

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
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27 January 2021

To: MEMBERS OF THE PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL
(Copies to all Members of the Council)

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel to be held online via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 4th February, 2021 commencing at 7.30 pm. Information on how to observe the meeting will be published on the Councils website.

Yours faithfully

JULIE BEILBY

Chief Executive

A G E N D A

Part 1 - Public

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes

5 - 12

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel held on 12 November 2020

3. Update on action identified in the last Minutes

4. Kent Police Services Update

Representatives of Kent Police to advise of recent initiatives, operations and activities, including issues raised by the Panel.

Attendance is subject to operational pressures.

5. Borough Councils Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic 13 - 22

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Nicolas Heslop) will provide an update on the current position.

The report of the Chief Executive and Management Team presented to Cabinet of 26 January is attached for information.

6. Update on the Local Plan

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure (Councillor David Lettington) will provide an update on the progress of the Local Plan.

7. Kent County Council Services Update

Representatives from Kent County Council to provide an update on recent initiatives, consultations and other matters of interest.

DISTRIBUTION

Borough Council Representatives

Cllr N J Heslop (Chairman)
Cllr M A Coffin (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Mrs J A Anderson
Cllr R P Betts
Cllr R W Dalton
Cllr P M Hickmott
Cllr F A Hoskins
Cllr S A Hudson
Cllr Mrs C B Langridge
Cllr D Lettington
Cllr B J Luker
Cllr M R Rhodes
Cllr M Taylor

Parish and Town Council Representatives

Addington
Aylesford
Birling
Borough Green
Burham
Ditton
East Malling and Larkfield
East Peckham
Hadlow
Hildenborough
Ightham
Kings Hill
Leybourne
Mereworth
Offham
Platt
Plaxtol
Ryarsh
Shipbourne
Snodland
Stansted
Trottiscliffe
Wateringbury
West Malling
West Peckham
Wouldham
Wrotham

County Councillors

Trudy Dean - Malling Central
Matthew Balfour - Malling Rural East
Sarah Hohler - Malling North
Peter Homewood - Malling Rural North East
Harry Rayner - Malling West

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TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

Thursday, 12th November, 2020

Present: Cllr N J Heslop (Chairman), Cllr M A Coffin (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr R P Betts, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr P M Hickmott, Cllr S A Hudson, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr B J Luker, Cllr M R Rhodes and Cllr M Taylor.

Together with representatives from Addington, Aylesford, Birling, Borough Green, Ditton, East Peckham, Hadlow, Hildenborough, Ightham, Plaxtol, Ryarsh, Shipbourne, Stansted, Trottiscliffe, West Peckham Parish Councils and County Councillors Mrs T Dean, Mrs S Hohler and Mr H Rayner.

Councillors A P J Keeley, P J Montague, Mrs A S Oakley, W E Palmer, R V Roud, T B Shaw and Mrs M Tatton were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors F A Hoskins and Mrs C B Langridge.

PART 1 - PUBLIC

PPP 20/23 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to recording that West Peckham Parish Council were in attendance.

PPP 20/24 UPDATE ON ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES

PPP 20/17 – Invitation to Southern Water

The Chairman extended apologies that unfortunately, due to other priorities, an invitation had not yet been extended to representatives of Southern Water to attend a future meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel. This would be progressed as soon as possible.

PPP 20/18 (d) – Development Management processes and consultation/guidance

The Chairman of Plaxtol Parish Council thanked the Borough Council for recognising the challenges faced by Parish/Town Councils in adapting to a change of process and welcomed the solutions related to technical responses on List B and Officers patience in addressing concerns. However, particular reference was made to the outstanding commitment

to enable parish clerks to be notified by e-mail when planning applications were validated. Currently, clerks were having to search the Public Access system for individual applications which was time consuming and challenging.

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure (Councillor David Lettington) thanked Plaxtol Parish Council for their constructive correspondence. It was explained that the issue of notification emails appeared to be an internal problem related to the way the systems were set up. However, it was believed that a technical solution could be found and this continued to be explored.

PPP 20/22 (c) - Climate Change Strategy

The Chairman, in his role as Leader of the Borough Council, advised that the Street Scene and Environment Services Advisory Board of 5 October had recommended that the Climate Change Strategy and the Year 1 Action Plan be adopted. It had also recommended that options for the establishment of a Climate Change Forum, to provide a mechanism for engagement with key stakeholders and interested parties be explored and reported to a future meeting of the Advisory Board. It was noted that the Climate Change Forum could provide a suitable vehicle for communication with Parish/Town Councils.

In addition, the Cabinet Member for Street Scene and Environment Services (Councillor Robin Betts) advised that, unfortunately due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and the introduction of new lockdown measures, the progress of the Strategy had been delayed as Officers were diverted into other priorities to support communities and residents. However, the Borough Council remained committed to climate change and were continuing to work with an external consultant to identify the best outcomes.

PPP 20/25 BOROUGH COUNCILS RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

The report of the Chief Executive and the Management Team, presented to Cabinet on 14 October, had provided an overview on a number of aspects as the Borough Council and its communities continued to adapt to living with coronavirus.

Initially, there had been good progress made on actions identified in the Corporate Strategy – One Year Addendum and included work on a new consultation draft of the Economic Recovery Strategy, the Climate Change Strategy, the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Savings and Transformation Strategy, the Air Quality Action Plan and support for the Leisure Trust.

Unfortunately, the lockdown measures imposed by Government, effective from 5 November to 2 December 2020, had impacted on these

areas of work as the Borough Council adapted to new restrictions, new financial pressures and identifying ways to support communities, businesses and residents.

The Chairman, in his role as Leader of the Borough Council, advised that since the publication of the agenda, the position locally had changed. Tonbridge and Malling had seen an increase in coronavirus figures, with clusters in Aylesford South, East Malling and Trench ward in Tonbridge. Whilst the local figures were slightly below the county average they were following the upward trajectory.

Residents were asked to continue to follow national guidance by maintaining social distancing, wearing face coverings and washing hands to reduce the spread of the infection. Anyone developing symptoms should self-isolate and follow Government advice.

Government funding in two parts had been allocated to the Borough Council to provide further financial support to local businesses. A new Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) Scheme utilising the first government funding allocation of £1,413,378 would be launched as soon as the funding allocation had been received, which was expected on Friday 13 November. Further detail of the Scheme and associated Policy was provided in the Decision taken under Emergency Provisions ([D200014EM](#))

The Borough Council would use the second tranche of government funding to provide further support under a discretionary scheme which would be launched in the next few weeks.

Currently, 4,000 residents had been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) and the Borough Council were working closely with Kent County Council on assessing and supporting these individuals.

PPP 20/26 UPDATE ON THE LOCAL PLAN AND SECTION 106 PROTOCOL

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure (Councillor David Lettington) provided an update on the progress of the Local Plan and advised that although the examination in public had started, the Planning Inspector had 'paused' the process after 3 days of hearings. Concerns about legal compliance of the Local Plan had been cited but the Borough Council were still waiting for an explanation as to the reason for the 'pause'. However, the Cabinet Member remained hopeful that the process would continue and indicated that any action that might become necessary would be a joint decision between Members and Officers.

There was also an update on the Section 106 Protocol and the Panel was advised that the Planning and Transportation Advisory Board of 11 November had given this careful consideration and raised a number of concerns that would be revisited by Officers. Whilst s106 was the

responsibility of the Borough Council, as the Local Planning Authority, comments were welcomed from key stakeholders, service providers and parish/town councils.

Details of the draft Protocol were set out in the report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health, attached to the agenda.

The following concerns and points were raised, discussed and noted:

- The ongoing delay in the Local Plan process which was disappointing, frustrating and meant that developers were submitting applications at short notice;
- There were no obvious reasons why parishes couldn't pursue private arrangements outside of the s106 protocol with developers to secure agreements on sewerage issues;
- Parishes believed they could assist the Borough Council in negotiating s106 obligations due to local knowledge and experience;
- To ensure transparency related to s106 obligations was there potential to publish details;
- It was indicated that priorities identified by Parish/Town Councils in relation to s106 would be considered as part of the overall assessment in line with other commissioning services, such as KCC Education, Highways and the NHS.

In conclusion, the Cabinet Member welcomed the comments of Members and indicated that the Borough Council would be happy to cooperate with parishes where appropriate. The points raised would be discussed with the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health to see if any of these could be pursued. It was intended that the introduction of a Section 106 Protocol would be mutually beneficial to all involved in the planning obligation process.

PPP 20/27 UPDATE ON WASTE SERVICES

The Cabinet Member for Street Scene and Environment Services (Councillor Robin Betts) provided an update on a number of areas related to Waste Services.

Since the engagement of a new manager in mid-August there had been an improvement in the performance of the contractor with a full completion of rounds achieved on a regular basis. However, a number of 'hotspots' remained and these would be monitored.

There was also good news on recycling performance, with a figure of 57% achieved. This demonstrated that residents were actively supporting climate change by exceeding target figures for recycling of waste. The following collection rates between June – August were noted:

- Refuse up to 28%
- Dry recycling up to 28%
- Paper/card up to 45%
- Food waste up to 13%
- Going to landfill was approximately 0.01%, with anything not recycled being converted to energy

Unfortunately, the coronavirus pandemic had placed greater pressure on the contractor with daily collection tonnages exceeding the amount usually collected over the Christmas period.

Borough Council Officers were now based at the Tonbridge depot to monitor activity and daily performance and the aim was now to maintain consistency on completion of rounds.

Finally, the Cabinet Member advised that the closure of the waste transfer station in Sevenoaks until 21 December was likely to significantly impact on waste collections at that end of the Borough, as North Farm would be dealing with increased volumes.

The following concerns and points were raised, discussed and noted:

- The number of complaints received by Ward Members had reduced;
- Unfortunately, there had been increased incidents of fly tipping;
- Guidance on how to prosecute fly tippers and evidence gathering would be shared with Parish/Town Councils and promoted on the website;
- There was over 50% subscription to the garden waste collection scheme which exceeded original targets. A direct debit facility for renewals was currently being tested;
- There was a significant issue with the facilities at Allington due to ongoing repairs and maintenance, which might have a consequential impact on waste collections in the North of the Borough;
- Road cleansing along Pilgrims Way around Wouldham, Burham and Peters Village had not been undertaken recently;
- The reinstatement of the weekend bulky waste collection service remained under review and was subject to risk assessment and ensuring that it was Covid safe;

Particular reference was made to the aerobic digester located at Blaise Farm which for technical reasons was emanating odours across Kings Hill and Offham, leading to complaints from residents. It was hoped that once the facility was operating fully, the emissions would reduce and improve the situation. Guidance on reporting issues would be placed on the website.

In conclusion, the Cabinet Member was pleased at the improved performance of the waste contractor, resident's commitment to recycling

and climate change and committed to providing more detailed information around fly tipping to a future meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel.

PPP 20/28 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE

Members noted the report provided by the County Member for Malling North (Councillor Sarah Hohler) and circulated in advance of the meeting.

Particular reference was made to the opportunity for residents to submit comments on potential areas of spending reductions and the level of Council Tax to help shape and balance the 2021-22 Budget. This [consultation](#) closed on 24 November 2020.

Details of a number of County initiatives and consultations were also set out for information. Attention was drawn to:

- Knock and Check – encouraging residents to reignite the community spirit seen during the initial months of the pandemic and to help the most vulnerable during the winter.
- Food vouchers had been given to families to help feed children during half-term.

All Kent County Council consultations could be viewed online at:

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti>

Finally, it was noted that the County Council had joined the Borough Council in opposing the potential large increase in housing targets for the South East. The overall annual requirement for Kent and Medway was already forecast to rise from 7,577 homes a year to 12,073 (60% increase) following the current standard method. The proposed changes would increase this by a further 2,835 to 14,908 homes a year.

PPP 20/29 AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREAS

The Parish Partnership Panel noted the report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health presented to the Street Scene and Environment Services Advisory Board, which provided an updated Air Quality Action Plan and identified actions to be taken to reduce pollutants within the 6 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and to tackle Nitrogen Dioxide across the Borough as a whole.

It was indicated that the comments and concerns previously raised at the Street Scene and Environment Services Advisory Board of 5 October had been noted by Officers. The Cabinet Member for Street Scene and Environment Services recognised the challenge in reducing air pollutants and commented on the benefits of encouraging people to move to electric vehicles.

Reference was made to the Kent County Council Rail Strategy Consultation, considered by the Planning and Transportation Advisory Board of 11 November, which supported low carbon travel.

The following concerns and points were raised, discussed and noted:

- It was unlikely that air quality could be improved unless road and traffic issues were addressed;
- The value of progressing the junction 5 east facing slip road to benefit West Kent, which the Borough Council continued to lobby for;
- The lack of detailed data from Public Health England on mortality rates due to air pollutants;
- UK Powers Network continued delay in setting up the equipment in Borough Green to provide statistical information. This position was being actively pursued by the Cabinet Member and Officers; and
- The difficulty in balancing ongoing housing development, particularly along the A20 corridor, the pressure to meet housing targets imposed by Government and reducing air pollutants.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm

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TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

26 January 2021

Report of the Chief Executive and Management Team

Part 1- Public

Executive Non Key Decisions

1 CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

This report provides an overview of a range of aspects as the Council and our communities continue to respond and adapt to living with coronavirus.

1.1 Strategic Context

- 1.1.1 At the time of writing, we are in a changing environment, as Covid-19 levels have risen dramatically across the country, including Kent and Tonbridge & Malling. The South East of England has seen some of the highest levels on infection across the Country. Having mover through various Tiers of restrictions, the whole of England is now in “national lockdown restrictions”. It is not the purpose of this report to set out the current restrictions as these are widely documented for all.
- 1.1.2 We continue to operate in the Emergency Structure in accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This continues to be led by the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF), within which we are active partners. We continue to participate in the command and control structure and also in a range of themed cells focussing on aspects including vulnerable persons and community support, outbreak management planning, compliance and enforcement and recovery.
- 1.1.3 As Members would expect, we also continue to be actively involved in a wide range of conference calls with various Government departments and other partners including, Public Health, NHS and Police colleagues. Public Heath are leading on all aspects of testing and track and trace, but we are active partners in this forum. NHS are the lead partners on the vaccination programme as this is progressed in various phases commencing with the priority vaccination programme implemented via the Primary Care Networks (PCNs).
- 1.1.4 It is particularly important that we continue to allocate senior resources to this multi-agency activity, impact assessment activity and horizon scanning, as the national picture continues to change at significant pace.
- 1.1.5 It is perhaps helpful to remind Members of the key themes used as a framework for previous reports

- Situation Update
- Staff
- Members and Democratic Process
- TMBC Services /Financial Position
- Business Sector
- Community Issues
- Communications

1.1.6 It is not the intention to set out every action and activity, but it may be helpful to set out some key updates and issues under each of the themes above

1.2 Situation Update

1.2.1 At the time of writing the country is in a “national lockdown” following rapidly rising rates across the country and the impact of the new covid variant which has an increased transmission rate. The national restrictions place the emphasis on “stay at home” other than for prescribed activities.

1.2.2 The NHS is under extreme pressure and at a local level elective treatments have been greatly reduced to provide capacity for covid treatment and bed space. It is no secret that patients have been sent out of County for treatment as capacity is at stretch. The ambulance service, SECamb, has also been severely stretched. Various datasets are available for those wishing to monitor covid related activity [Interactive Map | Coronavirus in the UK \(data.gov.uk\)](#) and [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - Kent Public Health Observatory \(kpho.org.uk\)](#)

1.2.3 There is the national programme of symptomatic testing, booked via the national portal. This is now supplemented in Kent by a programme of asymptomatic testing sites (AST's), led by Kent Public Health. There are two ATS in the borough (Larkfield Library and the Hop Farm). Anyone wishing to book a non symptomatic test must book an appointment via the Kent Portal (insert link). Non symptomatic tests should be repeated fortnightly.

1.2.4 The national vaccine programme has also now been commenced led by the NHS. The first phase of vaccinations are being delivered in Hospital and some care home settings, with the community programme initially being delivered via PCNs. Residents in the priority groups will be invited for an appointment by their GP /PCN. Vaccination appointments are not available on demand. A programme of mass vaccination sites is being developed and further details will be published in the coming weeks. Further information on Kent Vaccination programme can be found [Covid-19 vaccination :: Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group \(kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk\)](#)

1.3 Staffing

1.3.1 We are following the national restrictions and all staff who can work from home are now doing so. Our IT capabilities allow the vast majority of tasks to be undertaken remotely with no impact on service delivery. We do have staff who need to attend the offices to deal with post, scanning and access to records. In addition there are staff working from other locations including car parks and country parks, with a further cohort who are working around the Borough undertaking regulatory inspections on site. In addition we have Covid Enforcement responsibilities which necessitate staff undertaking visits to premises across the Borough. We do not have any enforcement powers in respect of individual behaviours including the wearing of face masks, with these powers resting with the police.

1.4 Community Issues

1.4.1 Our Community Hub has continued to operate since March 2020. Incoming call levels remain low. Our staff continue to ensure that any residents with real difficulties are connected to the most appropriate support networks.

1.4.2 The shielding programme has been re-introduced albeit in a different format. As part of this programme we do make periodic contact to approximately 4,000 residents on our Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) dataset. The CEV list is updated daily as new people are added by their GP. We make contact with new additions to the CEV list on a daily basis. This is to check that all are coping and remind them of the community hub helpline. We also provide online support to any CEV resident without internet access, to help them register for priority supermarket delivery slots via the National Shielding Support System. We also provide contact details for organisations who can provide support for a range of issues including isolation, mental wellbeing and bereavement support as well as signposting people to local volunteer support networks if required.

1.4.3 We have provided two tranches of funding to voluntary organisations. As previously reported to Cabinet, the first tranche was the Local Emergency Assistance Grants totalling £43,607. The second tranche was reported to the meeting of Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board (06/01/2021) where a total of £52,417 was distributed to agencies with the specific remit of supporting households experiencing food and/or fuel poverty.

1.4.4 In addition we are responsible for the assessment and distribution of Self-Isolation Support Payments. There are two elements to the Scheme, a mandatory strand and a separate discretionary one. So far we have distributed £125,500 of government funding. At the time of writing we are distributing approximately £40,000 per week in payments of £500 to individuals. Supporting those who are in work, and on certain benefits, or have low incomes while they must stay at home isolating is an important aspect in reducing the risk of spreading Covid-19. This

Scheme was reported to the Finance, Property and Innovation Board on 6 January 2021.

1.5 Members and Democratic Process

- 1.5.1 All Advisory Boards, Committees, Cabinet and Council continue to be held virtually by Microsoft Teams. Where permitted public speaking has also been facilitated. All meetings are live streamed on YouTube.
- 1.5.2 The legislation permitting virtual meetings remains in place until 7 May 2021.
- 1.5.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (03/12/2020) agreed the scoping report to consider Virtual Meetings & Homeworking. A full report will be reported to a future meeting, within the context of any clarification of the legislative position on virtual meetings.

1.6 Business Sector

- 1.6.1 Since November onwards, in order to ensure that business grants continued to be distributed as swiftly as possible, a number of emergency decisions were made:

- D200014EM – approval of the LRSG (Closed) Scheme on 11 November
- D200015EM – approval of Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme on 18 November
- D200017EM – approval of the Christmas Support package for wet-led pubs on 30 December
- D200018EM – approval of the LRSG (Open) Scheme on 31 December.

This was subsequently reported to the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board on 06 January 2021.

- 1.6.2 At the time of writing this report, for the period relating to the November 2020 lockdown, 467 businesses have accessed the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) Scheme, amounting to over £785,000, and over 300 businesses have accessed the Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme, amounting to over £460,000.
- 1.6.3 In addition, funding has started to be distributed for the period when the Borough was under Tier 3 and 4 restrictions. So far, 153 businesses have received Tier 3 payments (amounting to £141,000) and 464 businesses have received Tier 4 payments (amounting to £391,594).
- 1.6.4 The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) Scheme, which also relates to the Tier 3 period and is available to businesses that are ineligible for the closed scheme, has so far received 140 applications and closes on 21 January 2021.

- 1.6.5 The Christmas Support Package for wet-led pubs is also currently open for applications, and has seen 35 applications to date.
- 1.6.6 Preparations are now being put in place for further funding schemes to cover the current lockdown period.

1.7 TMBC Services

- 1.7.1 Customer Services – The offices at both Kings Hill and Tonbridge remain open on an appointment only basis. Demand remains very low with one or two appointments per week at most. The Customer Services Team continue to handle a high level of telephone calls, including calls on behalf of an increasing number of services. This has supported capacity in back offices allowing great efficiency in services.
- 1.7.2 Housing - the housing service continue to receive an increased number of complex homelessness and housing needs enquiries as well as applications for the housing register.

All the rough sleepers who were accommodated under the Government “Everyone In” policy at the start of the pandemic either have moved onto permanent accommodation with the support of the housing team or continue to be accommodated and have a move on plan in place. Although the recent lockdown has not prompted the Government to reintroduce the “Everyone In” policy, we will verify and properly assess the vulnerability of any identified rough sleeper and support where necessary. At this time of year our Severe Weather Emergency Protocol is also active whereby accommodation will be provided in periods of cold or inclement weather. A current priority for the rough sleeper cohort is to work closely with our health colleagues to ensure all are registered with a GP and can therefore take up any vaccination programme according to the priority criteria. Various sources of funding have been provided by central Government or successfully bid for by the team to support the work around rough sleepers.

The numbers in temporary accommodation continue to remain high however proactive work with local housing providers especially Clarion Housing is enabling some move on. In addition working with local private landlords through improving our landlord offer is a key current focus to enable further opportunities for move on accommodation.

- 1.7.3 Regulatory Functions and Enforcement – The Licensing and Environmental Health teams continue to work jointly with colleagues from the Community Safety Team and Kent County Council’s Trading Standards team to enforce the provisions of the Coronavirus legislation. Targeted, intelligent led enforcement visits have been carried out both during office hours and out of hours to respond to concerns raised. In the main businesses are largely compliant but where needed advice and support is provided and enforcement action will be considered where necessary. On average the teams are responding to 20-25 complaints per week. The main areas for concern around enforcement have been congregating

of public around take away premises eg public house/café, premises not enforcing social distancing and premises operating that are not permitted at that time. The teams will continue with a pro-active enforcement presence in the various towns/village High St areas and will work alongside the Covid marshals to provide support where necessary.

- 1.7.4 Test & Trace – the Kent Local Tracing Partnership was established by Kent County Council and the districts at the end of November 2020 to help improve the test and trace process. Local districts are searching their databases e.g. housing, council tax etc to obtain any telephone numbers for residents where they have tested positive for Covid-19 and they have not been contactable through details already provided. This is to ensure that they are self-isolating and that their close contacts are identified and also advised to self-isolate to reduce the spread of the virus. If the resident cannot be contacted by telephone they will be visited by a member of the Environmental Health team (door knock) to attempt to get the close contact form completed. In December we had 37 requests for resident contact details and were successful in finding new telephone contact details for 10 of these cases. We completed 11 door knocking visits and from these we completed 5 close contact questionnaire forms.
- 1.7.5 Leisure – The provision of Indoor Leisure facilities, operated by the Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust on the Council's behalf, have been significantly impacted by government restrictions and guidance. In response to the first national lockdown all facilities were closed and whilst this service area was recovering to a certain extent the most recent lockdown has enforced their full closure once again. The Council has been working with the Trust to ensure its sustainability though this time and Cabinet will be aware from previous reports of the Council's financial support. An application has recently been made to the Government's National Leisure Facilities Fund and it is hoped this will be successful. The Council continues to meet weekly with the Trust to ensure a prompt response can be made to reinstating services when restrictions allow.

With regard to Outdoor Leisure, the Council's parks and open spaces remain open following announcement of the most recent lockdown alongside takeaway catering services that operate within our two Country Parks. Service provision has been reviewed in accordance with guidance and specific facilities have been closed that include, ball courts, tennis courts and outdoor gyms. Parks and open spaces have seen a significant increase in usage and this has placed additional pressure on regular maintenance tasks, especially the cleansing of sites and emptying of litter bins. This is being continually reviewed and frequency increased where appropriate. Tonbridge Cemetery remains open for funerals in accordance with government guidance though the Council has taken the decision to close the Chapel.

The authorisation of events on Council land has been suspended though applications are already being received for 2021. These will need to be considered in the context of national restrictions and guidance.

Updates on service provision are being taken to the Communities and Housing Advisory Board with the next update due in February 2020.

- 1.7.6 Parking – The Council’s car parks remain fully operational and open to the public .Due to the pandemic usage of the car parks is understandably low with the exception of the car parks at the two Country Parks .Regular update reports are made to the Street Scene and Environment Advisory Board .
- 1.7.7 Waste – Cabinet will be aware of the previous implications that Covid-19 has had on the delivery of core services within the Council’s Waste Contract. Through the period of the first lockdown this was most evident with around 50% of contractor staff either on sick leave, self-isolating or “shielding” at some point. This was combined with significantly increased tonnages across all waste streams, a situation that was replicated across Kent and nationwide. As such, service provision was prioritised to focus on key kerbside collections and resulted in a number of other service suspensions including garden waste collections, new garden waste subscriptions, bulky collections (charged doorstep collection service) and the Saturday Freighter Service. In addition resources were also temporarily directed away from Street Cleansing.

As the Covid-19 staffing pressures eased for Urbaser all services were reintroduced with the exception of the Saturday Freighter Service that still remains suspended. Service performance significantly improved following the re-introduction of services and is being reflected in increased round completions, a reduction in missed collections and reduced customer comments/complaints.

With a national lockdown re-introduced on the 5 January 2021 and cases of Covid 19 increasing locally, due consideration has been given to current and future service delivery. The Council is monitoring impacts in liaison with all other Local Authorities in the County through weekly briefings of the Kent Resource Partnership Forum. Of greatest concern is staffing levels and some Authorities have already taken steps to prioritise service provision in their area. Officers at Tonbridge and Malling are monitoring staffing levels on a daily basis in liaison with Urbaser and if required may have to prioritise key services in accordance with our Business Continuity Plan. As with the first national lockdown kerbside collections of general refuse and food waste, and the collection of clinical waste will be the highest priority.

Regular updates on performance and the impacts and response to the Covid 19 are being taken to the Street Scene and Environment Advisory Board and this also includes updates on key projects such as the roll-out to communal properties/flats, the reduction of the Council’s Bring Bank/Recycling Sites and the Transfer of Public Conveniences to Parish/Town Councils.

1.8 Next Step & Corporate Strategy

- 1.8.1 In this rapidly changing environment it is still difficult to anticipate what the next steps are in relation to Covid-19. The commencement of both Asymptomatic

testing programmes and the vaccination programme bring positive news for the future, but the longer term stability will not be felt for many months.

- 1.8.2 At its meeting on 3rd June 2020, Cabinet adopted a one year Addendum to the Corporate Plan. Various reports have been submitted to a range of Committees and Advisory Boards, and continue to be reported further over the coming months. At the end of the 1 year Addendum, it would seem sensible to review progress and reflect on the potential need for a further Addendum, in the light of the prevailing scenario later in summer 2021.

1.9 Legal Implications

- 1.9.1 The statutory framework governing the response to the pandemic continues to evolve in response to the restrictions placed on both individuals and Local Authorities. It is an absolute requirement that we implement any new responsibilities and restrictions in a timely fashion. This must continue to be a corporate priority.
- 1.9.2 The legal implications for any proposals emerging from the Corporate plan Addendum, will be assessed at the time of individual reports to Members.

1.10 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.10.1 The recent report to Finance Innovation and Property Advisory Board (06/01/2021), and subsequent report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee (19/01/2021), set out the Council's financial position including the impact of the pandemic. At the time of writing there is nothing further to advise on.

1.11 Risk Assessment

- 1.11.1 The Council's Strategic Risk Register is regularly updates and is on the agenda for Audit Committee on Monday 18 January 2021.

1.12 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.12.1 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 users.

1.13 Policy Considerations

- 1.13.1 Community
- 1.13.2 Business Continuity/Resilience
- 1.13.3 Healthy Lifestyles
- 1.13.4 Climate Change
- 1.13.5 Customer Contact

1.13.6 Health and Safety

1.13.7 Human Resources

1.14 Recommendations

1.14.1 That the Council's ongoing response in respect of the response to Covid-19 be endorsed

1.14.2 That the Corporate Plan Addendum be reviewed at the end of the first year, summer 2021

Background papers:

contact: Julie Beilby

Nil

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