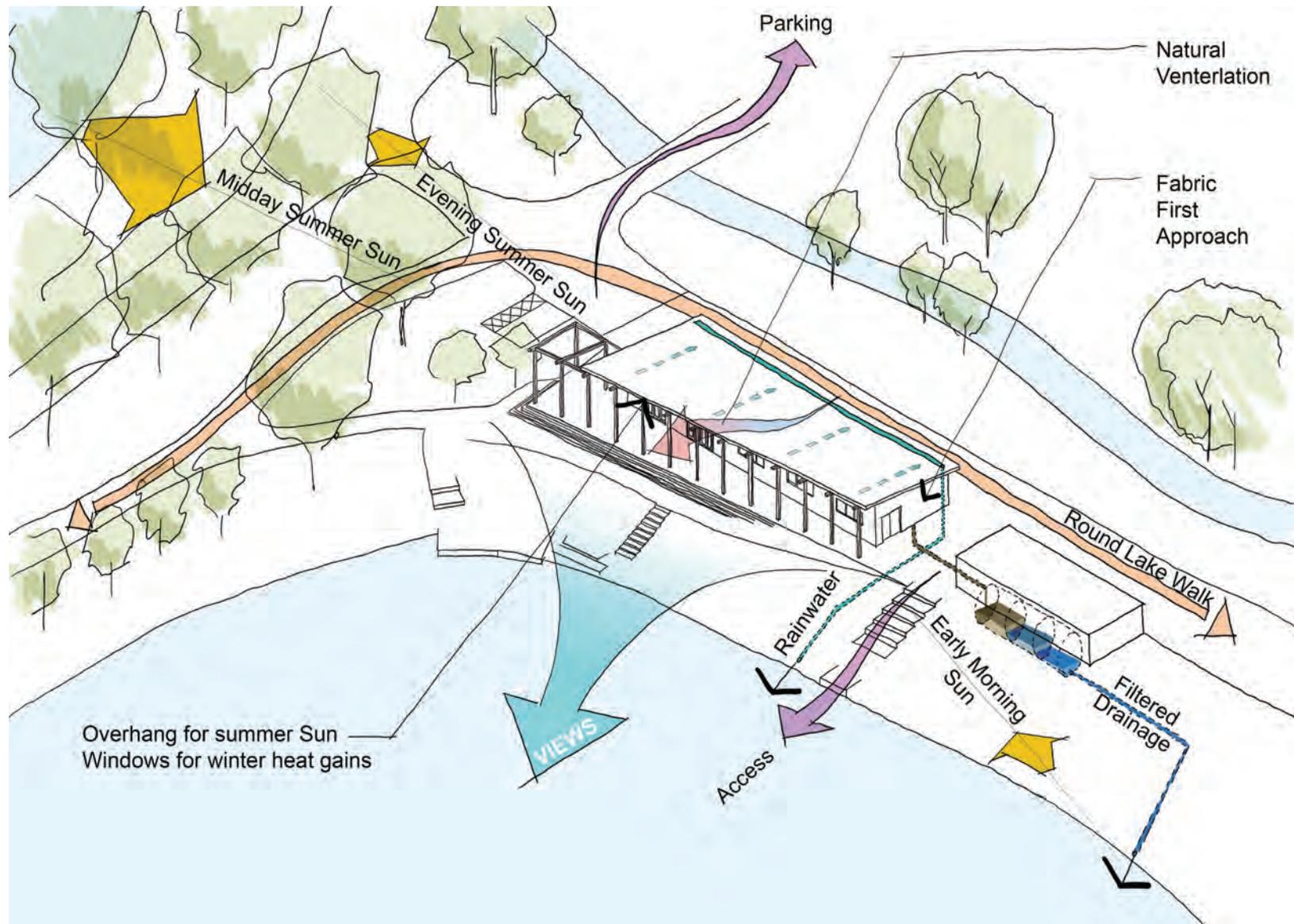


West Elevation
1 : 100



<p>Saunders Boston Architects</p> <p>Eastern Gate House, 119 Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB3 9BA T: 01223 367753 e: info@saundersboston.co.uk</p> <p>The Osmeaton, The Gallery, King's Wharf The Quay, Great Ouse T: 01392 346127 www.saundersboston.co.uk</p>	<p>Scale: 1 : 100 @ A1</p>		<p>Revision: P2</p>
	<p>PRELIMINARY</p>		<p>Client: Alliance Leisure Services</p>
	<p>SBA Project Code: 1844</p>	<p>Drawn: JS Checked: MNL</p>	<p>Date: 09.12.20 Suitability Code:</p>

Project	Originator	Zone	Level	Type	Role	Number
1844	SBA	XX	XX	DR	A	201





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Lakeside View

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

16 February 2021

Report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 PARKS AND LEISURE – RESPONSE TO COVID 19

Summary

This report updates Members on progress with the themes/activities identified within the Parks and Leisure section of the recently approved First Year Addendum to the Council's Corporate Strategy. This includes updates on the Council's Indoor and Outdoor Leisure Facilities, progress with Capital Plan Projects, and the 2020/21 Events Calendar. The potential outsourcing of Leybourne Lakes Country Park to the Leisure Trust is reported separately in these papers.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 At its meeting on the 3 June 2020, Cabinet approved a First Year Addendum to the Corporate Strategy in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Addendum identified a number of themes/activities and, within each, identified specific service areas to be reviewed, with an aim to Re-orientate and then Recover these services. Cabinet also agreed that progress with these themes/activities be monitored through updates to relevant Advisory Boards and Committees.

1.1.2 Included within the Addendum was the theme/activity of Parks and Leisure and within the Review section the following service areas were identified:

- Review opening of main leisure centres in light of government guidance, as well as the re-opening of remaining outdoor leisure facilities.
- Review completion timescales of delayed capital leisure schemes.
- Review events calendar.

1.1.3 Further to the above the following were also identified under the Re-orientation section:

- In liaison with the Leisure Trust, look at indoor leisure provision service delivery arrangements – future amendments to the Agreement will be required.
- Ensure the financial sustainability of the Leisure Trust.

- Give consideration to the potential transfer of the management of Leybourne Country Park to the Leisure Trust.

1.2 Indoor Leisure Facilities

- 1.2.1 Government restrictions, including the lockdown have had a significant impact on the delivery of indoor leisure, with the second enforced closure of all facilities run by the Leisure Trust (Larkfield Leisure Centre, Tonbridge Swimming Pool and Angel Centre) taking place from the 20 December 2020 and Poulton Wood Golf Centre following on 4 January 2021.
- 1.2.2 As a result, the Trust lost all income streams once again except for a £5 per month retainer on memberships, whilst still incurring costs. Actions have been taken by the Trust to minimise expenditure in the same way as before including the furloughing of the majority of its staff, negotiating reductions on contracts and suspending staff pay awards in the current financial year. The Trust has also continued drawing down on its reserves.
- 1.2.3 In recognition of the impact that the closures have had on the Leisure industry, some grant funds have now been introduced and the Trust have benefitted from the Local Restrictions Support Grants with further funding possible later in the year.
- 1.2.4 The Council has also applied to the Government's new National Leisure Recovery Fund for a maximum allocation of £250k. It is hoped that the outcome of the application will be known in advance of the meeting.
- 1.2.5 Any reopening will again be in strict adherence to government guidance and subject to detailed risk assessments. This approach worked extremely well in regard to the reopening of the facilities previously with the Trust keeping customers fully informed as changes were introduced, resulting in positive feedback from customers.
- 1.2.6 During the second enforced closure essential maintenance work has once again taken place where possible, limiting future disruption when the sites reopen. This work has included work to install a new fire detection system at Tonbridge Swimming Pool and ventilation work in the dance studio at Larkfield Leisure Centre.
- 1.2.7 Members will be fully aware that the Angel Centre has been selected to become the mass vaccination centre for West Kent. At the time of writing this report it is anticipated that the vaccination centre will open on 8th February until the end of July 2021. The vaccination centre will use the Sports Hall, Creche and adjacent Dance/Fitness Studio. This is clearly a vital project for the health and wellbeing of the public with the Council and the Leisure Trust working in close partnership with the NHS.

- 1.2.8 When the facilities are able to re-open the Gym and Medway Hall will be available for workouts and classes, and the community areas will also still be accessible and available for public use as appropriate, based upon any ongoing restrictions.

1.3 Outdoor Leisure facilities

- 1.3.1 The Council's grounds maintenance contractor, Landscape Services, has continued to fully maintain public open spaces throughout the period of the most recent lockdown, and this has been essential in allowing residents to use the facilities for daily exercise in accordance with government guidance. The Council has, however, closed areas including ball courts, tennis courts and outdoor gyms in compliance with the latest guidance. Play areas remain open. Staff have placed additional signage in all key open spaces reminding the public of the government rules to be adhered to. The Council has also introduced Covid Marshalls in to its two Country Parks and key sportsgrounds in order to assist in maintaining the government rules.
- 1.3.2 Formal sports, including football, rugby and cricket on the Council's sports pitches ceased on the commencement of the most recent lockdown, though the basic maintenance of these facilities has continued.
- 1.3.3 Operations at Tonbridge Cemetery have also been under specific scrutiny and again all due consideration has been given to government and industry guidance which is reviewed on a continuing basis. Maintenance of the site and funerals have continued throughout the lockdown period though procedures and protocols have been adapted in liaison with Funeral Directors. The need to comply with social distancing rules has been the key consideration and, in line with government guidance, attendance at funerals and internments has been restricted. The Council has also made the decision to suspend use of the Chapel for services following previous growing concerns of higher Covid cases within the South East region.
- 1.3.4 It is also worthy of note that concessions at the Council's outdoor sites have been subject to change. Catering units (takeaways) and fishing remain open, however other concessions such as outdoor swimming, sailing, scuba diving and dog training have been temporarily suspended. Each Concessionaire has been required to submit, for Council approval, updated risk assessments and working practices to address government guidance and their own industry best practice/guidance. All concessions are being closely monitored to ensure compliance and are also required to seek Council approval for any proposed alterations or extensions to their service provision (many are for example operating reduced services and hours at the current time).
- 1.3.5 Looking to the future it is clear from the experience of the pandemic to date, that outdoor spaces have been key in enabling the public to leave their homes for exercise and enjoy a healthy lifestyle. The spaces have been extremely popular with many people using them and experiencing them for the first time. It is also

recognised that people who enjoy a healthy lifestyle and exercise have been more robust in tackling the virus if they were unfortunate enough to contract it. Whilst only time will tell it is anticipated that the outdoor leisure facilities may grow in popularity and usage levels will increase. This will need to be recognised in future maintenance schedules, Management Plans and improvement schemes, for example the capacity of the car parks and the emptying of litter bins. It may also offer greater income generating opportunities at specific sites most notably in regard to secondary spend such as catering. Whilst events on open spaces have been suspended during this time, the Council is seeing applications starting to come through for later this year.

1.4 Capital Plan Schemes

1.4.1 There were two significant capital projects which were progressed during the lockdown period.

1.4.2 Larkfield Leisure Centre Roof, Ventilation and Boiler replacement/refurbishment – on commencement of the first lockdown, works were paused. The Council, Leisure Trust and the contractors [Kier] worked hard to ensure progress on site could continue, while ensuring government guidance was fully adhered to. As a result work resumed and the following was completed on site:

- Removal of the old air handling unit in the plant room
- Delivery of the new air handling unit from Germany and installation
- Installation of new ventilation ductwork in the pool hall
- Installation of new LED lighting in the pool hall
- Removal of all external scaffolding
- Removal of the large internal scaffolding

1.4.3 Tonbridge Swimming Pool Roof – Members will be aware of the phased approach being taken to the replacement of Tonbridge Swimming Pool roof, with Phase 1 (front elevation) and Phase 2 (Reception area and Health Suite) being undertaken in 2016 and 2017 respectively. Due to the disruption caused to the operation of the facility by phases 1 and 2 it was agreed to defer Phase 3 (rear elevation) until October 2020. However, with the building closed through the first lockdown period Management Team agreed to bring forward these repairs to minimise the impact on users of the facilities and any loss on income claim from the Trust. Works were completed last summer.

1.4.4 A full update on other schemes within the Capital Plan was taken and approved at the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board on the 6 January 2021.

1.5 Events Calendar

- 1.5.1 At the last meeting of the Board, events were being considered on a month on month basis as government guidance allowed. The majority, if not all event organisers had already taken the decision to cancel their events during 2020 given the restrictions in place. Two events did take place however, a three-day Music Festival and the Castle Ride both at Tonbridge Castle.
- 1.5.2 Bravo productions ran a three-day music festival during September. They adhered to the government guidance and put into place strict COVID measures to mitigate against risks. This was a great success and also generated income to the Council. The Castle Ride, a charity cycle ride run by Action UK took place and again worked well within the COVID restrictions providing the charity with a welcome fundraising opportunity.
- 1.5.3 Since December due to the lockdown there have been no events taking place. Government guidance will continue to be reviewed with regard to social distancing measures and guidance on gatherings. At the current time the Council is continuing to review authorisation for events on a month by month basis. The next scheduled event is due to take place at the end of April, this will be reviewed in March and a decision taken on its feasibility with the organisers in accordance with the guidance at the time. Tonbridge Lions have taken the decision to cancel the Summer Carnival scheduled for June and are hoping to run a smaller version in September. The Tonbridge Tattoo has also been cancelled due to concerns about the management of social distancing at a large scale event and a lack of rehearsal time.
- 1.5.4 The importance of events to local economies and communities is recognised and it is hoped that the proposed events for later in the year will be able to go ahead within the government guidance. All risk assessments now take into account COVID measures and further advice is sought from the Safety Advisory Group.

1.6 Youth Forum

- 1.6.1 Whilst not specifically in the 1st Year Addendum the TM Youth Forum has continued to run virtually throughout the year. The young people meet every 4-6 weeks to discuss issues that they are currently facing or areas that concern them. This has been a welcome platform for many and has proved a huge success. They have continued their work on the Safe Havens project and have brought in partner agencies to expand this project across the whole borough. This will provide information and advice to young people in accessible places. They have also worked with partner agencies to highlight the issues that have faced young people in regard to the pandemic and how they have been affected so that measures can be put into place to alleviate some of these concerns in the future. The Forum are planning to meet directly with Members of Cabinet in March to discuss the work of the Council and current priorities.

1.7 Legal Implications

- 1.7.1 The statutory framework governing the response to the pandemic is evolving and changing on a frequent basis, both in the restrictions placed upon individuals and upon the responsibility of local authorities. Specific proposals or changes brought forward following a review of the services will be assessed at the appropriate time in liaison with Legal Services to ensure they are lawful.

1.8 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.8.1 Management Team, and endorsed by Cabinet on 19 May 2020, imposed an 'essential spend only' policy for 2020/21 in order to preserve resources and set a 'savings target' of at least £500,000 to be delivered as a result of this policy.
- 1.8.2 An earmarked reorientation/post emergency reserve of £200,000 has been established to assist the Council in some of its recovery activity.

1.9 Risk Assessment

- 1.9.1 The departmental operational risk assessment has been updated substantially and is being revised on an ongoing basis as government guidance on Covid-19 changes.

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Darren Jones
Neil Lawley

Robert Styles
Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

16 February 2021

Report of the Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

This report will provide an update of some of the recent work of the Community Safety Partnership.

1.1 Latest crime statistics and crime trends

- 1.1.1 The latest crime statistics (to the end of December 2020) show that there were 8,803 crimes reported to the Police, compared to 9,851 in the previous year (a 10.6% reduction). There was also a reduction in victim-based crime (12.8%) and violent crime (6.8% reduction). This reduction could be due to the ongoing Covid pandemic as pubs and the night-time economy are closed resulting in fewer violent incidences.
- 1.1.2 However, there has been an increase in some crime types and there was an increase in both criminal damage (0.9%) and drugs offences (33.6%). There was also an increase in anti-social behaviour reports to the police from 1,731 last year to 2,622 this year. This increase is also reflected in the number of anti-social behaviour reports to the Borough Council and we have seen increases in the number of neighbour disputes reported as people spend more time inside due to the Coronavirus pandemic.
- 1.1.3 Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 and the lockdowns there has been an increase in domestic abuse reports. Reports to Kent Police have risen from 2,938 to 2,995. The organisations working with victims of domestic abuse are also seeing an increase in referrals to their services, as well as an increase in the complexity and severity of cases as victims find it harder to access support due to the perpetrator being with them more of the time.
- 1.1.4 The Police have also reported that locally there has been a number of shed breaks in the Malling area (particularly in West Malling, Larkfield and Leybourne areas). The Police are reminding residents of crime prevention measures they can take and high visibility patrols have taken place and will continue to do so.

1.2 Puppy Farming Enforcement operation with Kent Police

- 1.2.1 Over the last few months TMBC Licensing has been receiving intelligence over puppy trading within the Borough, based in Hadlow and Yalding. In addition, Licensing Services received complaints from people who have purchased a puppy recently, an example being after purchasing a puppy and then had to spend £5,000 vets bills, resulting with the puppy dying, after becoming very seriously ill.
- 1.2.2 The Head of Licencing, Customer Services and Community Safety raised this information at the Serious and Organised Crime meeting held with Police and other partners in December, which coincided with an arrest made by West Mercia Police, of members of this family during a separate operation.
- 1.2.3 As a result of this intelligence and information three premises (one house and one farm in Hadlow and one farm in Yalding) were subject to Kent Police Search Warrants. This was a joint partner operation with Kent Police, RSPCA, Trading Standards and Licensing.
- 1.2.4 The results from this operation were:
- One person was arrested for Public Order offences and assault on an emergency worker.
 - Two people were arrested for possession of a firearm (taser) and Amphetamines.
 - 10 puppies without a mother were located at the Yalding address. They appeared to be in good health and were checked by a vet.
 - 20 further dogs were located at the Yalding address and were checked with the scanner by RSPCA to establish if they were stolen – none were.
 - Numerous phones, iPads and paperwork relating to the sale of puppies was seized.
- 1.2.5 The true extent of this operation will not be known for some time, however the actions taken have been a serious set-back to the sale of puppies being sold by this family, and has clearly highlighted this is a huge cash rich illegal operation.

1.3 Neighbourhood Engagement Meeting (NEM)

- 1.3.1 We ran an online Neighbourhood Engagement Meeting on the evening of Wednesday 27 January which offered residents the chance to speak to representatives from Kent Police, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and KCC about Community Safety issues. On the evening over 25 residents joined us virtually to discuss issues such as boy racers, nuisance youths and drug offences. We hope to run similar events during the year, as feedback has been very positive.

1.4 Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop

- 1.4.1 The domestic abuse One Stop Shop is usually held each Wednesday in Tonbridge and allows victims of domestic abuse the chance to access support and advice in a safe way. Unfortunately, due to the Covid pandemic the face to face support is not able to be offered at present, however, an online One Stop Shop has been established via Zoom.
- 1.4.2 The Weekly Zoom meetings held every Wednesday from 9.30am until noon, allow clients to access support from police and legal experts and get advice on housing, home security, refuge living, money matters and more.
- 1.4.3 The Zoom details can be found on the Borough Council's website - [Domestic Abuse - Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council \(tmbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.tmbc.gov.uk)

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 None

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 Any funding requirements are provided through the Community Safety Partnership.

1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 All risk assessments are under taken as appropriate.

1.8 Policy Considerations

- 1.8.1 Community Safety

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Alison Finch
Safer & Stronger Communities
Manager

Adrian Stanfield
Central Services Director and Deputy Chief Executive

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**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD**

16 February 2021

Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 SOCIAL HOUSING DECARBONISATION FUND DEMONSTRATOR

Summary

This report updates Members on the Council's successful Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Demonstrator competition consortia bid with Fenland District Council (FDC) to secure funding to enable the upgrade of circa 160 Clarion owned homes in Tonbridge and Wisbech (Fenland).

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 In Tonbridge and Malling area, Clarion are aiming to retrofit circa 80 'hard to treat' system built Wimpey No Fines constructed properties in Tonbridge.

1.1.2 The total value of the SHDF Demonstrator award across both council areas is £4.49 million. Clarion Housing Group, the stock owner and local partner to both the Council and FDC will provide the necessary scheme match funding of £4.49 million. The total value of the SHDF Demonstrator scheme is £8.98 million.

1.1.3 Funding will support key Council strategic priorities to:

- improve existing housing condition;
- helping to reduce fuel poverty; and
- reducing carbon emissions in residential housing stock.

1.1.4 The Council's Climate Change Strategy sets out our aspiration for the borough to be carbon neutral by 2030.

1.1.5 A key ambition set out in the West Kent Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2016-2021 is to increase the availability of good quality affordable homes for purchase and rent whilst reducing homelessness and contributing to building the West Kent economy. We want our residents to live in safe, good quality homes that meet their needs'.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 On 8 July 2020 Government announced a UK wide SHDF Demonstrator competition to start decarbonisation of social housing over 2020 to 2021 and support green jobs as part of the COVID 19 economic recovery plan.

1.2.2 The £50 million SHDF Demonstrator competition, open to local authorities or consortia led by local authorities, will support social landlords to demonstrate innovative approaches to whole house retrofitting social housing homes at scale, with the aim of warmer and more energy efficient homes, a reduction in household's energy bills, and lower carbon emissions.

1.2.3 The SHDF Demonstrator is an initial investment to learn lessons and catalyse innovation in deep retrofitting for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, for which the Government manifesto committed £3.8 billion of new funding.

1.2.4 Aims and objectives of the Demonstrator competition include:

- Energy Demand Reduction: Achieve significant energy demand reduction in dwellings and a reduction in fuel bills by applying a whole house retrofit approach compliant with PAS 2035 :2019;
- Cost Reduction: Achieve a significant cost reduction for the approach selected within the lifetime of the project, and provide evidence on the sources of cost reduction;
- Green Jobs and Supply chains: Support green jobs and utilise local supply chains to contribute to economic stimulus post Covid-19;
- Safety: Safely treat an appropriate number of dwellings to demonstrate achievement of cost reduction in a replicable manner;
- Scale and replicability: Provide evidence on replicability and scale up of approach for future projects;
- Occupant health: Ensure the improvement of health, comfort and wellbeing of occupants and mitigate any unintended consequences; and
- Performance Evaluation: Provide evidence of performance evaluation post retrofit.

1.3 Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Demonstrator consortia bid

1.3.1 The Council aspires for the borough to be carbon neutral by 2030 through reducing carbon emissions and is keen to take up opportunities of funding to support this aim and benefit residents by improving energy inefficient properties and reduction of energy bills. It is a key strategic priority for the Council to improve existing housing condition ensuring homes are safe and warm and to help alleviate fuel poverty.

- 1.3.2 Initially Officers explored opportunities for a Kent SHDF Demonstrator consortia bid via the Kent & Medway Sustainable Energy Partnership, inviting Clarion Housing Group (our main social housing provider) to participate in these discussions.
- 1.3.3 Given the very tight timescales for a SHDF Demonstrator bid it was necessary to identify a scheme which would be 'ready to go' with established procurement in place. Officers concluded a Council bid working with Clarion Housing Group (Clarion) was the best option.
- 1.3.4 Clarion identified social housing in Tonbridge and Wisbech (Fenland) would be suitable and suggested a bid across these two key Clarion stock areas with the aim of sharing learning across area and property type. A consortia bid was subsequently established between the Council and FDC (acting as the lead council) working with both our local partner Clarion.
- 1.3.5 The Wimpey No Fines constructed properties were chosen as, in energy efficiency terms, they are amongst the poorest performing homes in the Borough.
- 1.3.6 There is a good concentration of this non-traditional built housing stock located in Tonbridge, with a fair amount of green space available to set up site compounds. It is believed that this site offers the best opportunity to maximise on the 'lessons learned' criteria of this project.
- 1.3.7 The SHDF Demonstrator bid proposal aims to upgrade 160 homes in Tonbridge and Wisbech (Fenland), reducing costs for residents in these homes and, bringing local economic benefit during large scale retrofit work in 2021. Furthermore, it is estimated that the project as a whole will generate 68 jobs and apprenticeships by accelerating retrofit plans, including use of local sub-contractors and installers. There is potential for wider replication and rollout in future years across other Clarion owned stock in Tonbridge and Malling area.
- 1.3.8 The project in Tonbridge will take a whole house fabric first approach and gain further efficiencies from renewable technologies (solar PV and battery storage) to help make the properties 'zero carbon ready' and generate additional energy bill savings for residents.
- 1.3.9 It is anticipated funding will advance retrofit circa 80 'hard to treat' system built Wimpey No Fines constructed properties. These properties are thermally inefficient with current energy consumption rates of 100 to 120 kWh/m² and Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings of D and E.
- 1.3.10 The project will develop a replicable technical solution to demonstrate economies of scale in the delivery of decarbonisation/retrofit measures to reduce energy consumption to less than 50kWh/m² and significantly improve EPC rating to B.
- 1.3.11 Proposed works include the installation of external wall insulation, cavity wall insulation (for cavity walls) , 400mm loft insulation, upgraded combi boilers,

mechanical ventilation heat recovery systems (MVHR), energy efficient doors and glazing, draught-proofing and low energy lighting measures. Funding will also enable the installation of solar PV panels to these homes.

1.3.12 The consortia have been awarded £4.49 million. Clarion Housing Group, social housing partner and stock owner will provide the necessary grant match funding of £4.49 million.

1.3.13 The total value of this retrofit project is £ 8.98 million to be split fairly across both local authority areas.

1.4 Going forward

1.4.1 Clarion has already undertaken a survey to inform the bid stage and facilitate undertaking works to the initial pilot property at the earliest opportunity enabling delivery and process issues to be identified and resolved at an early stage.

1.4.2 A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been agreed between Fenland DC (as lead authority) and the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). A milestone schedule of work has been agreed with an initial design stage and three phases of construction between June and October 2021.

1.4.3 Additional strategic retrofit and technical retrofit expertise and oversight will be provided to Clarion Housing Group by consultants Baily Garner in a strategic retrofit advisory role and Enhabit in a retrofit technical advisory role.

1.4.4 Works in Tonbridge will be undertaken by Clarion's (OJEU compliant) procured partnering contractor United Living, with Saving Energy undertaking the Retrofit Coordinator role function.

1.4.5 Clarion Housing will undertake community engagement at the earliest stage and support will be given to residents before, during and after works. Owner occupiers will be included in the consultation and engagement process on potential retrofit works and will be signposted to the Government's Green Homes Grant to find out about financial help.

1.4.6 Projects complete a monthly progress report submission detailing lessons learned during the project and key performance indicators must be completed by end of December 2021.

1.5 Legal Implications

1.5.1 The SHDF Demonstrator is a Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) competition open to local authorities/consortia led by local authorities and will support social landlords to demonstrate innovative approaches to whole house retrofitting of social housing at scale.

1.5.2 BEIS has already agreed a memorandum of understanding with consortia lead Fenland DC.

- 1.5.3 A Governance framework for delivering this project is currently being developed by a working party comprising Officers from the Council, Fenland DC and Clarion Housing Group (acting as commissioning client) who is delivering works to ensure compliance and delivery.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 The Tonbridge scheme in this report will attract up to an estimated £4.49 million funding to improve housing condition and deliver 80 retrofit homes.
- 1.6.2 Members should note funding is awarded under s 31 Local Government Act 2003 capital grant funding and is repayable if not spent. Local authorities are required to provide match funding and, Clarion Housing Group as stock owners will meet the cost of £4.49 million match funding required. There is expected to be no cost to the Council. As lead authority Fenland DC will receive all of the funding and administer project funding payments to Clarion Housing Group as the project progresses.
- 1.6.3 In addition to consulting our own legal service, both Fenland DC (lead authority) and Clarion Housing Group has sought legal advice and agreed the requirements on state aid rules are met.

1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 The project MOU requires a regular assessment of risks on a monthly basis.
- 1.7.2 A robust risk assessment has been carried out which includes issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Members should be aware the project will adhere to Government guidance and rules on managing COVID infection rates. Delivery may therefore be delayed depending on the current pandemic situation and, if a full lockdown continues to be implemented where any works cannot be delivered then the programme would need to be halted and resumed on exit from the lockdown.

1.8 Policy Considerations

- 1.8.1 The SHDF Demonstrator fund will enable the Council to work towards the aspirations of the Climate Change Strategy and the West Kent Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2016-21.

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Jason Wheble
Linda Hibbs

Eleanor Hoyle
Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

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Agenda Item 10

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent due to special circumstances and of which notice has been given to the Chief Executive.

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Agenda Item 11

The Chairman to move that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting during consideration of any items the publication of which would disclose exempt information.

**ANY REPORTS APPEARING AFTER THIS PAGE CONTAIN EXEMPT
INFORMATION**

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Agenda Item 12

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent due to special circumstances and of which notice has been given to the Chief Executive.

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